

Seminar on corruption-free leadership held in IITA

More than 100 young people attached to IITA under Nigeria's *National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)* scheme, met at the IITA conference center in Ibadan on 28 January 2015 to discuss concepts of corruption and how it affects leadership in agriculture.

Kwame Akuffo-Akoto, IITA Deputy Director General, Corporate Services welcomed participants on behalf of the Director General Dr Nteranya Sanginga. In his [keynote address](#), he said IITA is applying zero tolerance concerning corruption. "Anticorruption has to be one of the pillars of an inclusive growth strategy in the agricultural sector if the poor are to benefit. We all know that the harmful effects of corruption are especially severe on the poor mainly because they mostly rely on the provision of public services, and are least capable of paying the extra costs that are associated with bribery, fraud, and misappropriation."

IITA applies a [whistle blowing policy](#) to encourage people to report suspected cases without fear of victimization or repercussions.

Corruption is undeniably rampant and a principal factor limiting development

in Nigeria. In reflection of the bane due to corruption in the leadership systems, Transparency International in its [Corruption Perceptions Index for 2014](#), ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world.

Mr Bolu Onasanya, CEO and Founder of Bonas Consulting, was the guest speaker. He said bad leadership was the primary impediment to Nigeria's attaining its desirable standard in governance.

Mr Onasanya also stated that bad governance, [leadership, and corruption](#) were responsible for the lack of necessary infrastructure in the country, and its current

stagnation. He urged the youths to learn to do little things in extraordinary ways as they had great roles to play to phase off corruption.

"Your attitude towards work, events, and the people around you tells a lot about what you will eventually do if given power because power ignites what you have already formed inside of you," he said.

A presentation by Rasheed Dauda, Senior Internal Auditor; IITA Internal Audit Unit, titled "[Occupational fraud awareness](#)" buttressed IITA's efforts in ensuring everything possible to promote a fraud-free working space.



IITA corps members during the seminar.

Humidtropics works with farmers to choose best-bet farm practices

An [IITA](#) project is working jointly with farmers and members of Innovation Platforms at selected field sites in Nigeria in choosing best-bet farm practices. Farmers in four locations in two States have been participating in field evaluation trials to test and choose the best combination of cassava growth types, legumes, and management practices in their farms.

The Cassava/Legume Intensification Project, funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)), is being undertaken in Nigeria, Kenya, and DR Congo, and works on three



Women farmers discussing options in the field during the farmers' field day and demonstration held at Akinyele, Oyo State.

components: seed systems, social science/agribusiness, and natural resources management (NRM). The project is mapped under the CGIAR Research Program on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics ([Humidtropics](#)).

Humidtropics, and through it, the project, uses participatory rural appraisal, a research methodology that employs participatory tools such as focus group discussions or village-level discussions to understand rural problems. The process involves the full collaboration of stakeholders, for instance, farmers, rural people, and policymakers, in all stages of the “research” process—from defining the problem to conducting the research and thus identifying solutions to farm problems in their specific context.

A series of demonstrations and Farmers’ field days were organized recently to get feedback from farmers on the options that suit their situation, and determine their reasons for favoring or rejecting these options. Dr Christine Kreye, IFAD cassava intensification-NRM project

leader for Nigeria, said “The outcome of these field days will be used to prepare options for farmers on their own farms in the next wet season, and ‘recruit’ interested farmers for these on-farm trials.”

All the farms are cocoa-based systems that also grow cassava for food security and additional cash income. The demonstrations and trials were undertaken in Akindele, Ido Local Government Area (LGA) and Lagbedu, Ogo-Oluwa LGA in Oyo State, and Osunwoyin, Ayedire LGA and Iwara, Atakunmosa East LGA in Ogun State.

The project provides planting materials (except for the local variety), inputs, and know-how; the farming community provides land, labor, and information. The project also manages the demonstration trial jointly with the farmers. After planting, at mid-term, and at harvest, researchers ask the farmers to evaluate all practices.

The “treatments” in the demonstration plots featured farmers’ current or local practice, and several best-bet options

(e.g., cassava monocrop, cassava–legume intercrop to demonstrate high yield options), and several treatments where factors such as planting density, fertilizer application, and others are changed or tested.

Specifically, the demonstration farms used the following management practices: sole cassava using the varieties TME 419 (erect plant type/growth habit and 30572 (branching plant type) at 1 m × 1 m spacing and different options involving fertilizer (NPK), cassava–legume intercropping, spacing with a legume intercrop, and legume type (cowpea, groundnut, soybean).

For the farmers’ trials, farmers will grow cassava in 2 to 4 management packages that were developed jointly during the demonstration trial phase. Farmers manage these trials by themselves. They also agree to provide information through a field book provided for the purpose, facilitate sample collection, and allow field visits from other farmers. The project provides planting material, inputs, and advice.

