

IITA staff, Samson Udo, displays uncommon courage

For Mr Samson Udo, 3 October will remain a memorable day in his life. Reason: his contribution towards fighting hunger and poverty has earned him commendation from IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga. As an Assistant Farm Technician, Mr Udo supervises the operations of the Seed Building unit of IITA. In the last decade, this unit operated below capacity, no thanks to cost cutting and reprioritization of funds.

However, in November last year, Dr Sanginga visited the unit and promised to support the efforts of Mr Udo and his team to resuscitate the unit.

"When Sanginga first visited us, he directed that scraps be evacuated and that the place be repainted," Mr Udo recounted.

"What we did was to carry out the instructions and today we are glad the unit has been revived," he added.

The Seed Building Unit is strategic for IITA and Africa in general, considering that the continent hasn't been able to meet its seed requirements. In Nigeria, for instance, only 6 percent of the country's seed requirement is produced

locally.

Dr Sanginga commended Mr Udo for his uncommon courage to the Institute.

"I am very proud of what you are doing here," he said. "Mr Udo gave me the courage to revive this place," he emphasized.

This is not the first time Mr Udo's efforts will be recognized even in his obscure office.

Mr Wilson Igbaifua, IITA Farm Manager who supervises Mr Udo, had actually given him a double promotion in the last few years.

"Mr Udo has been a very supportive staff to my Unit... He is one of those that make my Unit proud," he said.

Mr Udo joined IITA in 1986 as a Field



Mr Udo (in blue overall) takes staff members on a tour in the renovated Farm Office Seeds Unit.

Technician, the same year the processing equipment in the Unit were procured and installed. He desires that his equipment will be changed to rev up processing and improve efficiency.

Accompanying the DG to the Seed Building Unit were Drs Sam Ajala and Gbasse Tarawali, and members of the National Youth Corps.

IITA DDG (PCD) visits Notore and IITA-Onne station

IITA DDG Partnerships and Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell on 26 September, led an IITA delegation comprised of Dr Gbasse Tarawali and Mr Godwin Atser, to Notore Fertilizer Company in Onne, and the IITA-Onne station.

The visit to Notore was facilitated by Dr Scott Wallace, who is the head of IFDC in Nigeria.

During the courtesy visit, Dr Dashiell, IFDC, and Notore explored areas of possible collaboration in the future.

Mr Innocent Okuku, Head of Marketing with Notore, said that his company would be delighted to have IITA as a

partner as the company works towards realizing a Green Revolution in Africa. A factory tour was organized by Notore for the IITA delegation.

Dr Dashiell commended Notore for their investments in fertilizer production, adding that Notore's quest for a Green Revolution in Africa aligns perfectly with IITA's vision of lifting 20 million people out of poverty, reclaiming 25 hectares of degraded lands, and improving the nutrition of people especially women and children.

He also promised that IITA would support the company when needed.

Dr Dashiell also visited the IITA station at Onne and promised that IITA would work with partners to rejuvenate the station.



IITA DDG (PCD) Dr Ken tells visitors that the IITA-Onne station will be rejuvenated.



IITA DDG (PCD) Dr Ken Dashiell (third from left); Dr Gbasse Tarawali (fourth from left), and officials of Notore and IFDC during the visit to Notore factory in Onne..



Another section of IITA-Onne station that will soon be rejuvenated.

IITA and SLU sign international cooperation agreement

On 26 September, IITA and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) signed a cooperation agreement that will see the two institutions joining efforts to develop agriculture and improve livelihoods.

The inauguration ceremony took place during the annual conference on Agricultural Research for Development, with the theme "Innovations & Incentives," held at SLU Ultuna on 26–27 September.

The Vice Chancellor of SLU, Prof. Lisa Sennerby Forsse, and IITA DG, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, signed the memorandum of understanding for cooperation on behalf of the two institutions. The agreement is valid for five years.

