



IITA researchers gather for R4D Week 2012, chart roadmap for institute

More than 100 IITA scientists working across Africa converged at the IITA-Headquarters in Ibadan for R4D Week 2012 – the institute’s annual workplanning event – to examine the past year’s activities and accomplishments and draw up plans for work in 2013 and beyond. This year’s event centered around the Institute’s refreshed 10-year strategy and the CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). Simultaneously, the IITA Board of Trustees also held their second annual meeting at IITA-Ibadan.

At the opening of this year’s R4D Week, Director General Dr Nteranya Sanginga said, “IITA must remain the leading research partner in Africa” in reference to the institute’s refreshed long-term strategy.

“We all need to work really hard if we are to achieve our goals of increasing food security and availability, enhancing the profitability of foods, feeds, and other agricultural products, and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources as enshrined in our strategy,” the DG added.

He emphasized that science must evolve if it is to keep up with the myriad of challenges confronting agriculture and Africa’s development in general.



DG Sanginga addressing IITA staff during the opening of R4D Week 2012 on 26 November at the Conference Center in IITA-Ibadan.

“We must avoid research dogma... we must do research in the context of these changing patterns,” he said, highlighting that research must not just be for research sake but it must address the constraints to development.

Among the big challenges facing Africa as mentioned by the DG include spiraling unemployment, poverty, water scarcity, declining soil fertility, and the negative effects of climate change.

The week-long meeting, which officially ends today, provided staff

an opportunity to share progress of work on the different CRPs, discuss future plans for research, look at strategic collaboration and partnerships, review hub operations and challenges, and celebrate successes. Aside from the science-related sessions, other activities held during the week included a learning session on communicating science effectively through the media, a special presentation by the BoT on the “Red Ferrari of Science”, a town hall meeting between the BoT and IITA staff, and several social events.

DG Sanginga welcomes new staff, lauds promoted personnel

IITA Management led by DG Nteranya Sanginga on Tuesday met with and welcomed newly recruited staff to the IITA family and congratulated recently promoted ones.

During the meeting, the DG urged staff to think first about IITA, and IITA would take care of them.

He reiterated the importance of human resources as a critical factor to the new administration and the success of IITA, stressing that the Institute will

continue to train staff as needed.

“I will not hesitate to promote and train people,” he said.

The DG also emphasized the need for confidence and competence. He reiterated that IITA would continue to reward hard work but that lazy staff will not be tolerated. He also urged supervisors to always think about their subordinates.

“You should think about mentoring them... training them and pointing them in the right direction. By so doing, we

will build a better IITA together,” he explained.

Dr Kenton Dashiell, IITA DDG (P&CD) urged the new and upgraded staff to see themselves as part of a big family working together to realize a common mission and vision.

Dr Ylva Hillbur, IITA DDG (Research), encouraged the staff to uphold hard work—a virtue, she said, she immediately noticed among IITA staff when she came on board 119 days ago.

Burkina Faso PM lauds IITA/AVEC-BF as project booth draws large crowd at international fair



Japan Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Tsutomu Sugiura, and Burkina Faso Prime Minister, Luc-Adoplhe Tiao, being briefed by Dr Haruki Ishikawa about the AVEC-BF project at SIAO 2012.

The Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Luc-Adoplhe Tiao, has cited the contributions of the AVEC-BF project being implemented by IITA in the country, particularly highlighting its interventions to boost the production and productivity of cowpea smallholder growers. He also mentioned that his government expects the continuation of the project and expressed his full support of the initiative.

The PM was speaking at the Le Salon International de L Artisanat de Ouagadougou or SIAO 2012—the International Art and Craft Fair held biennially in Ouagadougou — where he was guest of honor. He was accompanied by Japan's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, His Excellency Tsutomu Sugiura. Both thanked IITA and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for implementing the project in Burkina Faso.

AVEC-BF also set up a booth at the fair where it exhibited its various

products and technologies. Dr Haruki Ishikawa, Project Coordinator and IITA scientist, with his staff demonstrated "Anko" (bean-jam), a traditional Japanese sweet made from cowpea which the project plans to use to introduce new varieties of the legume in the project sites. About 1800 participants tried the cowpea dessert out of some 5000 who visited the booth to learn about the project and IITA.

Ms Aoi Ishikawa, Japanese food processing specialist, was initially worried about the acceptability of cowpea-based sweets among the locals. "But at the exhibit," she said, "many of the participants asked for the recipe of 'Anko' after tasting it. This shows the potential acceptability of this cowpea-cooking technique in Burkina Faso and in West Africa."

"AVEC-BF not only introduces new cowpea varieties, but also new and profitable ways to use the crop quickly and make it available continuously," added Ishikawa. At the project booth in SIAO, participants eagerly asked questions about AVEC-BF. "We tried to match their enthusiasm. After all, this project is for them," Ishikawa emphasized.

