

## IITA's Youth Agripreneurs convene a 3-week intensive training for the youth in Borno State

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) have convened a 3-week intensive agricultural training for selected young people from Borno State. Areas of focus cover on-field sessions on fish farming and production, processing and marketing of maize, cowpea, soybean, millet, groundnut, and sorghum. The training is another in a series of youth empowerment campaigns in Nigeria that the IYA have organized since their inception in 2012. It also endorses the replication of the IITA youth in agribusiness model in Borno.

At the opening session, 3 September, Molayo Owoeye, leading the team of Agripreneur-facilitators from IITA Headquarters in Ibadan, stated "This training will harness the potential of Borno youth to create their own employment, identify the strengths of trainees, and proffer the knowledge and skills required to generate wealth successfully from agriculture." She added, "The training in particular is about developing entrepreneurial skills in agriculture, helping young people to identify and make use of their innate potentials, strengthen weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and eliminate threats in terms of doing business in agriculture."

Entrepreneurship in agriculture has become a critical pathway in many African countries for creating employment and simultaneously driving productivity and economic growth. National programs invest in young people with



IITA agripreneurs (in lemon T-shirt), Borno youths (in blue T-shirt) and agriculture experts from IITA, N2Africa and Borno ADP in a group photo during the training.

multidisciplinary backgrounds to catalyze economic development while at the same time reducing unemployment and creating income through agribusiness. To support this drive, IYA are motivated to share their experiences with other groups of young people and encourage them to embrace farming as a business and improve their quality of life while contributing meaningfully to sustainable development.

Dr Emmanuel Sangodele is the Nigeria Project Coordinator of the N2Africa program—a large-scale, science research project focused on putting nitrogen fixation to work for smallholder farmers growing legume crops in Africa. He praised IITA for its concerted efforts in ensuring that youth unemployment is erased in Africa, and said, "The youth initiative and training

is extremely insightful and comes at a time when young people in Borno need financial and occupational stability. N2Africa is strongly committed to collaborate with IYA in launching agribusiness-based solutions to eradicate youth unemployment in Borno."

Experts in agriculture acted as resource persons for the training. These included Dr Alpha Kamara, Head of the IITA Kano Station, Alhaji Sani Aliu Meedugu, Permanent Secretary/Project Manager, ADP Borno, and Prof Alphonse Emechebe, IITA Plant Pathologist and Independent Plant Management Specialist.

The training was organized in collaboration with N2Africa-to-Borno project under the auspices of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## IITA Forest Project featured in *Herbalgram*

The IITA Forest Reserve covers over 300 ha of the Ibadan campus, and is a center of biodiversity, representing a great variety of flora and fauna which are typical of the West African rainforests. Many of the trees and other plants have medicinal uses, and one of these was prominently featured in the August – October 2014 edition of *Herbalgram*, the Journal of the American Botanical Council.

Deni Bown, IITA Forest Project Manager, wrote an article for *Herbalgram* about *Caesalpinia bonduc*, Fabaceae. She described how the plant, with its prickly pods, is widely used for medicinal, leisure, and decorative purposes across West Africa.

"In southwestern Nigeria, the plant is known as *ayo* and the seeds are popular as beads and counters in games such as *ayo alopou*—which gets its name from this plant. Currently the most popular medicinal parts are the seeds which are ground and mixed with honey as a tonic and cure-all.

Compounds in the seeds of the plant have also been reported to be effective with antibacterial, antidiarrheal, and antioxidant properties whereas extracts from the roots and foliage have shown anti-inflammatory and anticancer effects."

"*Ayo* grows in the new garden for medicinal plants and also in the IITA Forest Reserve," Deni Bown wrote.



Prickly pods of the *ayo* plant, *Caesalpinia bonduc*, in IITA forest.

## IITA DG underlines strong linkages between agriculture, nutrition, and health in agricultural science and technology

Dr Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, drew attention to the consequences of insufficient attention on nutrition and food safety issues in the agricultural food value chains in Africa. He was speaking at a symposium of the International Centre for Advanced Research and Training (ICART) on the *Role of research to improve health and food security in sub-Saharan Africa*, held in Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, from 21–23 August.

Dr Sanginga referred to aflatoxin contamination in food and feed, especially in maize and groundnut.

The DG linked the undernourishment in Africa to physical and economic progress of individuals, communities, and nations. He further said that agricultural



DG Sanginga

science and technology had a big role to play: “Developing improved crop varieties and crop diversification, enhancing the nutritional profile of food crops through biofortification and agro-

processing technologies, increasing dietary diversity as well as giving adequate attention to safety issues in the food value chains is crucial to the continent’s wellbeing”.

He noted that IITA had made significant progress in this area, highlighting IITA’s achievements in developing and disseminating biocontrol tools against aflatoxins and promoting agro-processing technologies for soybean, cassava and maize in Africa. The DG shared with the participants the exciting strides that IITA was making in promoting youth involvement in agriculture through the IITA Agripreneurs initiative. In his conclusion, he invited ICART to partner with IITA.