The mission of SLU Global is to strengthen the university's commitment, through a scientific approach, to issues related to improved agricultural productivity, food security and sustainable livelihoods in low-income countries.

IITA and SLU will work together to help lift millions of people out of poverty through research and development.

Other participants at the inaugural ceremony included Ambassador Lennart Båge and the Deputy Director-General, Swedish Ministry for Rural Affairs, Tomas Dahlman.



IITA DG, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (left) and Vice Chancellor Lisa Sennerby Forsse, SLU, signed a five-year cooperation agreement.

IITA-DR Congo builds capacities of NARS and partners



Dr Nzola Mahungu (in white shirt) demonstrates the use of GPS to participants in DR Congo

Scientists working under the IITA cassava project in DR Congo (DRC) held their annual work planning week from 27 to 30 August, 2012 in Kisantu in the Bas Congo province.

The workshop reviewed the past, present and future activities of the 2012/2013 cropping season. Researchers also used the event to build the capacities of officials of national agricultural research systems (NARS) and other partners. Fifty participants from nine INERA (DRC NARS) research stations, farmers and processors association,

universities and USAID representatives attended the workshop. The NARS and other partners were trained on (i) the methodology to assess cassava roots biodegradation, (ii) the use of GPS, (iii) the improvement of good Power Point presentations.

The Director General of INERA, Prof. Mafuka, who participated at all the sessions thanked IITA for such initiatives and promised to duplicate such initiatives in other INERA programs for a better quality of science.

Dr Dashiell to address participants at annual national congress

IITA DDG (PCD) Dr. Kenton Dashiell will be addressing participants at this year's annual national congress of the Nigeria Rural Sociological Association (NRSA) that will happen at the University of Ibadan.

Dr Dashiell will be speaking on behalf of IITA DG, Dr Nteranya Sanginga. The event, which opens on 8 October, will attract policymakers, scientists, academics and farmers.

This year's congress' theme is "Challenges and Approaches to Sustainable Rural Development in sub-Saharan Africa. IITA will be among those to exhibit innovations that are transforming livelihoods.

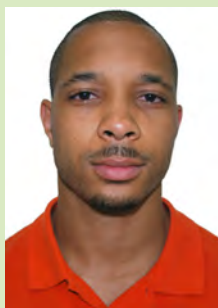
The Communication Office is coordinating IITA's participation. For more information, contact: k.lopez@cgiar.org.

IITA welcomes Dr. William Bowser

Dr. William Bowser has joined IITA-Ibadan as a Postdoctoral Fellow – Agricultural Economist. Dr Bowser is a USA citizen. He obtained a PhD in Agricultural and Applied Economics from University of Illinois in 2012 and BSc in Agribusiness from Florida A&M University in 2005.

Prior to his appointment, he was a Research Analyst at the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C. between 2011 and 2012. He was a Research Assistant at the Center for African Studies/ Lemann Institute for Brazilian Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Campaign from 2008 to 2011. He had previously studied income diversification and land rights for rural Afro-Brazilian households, and grain market integration in Ethiopia commercial markets.

He is accompanied by his wife Lashawnda Batts-Bowser and their two children. He resides in Apartment 2A. His office is in room 40, Building 401 with telephone extension 2290.



Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving the workplace at day's end, make sure that you have:

- (1) Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/lab equipment;
- (2) Turned off air conditioners; and
- (3) Switched off all lights.

Zambia Feed-the-Future R&D Program completes second Review and Planning exercise

From 18 to 20 September, implementing partners of the Zambia Feed-the-Future (FtF) Research and Development Program converged in Chipata, Zambia to review and assess the progress of the initiative in 2012 and develop a strategic roadmap for 2013.

About 50 representatives from the program's six implementing organizations: IITA, CIMMYT, CIP, ICRISAT, HarvestPlus, and the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) deliberated on progress of the program's thematic areas for the past year and develop workplan for the coming year.