IFAD/IITA HQCF value chain project team meet with partners to plan 2015 activities

From 20 to 21 January 2015, the IFAD/IITA High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) value chain project hosted its partners and Farm Managers from the different project sites in Nigeria including the National Roots Crops Research Institute, (NRCRI) Umudike, at IITA headquarters in Ibadan.

The meeting was organized to deliberate on the activities of the previous year and to plan for 2015. Welcoming the project partners, Bamidele Alenkhe said that he believed the outcome of the two-day exercise would prepare all partners better for the activities in 2015.

The meeting also provided a platform for partners to interact and brainstorm on the modalities to successfully achieve the aims and objectives of the project in 2015.

Dr Richardson Okechukwu, who leads the production activities of the project, emphasized its aims and objectives which included reducing poverty, the

cost of producing cassava, and the rate of unemployment among the youth. The IITA Youth [Agripreneurs](#) also showcased their activities at Osogun Cassava Farm, Oyo State. The previous year’s budget was reviewed; production constraints were discussed and measures to solve them were agreed.

At the end of the two-day progress meeting, Pastor Femi Salami, Director, Oamsal Nigeria Ltd., on behalf of the other partners, thanked the IFAD/IITA project for giving them the opportunity to be involved and promised their unflinching support in 2015.



HQCF value chain partners.

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

USAID cowpea and groundnut project holds stakeholder consultation

Project implementers and stakeholders involved in the USAID cowpea/groundnut scaling project in Nigeria met in Kano last week. The 19-22 January consultation is part of a series of in-country meetings being held to establish a common understanding of the project.

The project, *Taking Cowpeas and Groundnuts to Scale in West Africa*, covers four target countries—Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal. It is being initiated by [IITA](#) (cowpea) and [ICRISAT](#) (groundnut), in collaboration with national partners, value chain players, and the private sector, with funding from the US Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)).

In the Kano meeting, participants discussed project goals, milestones, and activities; agreed on roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, and drafted workplans and implementation plans for the first year of the project.

The meeting was attended by more than 100 participants involved in cowpea and groundnut research and value chain development. They sat down for three days in breakout groups to tackle specific issues on seed systems, improved technologies (varieties, agronomic practices, postharvest management, and utilization), markets, knowledge dissemination and extension for both groundnut and cowpea, and to identify strategies that would address these issues.

The main objective of the cowpea component of the project that IITA is leading is to increase sustainable demand-driven production and productivity in smallholder farmers' fields



Project implementers and partners during a breakout session, USAID cowpea outscaling project meeting, Kano, Nigeria.

in the four target countries using best-bet production technologies in Feed the Future (FtF) communities through a strong partnership among USAID, IITA, and other key national partners. FtF is the US Government's global hunger and food security initiative. It is exploring the expansion of partnerships with the CGIAR and related partners around a targeted set of technologies for the promotion and large-scale dissemination of improved cowpea technologies.

The project focuses on scaling out technologies that enhance the production and productivity of cowpea in the four West African countries where the crop is very important for food and nutrition security.

Project outputs include the setting up of Innovation Platforms, creating awareness about improved technologies, establishing solid partnerships, and providing breeder and foundation seeds to support the seed

system. These are expected to result in increased demand for improved cowpea seeds, crop management, and cowpea storage technologies. In turn this will lead to adoption and greater production of cowpea in project areas; increased income for farmers, seed companies, agro-dealers, cowpea food vendors; improved nutrition of children and the most vulnerable groups in the community and better availability of cowpea in the market.

Dr Alfred Dixon, Head of IITA's Partnership Coordination Office, in his closing remarks, thanked the participants. "Your expert advice and perspectives during the discussions will help the project in developing the final strategic document.

This is one of those projects that I am sure will make a difference because it is paying attention to sustainability and on ensuring the deliverables and outcomes through engagement with key national partners."

Upcoming Event

IITA Youth Agripreneurs prepare for Entrepreneurial and Business Training workshop

A 3-day entrepreneurial and business training workshop that is poised to make the IITA Youth [Agripreneurs](#) icons in the world of agricultural entrepreneurship will commence on 3 February. The beneficiaries of the proposed training have been drawn from five countries across sub-Saharan

Africa: Kenya, Zambia, DR Congo, Tanzania, and Uganda. Consultants from EKIMIKS Nigeria Ltd will train the youths on *Leadership and Self-Management in Entrepreneurship, Essential Business skills, Business Accounting, Effective Sales and Marketing Strategies, Creating a Bankable Business, Case studies*

with agricultural bias of Agronomy, and Animal Husbandry. The topics are all aimed to create and enhance the productivity and profitability of the Agripreneurs' enterprise, transform participants' attitudes, and strengthen their skills.