“This is the time for IITA and ICART; the journey has just started,” he said.

## IITA promotes soybean as “miracle crop” at ag fair in Malawi

In Malawi, IITA is promoting soybean as the next “miracle crop”, emphasizing its value for the wellbeing of small-scale farmers by integrating the crop in sustainable agricultural development and commercialization.

At the 11th Malawi National Agricultural Fair, held 28–30 August in Blantyre, the IITA-Malawi exhibition showcased agricultural innovations, technologies, crops, and value-added products that the institute is promoting in the region. Among the most notable were the improved varieties of soybean and cassava, as well as recipes and the information materials on improved crop management and value addition.

The Fair was organized by the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) with the theme “Agriculture: the basis for achieving inclusive growth”. The event drew over 100 exhibitors that included researchers, input suppliers, farmers’ organizations, processors, buyers of agricultural produce, and service providers. The Fair was officially opened by the Malawi State President, Peter Mutharika.

The Hon. Allan Chiyembekeza, Minister of Agriculture, visited the IITA pavilion. He was briefed by Mathinda Sopo, IITA’s agribusiness specialist, on the various technologies on display as well as IITA’s work to support farmers with new technologies and improved seeds to help Malawi’s agriculture-based economy to grow.

“We are developing a sustainable soybean seed system that aims at enhancing the availability of high-quality seeds of improved varieties for farmers in Malawi.

We are also working to promote the integration of subsistence farmers into the market economy by linking them to end-user industries,” Mathinda told the Minister.

In his response, Minister Chiyembekeza indicated that he was well aware of IITA’s work and appreciated the research in the country particularly on cowpea and cassava, adding he was delighted that IITA was also focusing on promoting soybean in Malawi.

“I have known of IITA’s work for some time since I am familiar with CGIAR research centers working in Malawi and in the [southern Africa] region. However, this is the first time I am hearing that IITA is also working on soybean. This is indeed impressive, and I am excited about the

future prospects of your research on this crop. There are many farmers and other people who do not know productive ways of using soybean for both food security and income generation,” the Minister emphasized.

Daniel Manda, a student at the Malawi College of Accountancy, was among the hundreds of people who visited the IITA pavilion to see the various technologies and products on display. He indicated, “I would like one day to become a commercial farmer who would seek to know more about soybean and its benefits to export the crop to other countries. Coming to this Fair – to the IITA exhibition in particular – has made me appreciate soybean and better understand its various uses.”



Visitors at the pavilion during the exhibition.

## Sokoine university students gain practical research experience



*John Jengo, a food science and technology student, carrying out experiments at the food laboratory during his field work at IITA.*

IITA-Tanzania hosted seven students from Sokoine University in Tanzania at its Eastern Africa Hub for a 5-week internship to gain practical experience on agricultural research as part of the Institute's efforts to build the capacity of young researchers in the region.

One of the students, Machambire Suratha, BSc in Horticulture, said the experience had allowed her to put into practice the knowledge gained at the university. She therefore thanked IITA for the time to build their capacity through providing laboratory space and competent

supervision. She also thanked the Institute for the warm welcome and friendly atmosphere during their stay.

Jengo John, BSc Food Science & Technology, said one of the challenges in the country was a lack of adequate laboratory equipment and facilities and this meant some of the learning was more of theory than practice. Therefore, he said, the experience of working alongside professional scientists at IITA helped in filling this gap.

"We would like to remind donors on the necessity of building sufficient laboratories

at universities and other institutions of learning. This will encourage many students to engage in science which in turn will contribute to supporting the growth of the agricultural sector. It will lead to increased production and help to solve the problem of food insecurity, poverty and unemployment in Tanzania. It will also help us to raise our economy."

Dr Edward Kanju, a cassava breeder with IITA, encouraged the students to put to good use the skills and knowledge gained. The institute was committed to building the capacity of those in the country engaged in agricultural research.

"IITA is committed to finding solutions to hunger and poverty in the region. What better way is there to do this than in building the capacity of future scientists? We have state-of-the art facilities which are open to students and researchers from the country and the region. We are therefore encouraging more young researchers to come and gain practical experience. We are also encouraging them to apply for job opportunities and join us," Dr Kanju said. The students were drawn from departments of Horticulture, Biotechnology and Laboratory Science, and Food Science Technology. They pledged their commitment to disseminate the skills obtained from IITA to fellow-students and farmers.

## SARD-SC maize project introduces problem-solving agronomic options in Ghana

In view of the low productivity of maize in Ghana, the SARD-SC maize project in April, adopted the Participatory Research and Extension Approach (PREA) on innovation platforms to foster interaction among stakeholders and problem diagnosis and in accelerating the adoption of technologies.

