

## Young researchers at IITA win prestigious ITOCA/TEEAL 2015 awards

Two young researchers are making IITA proud. They won the Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA) and the Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) research paper competition, 2015-PhD category for West Africa.

Olutayo Talabi, a Research Associate in IITA's Maize Program and a former IITA Research Fellow, won first prize with his research paper on *Genetic variability and intertrait relationships in maize under drought and low soil nitrogen environments*, while Olubunmi Ibitoye, an IITA Research Fellow in the cowpea breeding unit, was awarded second prize for her work on *Performance of cowpea [Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp hybrids under drought induced and well-watered conditions]*.

For this round of the competition, entries were judged from two regions, East Africa and West Africa, for papers which fell in either the PhD or MSc categories.



Talabi



Ibitoye

The panel of judges ranked the [submissions](#) from the IITA researchers as best among many others from researchers in West. The second and final round of the competition will be between the top three winners from East Africa and the top three from West Africa.

As a Research Fellow between January 2012 and March 2013, Olutayo conducted his M.Phil thesis research under the joint supervision of IITA

scientist, Baffour Badu-Apraku, and Prof Fakorede of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The award-winning paper by Olutayo was part of his M.Phil research conducted at IITA.

Olubunmi conducted her research under the supervision of Ousmane Boukar and Christian Fatokun. She is a PhD candidate with the West Africa Center for Crop Improvement (WACCI), University of Ghana.

## IITA and partner researchers trained on GIS

The Geographic Information System (GIS) unit and Capacity Development Office (CDO) of IITA conducted a one-week participatory training on GIS at the IITA East Africa hub, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Participants came from Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Nigeria and were drawn from diverse backgrounds.

The training aimed to enable participants to understand basic concepts of GIS and how they can be applied to their research in a descriptive, analytical, and predictive manner.

Speaking about the program, Tunrayo Alabi, the GIS Support Services Manager from IITA-Ibadan, said the



A participant, Davis Mwakanyamale, receives his certificate from Micheal Haertel.

program was part of a strategy to improve agriculture data management in Africa.

“Our targets are scientists, researchers, and those dealing with spatial data to build their competence in planning, implementation, and dissemination of agriculture research programs,” he said.

The training was delivered through intensive lectures and practical sessions and gave the participants opportunities to explore, in-depth, basic concepts of GIS, map symbology and cartographic designs, the application of GIS to natural resource management,

and GIS modelling tools in agricultural research.

At the end of the training, Michael Haertel, IITA GIS and Database Expert, encouraged the participants to put into action the knowledge and skills they had learned during the training. He praised the participants' willingness to learn, their attentiveness, and active participation throughout the training program.

“The participants were very attentive and eager to explore more of the program inputs,” he said. “It is my hope that participants will continue to make use of GIS knowledge.” he commented.

The participants appreciated efforts made by the Institute and are looking forward to using the skills and knowledge learned in their research work for better outcomes.

“As a researcher working in multiple locations across various countries, the training will help me in mapping and showing the exact locations of the trials we are conducting. We also gained skills in analyzing and interpreting data presented in maps to guide us in making decisions, for example, to select the most appropriate project sites,” said Silver Tumwegamire, a Research Fellow/Cassava Breeder and one of the participants.

## IITA and Stellenbosch University formalize ties, identify priorities for collaboration

IITA has formalized its partnership with [Stellenbosch University](#) with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) by representatives of the two institutions on 5 October at the university's campus in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The MoU was signed on behalf of IITA by Ylva Hillbur, Deputy Director General for Research for Development, and by Danie Brink, Dean of the Department of AgriSciences of Stellenbosch University.

The signing of the MoU between Africa's leading agricultural research organization and one of the continent's premier scientific academic institutions was the highlight of a visit to the university by an IITA delegation composed of Hillbur and David Chikoye, Regional Director for Southern Africa. Hillbur and Chikoye were at Stellenbosch University from 5 to 7 October to explore opportunities for closer collaboration between the two organizations.

On the signing of the MoU, Brink commented, “Stellenbosch University is recognized as one of the top universities in Africa. We believe that we have a significant role to play in the development of the continent. We are very excited to have IITA as a partner, as this will help catalyze our efforts to reach as much of Africa as possible through your well-established network of research stations and partners.”

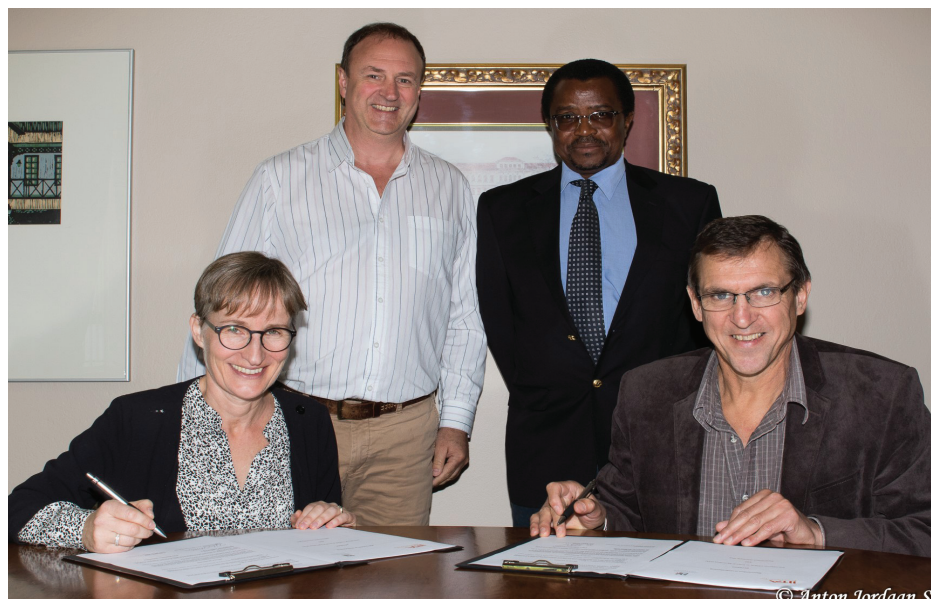
In response, Chikoye indicated, “As IITA, our desire is to see more commercialized, smallholder agriculture in Africa. We

believe that Stellenbosch is already well advanced in this path, and with this partnership and your rich experiences in the area of agribusiness development you can help us attain our mission expeditiously.”