This year, Japan was specially invited to SIAO by the government of Burkina Faso. The Japanese Embassy then requested the AVEC-BF project to set up an exhibit in the international fair, which ran from 26 October to 4 November. This year's theme was "African Craft Industry and Economic Emergence".

N2Africa mulls inclusion of Tanzania

The N2Africa Project is looking at the possibly expanding its coverage to include Tanzania during a meeting held with potential partners in the country to explore opportunities and identify possible activities. If this pushes through, Tanzania will be joining Uganda and Ethiopia in N2Africa's phase 2 starting in 2014.

The project identified soybean, common beans, and groundnut as priority crops which will be used to boost the nutrition and income of smallholder farmers and enhance soil fertility. The project will also provide agronomic support to cowpea and pigeon pea.

The project sites identified are the Southern Highlands for all three legumes, and the Northern Highlands for climbing beans.

Dr Hussein Mansoor, Deputy Director of Research & Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFSC), said, "unlike most projects, you came with an open book and we have all designed this project together. I thank you all for your inputs and we look forward to working together on this important initiative in the coming years."

Proposed activities for 2013 include seed bulking and conducting baseline study on the roles of legumes in farming systems, farmers' agronomic management practices, soil fertility challenges, and pests and diseases. It will also establish partnerships with major NGOs and initiate participatory demonstration trials. These

Continued next page...

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving the workplace at the 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.

Got a story to share for the Bulletin? Email Jeffrey T. Oliver (o.jeffrey@cgiar.org), Godwin Atser (g.atser@cgiar.org), or Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org).

'Malnutrition of affluence' prevalent among Africa's poor - IITA Study

The health of poor and vulnerable people in Africa is being compromised by malnutrition disorders including not only stunting and wasting but also obesity, a new study has found.

Scientists describe this situation as the "double burden of malnutrition—diseases of 'affluence'."

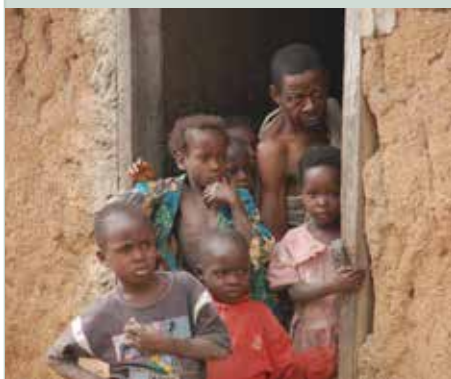
In the past, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, Type II diabetes, and cancers were more common only among the rich but this is changing, as more people below the poverty line are being afflicted by these same disorders.

Dr Bussie Maziya-Dixon, who led the study in Akwa Ibom state of Nigeria, found that these disorders are increasing among poorer people, especially in urban areas, as a result of simpler diets.

The study which assessed the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age also found that stunting was prevalent in 32% of children; there were more stunted boys (36.6%) compared to girls (27.5%); 15.3% of children under 5 suffered from wasting; and wasting was more prevalent in boys (11.9%) compared to girls (9.6%)

Dr Maziya-Dixon described the results as 'double jeopardy' for the poor, explaining that on the one hand children are undernourished and on the other women are becoming obese.

She concluded that the results suggest a rethinking of consumption patterns among the poor and vulnerable especially the intake of carbohydrates.



A poor family in rural Nigeria.



N2Africa partners' meeting participants in Tanzania.

Nelson Mandela Institute of Science & Technology, USAID – Feed the Future, McKnight Foundation, CRS, and Minjingu Fertiliser Company, a private enterprise.

Continued from previous page...

are in preparation for N2Africa's phase 2.

The workshop was organized by Wageningen University and IITA. Participants came from MAFSC, Uyole and Naliendele Agricultural Research Institutes,

Stakeholders deliberate on ways to accelerate soybean R&D in Africa

Researchers and other actors in the soybean value chain held a two-day meeting in IITA-Ibadan to brainstorm on how to improve the livelihoods of soybean farmers in Africa.

The meeting, which was coordinated by the Partnerships and Capacity Development Directorate, was graced by Drs Bridget Owen and Karl Weingartner of the National Soybean Research Laboratory, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Drs Owen and Weingartner jointly gave a seminar on "International activities of the National Soybean Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois."

Their presentation highlighted past and present efforts in soybean production, processing, utilization research, and soybean as a nutritional crop.

The two experts underscored the need for increased awareness on



The visiting soybean experts with IITA management and staff at the soon-to-be-completed aflasafe manufacturing plant in IITA-Ibadan.

the use of soybean for home consumption to create demand and market for the 'golden bean' which in turn will drive production.