Gracing the exercise were Harry Ngoma, USAID Representative; Kennedy Kanenga, ZARI Representative; and Obvious Kabinda, Provincial Agricultural Coordinator (PACO). Gracing the opening of the event was Hlobota Nkunika, Permanent Secretary of Zambia's Eastern Province representing the government of Zambia.

At the event's opening, Ngoma highlighted the program's emphasis on women participation and value chains, the importance of partnership with the private sector particularly in the country's Eastern Province, and of linking farmers to markets.

ZARI Director Kanenga added that the program "brings science and technology closer to farmers to improve incomes and nutrition. This will also give farmers the competitive edge to enter trade and markets for improved livelihoods." He added that ZARI is also benefitting especially in capacity building of its staff and scientists

Permanent Secretary Nkunika, said that the Eastern Region of Zambia is a "paradox" – that while it is the biggest agricultural producer in the country, it is



Participants and guests of the Zambia FtF R&D Program's 2nd Review and Planning Exercise held at the Protea Hotel in Chipata, Zambia.

also where farmers are the poorest and malnutrition is highest.

"I am proud to have this program in the region, particularly this high-level collection of expertise focused at helping uplift the lives of our resource poor farmers," he said. "It is gratifying to note that the Zambian government, USAID, and international organizations have come together to address the challenges of farmers in the Eastern Region of Zambia."

"The small-scale farmer is always ready to embrace and utilize agricultural innovations," he added. "As we reflect on the past year we need to emphasize on the challenges being faced by our farmers in the production value chain. This is especially so for the woman farmer who is the main stakeholder of this initiative."

"I would like to assure you that the Zambian Government, through my office, will always be ready support this initiative to ensure its success," Nkunika concluded.

The 5-year, USAID-funded program works through international agricultural

research centers to build the capacity of Zambia's NARS, promote adoption of improved crop varieties and low cost technologies for smallholder farmers, improve productivity, markets, institutions and policies, and enhance availability of and access to nutritious foods. The program will benefit over 120,000 households.

The program's six thematic projects are: Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume Systems for Zambia, led by IITA and CIMMYT; Improving Groundnut Farmers' Incomes and Nutrition through Innovation and Technology Enhancement, led by ICRISAT; Mitigating Cassava Disease Threats for Improved Cassava Production in Zambia, led by IITA; Dissemination of Pro-Vitamin A Maize in Eastern Province, led by Harvest Plus and CIAT; Aflatoxin mitigation in maize and groundnut, led by ICRISAT/IITA; and Effective Use of Orange-fleshed Sweet potato, led by CIP. The program is being coordinated by Naomi Kamanga of IITA.

IITA East Africa Hub administrative staff undergo online procurement training

The administration staff of IITA's East Africa Hub in Tanzania underwent a one-week intensive training on online procurement and purchasing, which was conducted by Fredrick Olatunji Akinkusote, Procurement Manager of the Supply Chain Unit based in IITA-Ibadan. The aim of the training is to improve procurement services at the hub.

The training was held on 17 – 21 September 2012 at the regional hub office in Dar es Salaam.

Eveline Odiambo, East Africa Regional Administrator, said the

training was timely to build the capacity of the hub administration staff on online procurement using Oracle Purchasing. "We want to move from paper-based purchasing at the hubs to online as being done at headquarters in Ibadan. This will shorten the procurement time from the requestor to the buyer to the supplier therefore speeding up purchasing and delivery of items".

The participants at the training included Odiambo, Neema Lazaro and Edith Kazimoto, Administration Officers, and Gerald Rusulabeza, Regional IT Specialist.



(L-R) Odiambo, Kazimoto, Akinkusote, Lazaro, and Rusulabeza pose for a group photo during the online procurement training.