This approach has enabled the project to successfully obtain gender-disaggregated field data from 745 farmers (423 males and 322 females) from 18 communities in Ghana across three innovation platforms constituting the project area. It employed a series of workshops, field work, and community analysis strategies in identifying farmers' production constraints, opportunities, and solutions towards improving maize productivity.

By this, the project has identified an array of possibilities capable of surmounting the constraints and counteracting the vulnerabilities being experienced by maize farmers in the production, processing, and marketing of harvests.

As a measure of remedying the situation, the SARD-SC maize project has developed community action plans to cater to policy

advocacy, technology validation, and capacity building of affected farmers. Other agronomic interventions deployed to validate and disseminate improved options include the following:

- Strategic mother trials to validate improved agronomic options that address declining soil fertility, erratic rainfall, and Striga infestation in the project area;

- Demonstration of mini-kit seed drops to disseminate multiple stress tolerant/resistant maize varieties for quick adoption;
- On-farm demonstration of improved maize varieties and complementary agronomic practices; and
- Community seed production schemes to amplify the availability of improved seeds at the community level.



*Participants during the community analysis session in Ashanti, Ghana.*

## Welcome!

**Tariro Phanuel Mutamuko**, a Zimbabwean, has joined IITA-Ibadan team as the Head of Internal Audit. Tariro is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered



Certified Accountants (FCCA) and holder of a Bachelor of Accounting from the University of Zimbabwe. He has over 11 years experience in governance, risk and control management in both commercial conglomerates and development organizations across South and East African Regions and partly North America.

His office is in Building 500, Room 215/224. His email address is [t.mutamuko@cgiar.org](mailto:t.mutamuko@cgiar.org) and his mobile number +234 8039784443.

**Mastewal Yami Degefa** has joined IITA-Uganda as a Policy Scientist. She holds an MSc in Tropical Land Resources Management from Mekelle University, Ethiopia, 2006, and a BSc



in Biology from Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia, 2003.

Mastewal was awarded PhD in agricultural sciences from the Centre for Development Research, BOKU University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria in 2010.

Her official e-mail address is [m.yami@cgiar.org](mailto:m.yami@cgiar.org) and telephone number +256757787855.

**Edidah Lubega Ampaire**, from Uganda, currently serves IITA as a Project Coordinator for the CCAFS Policy Action for Climate Change Adaptation (PACCA) Project at the IITA-Uganda Station. She also



supports other projects in integrating gender and participatory research methods.

Edidah obtained her PhD in Rural Development from University of Pretoria, South Africa. She also has an MSc Agricultural Extension Education and a BSc Agriculture from Makerere University, Uganda. Previously she worked for CIAT- Africa as a capacity building specialist, promoting gender responsive research approaches. Her efforts to reach women were rewarded with an education grant towards her PhD studies from Margaret McNamara Memorial

Fund in 2009 and in 2013 she won the African Women in Agriculture Research and Development (AWARD) Fellowship for career development.

Her duty station address is IITA – Uganda, East Naguru Road, Kampala, Tel: +256 (0) 414 285060/4, e-mail address: [IITA-Uganda@cgiar.org](mailto:IITA-Uganda@cgiar.org). She can also be contacted at [e.ampaire@cgiar.org](mailto:e.ampaire@cgiar.org)

**Marimagne Tchamba**, a Togolais national, has joined the Genetic Resources Center (GRC) at IITA-Ibadan as a Database Manager. He has over 20



years working experience in database programming and administration, and software architecture. He obtained his MSc in Telecommunication and Computer Networks in 2007 and a Computer Engineering degree in 2002. He was a Data Manager of the Genetic Resources Unit/International Network for Genetic Evaluation of Rice in Africa (INGER-Africa), AfricaRice, Cotonou, Benin Republic (2002 to 2014).

He is married; his office is in GRC, extension 2955. His email address is [m.tchamba@cgiar.org](mailto:m.tchamba@cgiar.org).

## Passage



Prof Idachaba

Professor Emeritus F.S. Idachaba (OFR) died in the USA on 15 August, after a brief illness; he was 71 years old. He is survived by his wife and six children.

From August 2000 to 2002, he was a Senior Scientist at IITA, seconded from the International Services for National Agriculture Research (ISNAR).

Prof Idachaba partnered with various IITA scientists in studies that led to the reform of agricultural policies. One was in IITA's research on *Agriculture in Nigeria: Identifying opportunities for increased commercialization and investment*.

In the area of food and agricultural policy, he identified the main causes of perennial policy failures as the tendency to treat policies as discrete events rather than as processes. He also reevaluated past policies in ADPs and River Basin Development Authorities.

Prof Idachaba had lead roles in the design and implementation of policies and institutional varieties. His proposal led to the establishment of two Universities of Agriculture in Makurdi and Abeokuta in 1988.

He was the Chairman, Governing Board of the Nigerian Merit Award.