Drs Kenton Dashiell and Robert Asiedu welcomed the renewed interest in soybean.

"We are excited and this is an excellent opportunity for us to conduct more research for development activities for soybean in Africa," they said.

Dr Dashiell, who chaired the meeting, thanked the attendees for their zeal in soybean, stressing its many benefits to farmers in terms of income generation and improved nutrition.

The participants agreed to look at several areas under soybean value chain including processing the crop into a product that simulates meat and milk, using inoculums in cultivation, conducting studies on yield gap, and capacity building.

Stories of change: MIRACLE and Jacob's trials

In many places in Africa, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) are still often stigmatized and marginalized by society. While the disease may make HIV-positive individuals less productive, the social stigma associated with the disease has more far-reaching effect. PLWHAs usually withdraw from society and interact less. However, initiatives like MIRACLE can help reverse the situation by providing an enabling environment where PLWHAs can become highly productive and even serve as community models.

Take the case of Jacob, a 42-year old small-scale farmer of Mibenge agricultural camp in Mansa District, Luapula Province in Zambia, and a living testimony of rising above the stigma. In his younger days, Jacob used to drink and smoke heavily. Then in 2005, he suddenly became seriously ill. He was rushed to a hospital where doctors diagnosed him to be HIV-positive. Noticing his confusion and shock, the doctors directed him to the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV&AIDS (NZP+) for counselling.

Initially he kept his condition from his wife, 32-year old Generous. He took antiretroviral therapy (ART) secretly for one year. However, as he became weaker and unable to do any farm work, he opened up to his wife. With Jacob's encouragement, Generous went for a test, turning out to be HIV positive as well. Saddened but still firm, the couple decided to have their children tested. They were all negative.

From 2006 onwards, Jacob mainly stayed at home, feeling weak and tired. "I seldom talked to people because my entire family was shunned and discriminated", he said.

"At that time, my wife was physically stronger than me so she was the one who went to look for food. We managed to eat at least once a day."

Then in 2011, the IITA-led MIRACLE project came to Mansa District. Initially, Jacob did not attend any of the project's sensitization meetings in his community, largely because he was still ashamed of his condition.

Knowing Jacob's situation and that of his family, Mr. Gift Mutale, the agricultural camp extension officer of Mibenge, approached him and discussed the MIRACLE project.

"The only thing I understood at that time was that MIRACLE would want to help farming households affected by HIV/AIDS", Jacob said. Mr. Mutale was able to encourage Jacob to participate in MIRACLE, albeit reluctantly.

Jacob agreed to host one of the four baby trials for soybean varieties. As a host, he participated in a number of innovation platform workshops, meetings, and training sessions on running and managing soybean baby trials. This gave him the opportunity to extensively interact with fellow farmers and extension workers. During project field days, hundreds of farmers, community leaders, government extension workers, NGO staff, private sector, and even some District Officials came to visit Jacob's trials were invited to visit and learn from the trials, including his.

"I couldn't believe it. I was like a teacher telling people how to grow soybean," he enthused.

From that point, Jacob's behaviour and outlook started to change. He slowly regained self-confidence. He started to mingle more with people – first with his immediate neighbours and moving outwards to the community. In the first quarter of 2012, he was invited to participate in a number of training of trainers (ToT) on nutrition education and on fruit and vegetable processing in Lusaka. Eventually, Jacob became part of the team that conducted the same

training in his community.

"I felt very proud that MIRACLE picked me to be trained, and now I am training my fellow farmers, even those who used to despise me and my family. It felt wonderful!" he exclaimed.

"If the MIRACLE project hadn't come to my community I honestly do not know what could have happened to me and my family," he stressed. "These days, I feel stronger. I go to work in the farm almost every day. I can now do many things that I was not able to do 5 to 6 years ago. I am now socializing with the entire community. Many have come to me to ask how I was able to cope. They said I looked happier than ever."

"Those who used to denounce me are the same people who have come to ask for advice. I and my wife have become sort of counsellors and a source of motivation to other people in this community," he narrated.

Two months ago, Jacob was elected Chairman of his community's Village Committee on HIV and AIDS, a committee set up to handle programs and activities related to the disease. "Today, people here are no longer afraid to openly admit that they are HIV-positive", he said. "Just recently, the District Agriculture Office of Mansa also came to ask me for soybean seeds for the District Agricultural Show, which I proudly shared because that was a proof that I am now able to produce," he raved.

Jacob recounted that when the project was first introduced in his community people had second thoughts of joining because, he said, joining was tantamount to admitting that you are HIV-positive.

"Today, people like me are no longer ashamed of who and what we are. I am no longer a victim," he concluded.