



# IITA

## Youth Agripreneurs

*Agriculture is the future*

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## Nigeria targets youths in new initiatives



President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (M), Vice-President Namadi Sambo (2nd from left), and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nigeria, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina (2nd from right) with the representatives of IITA Youth Agripreneurs: Bekee Barituka (far left) and Ohanwusi Evelyn (far right) at the exhibition booth during the YEAP launch

The Nigerian government has launched two initiatives to encourage young people to become more involved in agriculture, and stem the rising unemployment in the country.

The two initiatives which were inaugurated by President Goodluck Jonathan in December are Youth Employment in Agriculture Program (YEAP) and the Fund for Agricultural Finance in Nigeria (FAFIN).

The YEAP which is similar to the IITA Youth Agripreneur (IYA) model is designed to reposition the agricultural sector by involving, developing and raising 760,000 youths in agribusiness within the next five years.

FAFIN on the other hand is a financing vehicle targeting Nigeria's small and medium enterprises in agriculture.

The YEAP program which is part of Nigeria's Agricultural Transformation Agenda

(ATA) will involve at least 20,000 youths from each state of the federation.

President Jonathan, stated that the program encompasses all the economic activities along the agricultural value chain, including commercial farming, processing, value addition, logistics, transport and marketing of value added agricultural produce.

Describing the agriculture sector as vital for the country's growth, President Jonathan said the involvement of youths in the sector would rapidly boost the sector. He further stated that, with the program, young people would not only take agriculture as a way of life, but also as a viable source of generating income.

He said youths under the program would be known as *Nagropreneurs*, and added that he was confident that the agricultural sector would produce several young millionaires and billionaires

in the country.

President Jonathan noted that the ageing population of farmers posed a significant threat to the agricultural sector, and said unless young farmers were developed, the nation's food security would be compromised.

In order to change the negative perception about agriculture, the President emphasized the need to adopt mechanization in the sector.

According to him, his government plans to successfully attract young people into agriculture by replacing the hoes and cutlasses with modern farm machineries.

While shedding light on YEAP, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, said the launch of the program was the birth of an idea that was conceived three years ago.

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Ohanwusi Evelyn, while speaking at the YEAP launch

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He said with the current fall in the price of crude oil, agriculture would now serve as a better option as the country's

source of revenue.

Presenting the success story in the sector, Dr Adesina revealed that food importation had reduced drastically.

His words, "food importation has reduced due to the effort being invested into local food production. In the last three years, we have produced over 21 million metric tons of food and I think that is quite encouraging. The country no longer needs to import food," he said.

Ohanwusi Evelyn, who represented the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) commended the initiatives saying that through agriculture, many youths would be employers of labour thereby reducing the scourge of unemployment in the society.

Another agripreneur, Mosunmola Umoru encouraged other youths to become actively engaged in agriculture.

A medical doctor turned farmer, Temitope Aroge who was at the event, also said that from experience, "farming is too interesting to be abandoned."

Side events at the launch included exhibitions of agricultural produce ranging from snailery, horticulture, fishery, rice processing, palm fruits, bee keeping, leather works, and cassava processing among others.

## IITA Youth Agripreneurs successfully harvest their first crop of catfish



Cross-section of Agripreneurs: (Left-Right: Nweke-Okon Murphy, Idowu Ayodeji, and Adesanya Omotomiwa) during harvesting

The Fishery and Livestock Unit of IYA has commenced sales of its catfish. The sales, in the first week of December at the FAO yard, recorded a large turnout of customers, both from the IITA community and some wholesalers outside of the campus.

After identifying the economic benefits, IYA decided to diversify into fishery to advance employment among the unemployed youth and also to scale up their sources of income.

The Fishery and Livestock Unit which is

one of the newly created units in the organization stocked four ponds with over 20,000 fingerlings to begin its activities in June after 2 weeks training at Durante Fish Industry, one of the biggest fish industries in Africa.

From fingerlings to juveniles, on-growing, and table sizes, the team members successfully utilized the skills acquired from their trainers in catfish breeding, and harvested over 6 tonnes from one of the ponds stocked earlier in June.