MIRACLE completes ToT on soybean utilization in four Southern Africa countries

From June to August 2012, the IITA-led MIRACLE Project conducted a series of Training of Trainers (ToT) on soybean utilisation in Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zambia. The ToT exposed participants to appropriate methods of processing and utilizing soybean as well as preparing nutrient-dense soybean dishes and complementary foods based on local knowledge and preferences.

About 130 individuals were successfully trained as trainers, with more than 100 women. Participants came from government agencies, NGOs, and CBOs who are involved in promoting agriculture and health and nutrition in rural communities particularly those affected by HIV&AIDS, as well as selected community members. Upon completion of training, the graduates will have to train other groups/individuals in their respective communities.

Participants were trained on preparing more than a dozen recipes that varied among countries. These included soya-based cake, scones, mash relish, sausage, samoosa, leafy vegetable in legume milk, and soya maize porridge in Zambia; soy milk, soy crackers, cakes, porridge, and soy sauce in Mozambique; jollof rice, soya burger, leafy vegetable with soya soup, usipa (small fish) with soya soup, and soya milk in Malawi; and tofu stir-fry, scrambled tofu, soy biscuits, soya cake, tofu stew, tofu dumpling, soybean burgers, soy-spinach pie, soybean meatballs, tofu mince filling, soya tidbits, emabele-soya dumpling, chapatti, and fat cakes in Swaziland.

Many farmers in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia know soybean but only a few have tried growing it. Those who did only grew it on a small scale and usually attached to initiatives by NGOs. Farmers did not develop interest in the crop because they did not know how to properly utilise it; while those who grew soybean lacked proper market information to maximize earnings.

In Swaziland, soybean is almost a "new" crop and, therefore, there was almost no information available on how to use it. In some cases, farmers who did try to grow soybean were often



A woman processor preparing to make soya-based milk.

taken aback when they tried to cook it – the legume remained hard despite long hours over a fire. That alone killed peoples' interest in the crop.

For many of the participants, the ToT was an eye-opener. Thankful Dlamini, Principal Home Economics Officer of Swaziland's Ministry of Agriculture, said that the ToT workshop "is definitely going to help improve the nutritional status of people affected by HIV/AIDS. This is also going to help alleviate the problem of malnutrition in the country when the mothers in communities are taught how to utilise soybean."

"After tasting the different delicious dishes, I believe we should encourage farmers to grow soybeans. We will encourage farmers to diversify their crops and not focus on maize only. I am very happy to hear that some of the prepared dishes were originated by the training participants" added Mrs. Phindile Dlamini who represented the Director of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture.

The ToT was facilitated by staff from IITA, Crop Utilisation Section of the Ministry of Agriculture of Zambia, Malawi's Department of Agricultural Research Services, and Mozambique's Care International.

ISTRC confers award on IITA scientist...

The International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC), on the occasion of its 16th Triennial Symposium, has conferred on Emmanuel Njukwe, IITA-CIALCA Associate Scientist based in Burundi, the "Oral Paper Award" for the paper entitled "Cassava value chain development through partnership and stakeholders' platform in Cameroon".

The symposium was held on 23-28 September 2012 at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria.

The paper described and analyzed the whole cassava value chain as a successive link of actions played by concerned actors. It substantiated through empirical data what has been achieved so far and what needs to be done for the benefit of farmers. It was written by Njukwe, R Hanna, H Kirscht, A Shigeru, A Mbairanodji, and T Ngue.

Njukwe received a certificate of recognition and a plaque from the ISTRC on behalf of IITA.

...as body cites Asiedu for yam research contribution

At the same Triennial Symposium, the ISTRC conferred a Special Award to Dr Robert Asiedu, IITA R4D Director for West Africa, citing his "contribution to the development of yam research in Africa."

Dr Asiedu, on receiving the Special Award Certificate from Prof Andrew Westby, ISTRC President, called upon all the researchers and experts present to continue pushing the envelope of roots and tubers research to improve the plight of resource-poor African farmers. He added that partnership among such pool of expertise is crucial in attaining this lofty vision.