During their visit to the university, Hillbur and Chikoye interacted with staff of the Faculty of AgriSciences including the departments of Agronomy, Soil Science, Horticultural Sciences, and Food Science. They also toured the university's various laboratories and research facilities such as the Central Analytical Facility, the library, and the [Stellenbosch Institute for](#)

[Advanced Study](#). The duo also interacted with staff and management of the International Office to discuss potential collaboration on student training.

Commenting on possible capacity building partnership, Hillbur said, “We could send IITA scientists to serve as resource persons or guest lecturers here at Stellenbosch, especially in your postgraduate training programs.” The DDG also made a presentation about IITA's activities to the faculty and graduate students of the university to orient them about the institute's mission, vision, and research-for-development activities across Africa.



Ylva Hillbur of IITA (seated left) and Danie Brink of Stellenbosch University (seated right) signing the MoU. Looking on are David Chikoye (standing, at right) and Altus Viljoen of the Department of Plant Pathology of Stellenbosch University.

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)), Jeffrey T. Oliver ([j.oliver@cgiar.org](mailto:j.oliver@cgiar.org)), Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)), or Adaobi Umeokoro ([a.umeokoro@cgiar.org](mailto:a.umeokoro@cgiar.org)).

## AfricaYam and JHI scientists establish bond to achieve project goals

The collaboration of scientists at the [James Hutton Institute, Scotland UK](#), (JHI) has been enlisted by the AfricaYam: Enhancing Yam Breeding for Increased Productivity and Improved Quality in West Africa project for quicker results and realization of project gains. JHI scientists will join efforts with those of IITA to combat the scourge of pest and disease infestations limiting the productivity of yam in West Africa. They will also provide training and advisory support to other project partners.

The decision to embark on this joint approach to tackle the limiting factors in yam production was consolidated during a visit by a delegation from IITA and national

program partners led by [David De Koeeyer](#), AfricaYam project leader, to JHI on 14–18 September. The delegation was received by [Glenn Bryan](#), Potato Genetics and Breeding team leader in JHI's Cell and Molecular Sciences group.

The discussions focused on deploying JHI's prominent technology on potato breeding and research to Africa. According to the scientists, potato shares some similarities and attributes which can be adapted to increase the resilience and yield potential of yam.

AfricaYam receives support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is implemented in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria.



*Yam vines growing profusely.*

## Integrating the IITA Youth Agripreneur model in the CGIAR CRP2 portfolio

The problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria and the African continent has left many government officials searching for ways to combat unemployment. Solutions consist of ways to positively engage the energies and potentials of the African youth.

Agriculture as a business has been identified as a platform not only for food production but also for generating income.

[IITA](#) piloted a model in 2012 to help reduce youth unemployment by engaging

the energies of 35 youths in agribusiness and identifying various entry points to generate income from agriculture.

To further this cause, the [CGIAR Consortium](#) organized a workshop in Montpellier, France on 8–9 September, with the theme *Mobilizing youth within phase 2 of the CGIAR Research Programs*.



*IITA Youth Agripreneurs make a presentation at the CGIAR office in Montpellier, France.*

Four representatives of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) attended the workshop. They were Evelyn Ohanwusi, Molayo Owoeye, Ifedayo Ibronke, and Oludare Odusanya. These IYA representatives presented the case of the IITA youth in agribusiness pilot model as an example of how the livelihoods of youth in Africa can be positively impacted through agriculture. The workshop discussed how the Consortium can use the IYA approach as a tool and strategy for combating socioeconomic problems caused by youth employment in Africa in the next wave of CRPs.

### Announcements

- **High Level Conference:** An African Agricultural Transformation Agenda, Towards a strategy for building a strong agricultural sector in Africa; The King Fahd Palace Conference Center, Dakar, Senegal, 21 - 23 October.
- **Young Africa Works Debate:** 29 October, Westin Cape Town Ballroom, Cape Town, South Africa. Moderator: Dr Eleni Gabre-Madhin, Debaters: Dr. Nteranya Sanginga (affirmative) and Jim Sumberg (negative). Proposition: Agriculture is a sector of economic opportunity for youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sponsored by The MasterCard Foundation.
- **Open Day, IITA Ibadan, Nigeria, 14 November**
- **R4D Week, IITA Ibadan, 22-28 November.**
- **7th International Conference of the Africa Soil Science Society;** Theme: Critical soil solutions for sustainable development in Africa. 2 to 8 December, Salle de Banquets in Ouaga 2000, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
- **Joint World Cowpea and Pan-African Grain Legume Research Conference 2016,** co-organized by IITA and the Feed-the-Future Legume Innovation Lab, Livingstone, Zambia, 28 February to 4 March 2016. For more information, visit the conference [website](#) or download the conference [announcement](#).

### 2015 World Food Day

Today, 16 October, is World Food Day. IITA joins the world in celebrating this important day with the theme @Social protection and agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty. To learn more, go to [www.fao.org/world-food-day/home/en/](http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/home/en/)