During sales, the first of its kind at IITA, some of the customers from the community who had placed advance orders stood anxiously in the FAO yard to catch a glimpse of the fish.

Impressed by the actions of the group, one of the customers, Alhaji Sanni Mohammed, stated that IYA was set to compete healthily with other fish farms in the State. He said, "Seeing this as their first harvest and taking in what they have managed so far, I can say they will grow even more than some existing fish dealers."

Another customer, Akinsiku Suleiman, who was astounded by the sizes of the fish, said doing business with IYA would enhance his level of profitability. He stated, "I am happy doing business with the IYA fish industry because the fish are very big and this is where success lies in catfish production. It will be of great advantage for us, the buyers, as it will bring in our own profit."

Olaniyi Ajibola is the head of the Fishery and Livestock Unit. She expressed profound gratitude to IITA for believing in the group and stated that she was optimistic that the Unit would grow beyond imagination. "I really appreciate IITA for believing in us and sending us to the training. Here we are today doing our first cropping after 6 months. I strongly believe if we can crop more than 6 tonnes from just one of our ponds, then I'm short

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The fully-loaded bus of one of the wholesalers, Alhaji Sanni Mohammed

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of words concerning where we are heading in the Fishery Unit of IYA."

Another member of the Unit, Adesanya Omotomiwa, also expressed delight at the successful production of the fish. He believed IYA would go places by venturing into fish farming. He said, "I think the fish farming area is a great opportunity to explore in Nigeria because there is a ready-made market and with the rate of expansion of the IYA Fishery Unit, I'm sure the sky is our limit."

Although the group had difficulty in controlling the large crowd of people trying to patronize them, they were able to meet the demands of their consumers.

By 2015, IYA's Fishery and Livestock Unit is set to also commence the sales of fingerlings and juveniles from the newly constructed first-class hatchery facility that had been put in place by the group for the smooth running of the Unit.

The hatchery would enable the Unit to produce fingerlings and juveniles in a more conducive environment.

IYA also plans to extend their activities by venturing into Tilapia fish production next year.

## IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs (IKYA) partner with HarvestPlus

IKYA is partnering with Harvestplus in the production and multiplication of biofortified beans to counter protein deficiency in the nutrition of children in DR Congo.

This partnership is also expected to bridge the gap in demand by increasing supplies of beans in the local market.

Working on the variety-- *HM 21/7*, the propagation of this variety will generate improved seeds that will be used in the following season to expand the hectareage of land to be planted.

This expansion will enable IKYA to compete in the local market in DRC.



Also, IKYA has ventured into the production of maize, soybean, and vegetables.

The production of these crops will enable IKYA to achieve its vision of providing nutritious foods as well as expanding its source of income.

With six different kinds of vegetables: tomatoes, cucumbers, amaranthus, onions, carrots, and cabbages, IKYA is set to match the growth in demand for vegetables and compete healthily with local farmers in DRC and beyond.

## Agripreneurs train staff of Food for the Hungry on the value addition of cassava- and soybean-based products

The IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs have organized training for some of the staff of the Food for the Hungry organization.

The staff, numbering about 12, gathered from Katanga and South Kivu provinces of DR Congo to acquire skills on the value addition of cassava and soybean.

At the Training of Trainers (TOT), the trainees were expected to use the acquired skills effectively and spread the benefits of value addition to cassava and soybean to their beneficiaries.

During the 5 days of intensive training, the trainees were exposed to products made from High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF), such as *chinchin*, cakes, and bread.



IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs and Food for Hungry staff at the training

Amazed by the efficiency of the IKYA, Ir Destine Kitunda, one of the trainees who is the site representative of the Food for the Hungry organization in Nyagezi, expressed his satisfaction over the activities of the group and urged them to become more visible.

His words: "I have never imagined that such a group of young people existed. This is definitely strong substance that will help us evaluate our local products. I feel, however, sorry that people in DRC don't even know about your existence. I urge you to increase your visibility

because I am convinced you will receive support from everywhere."

Food for the Hungry is an international relief and development organization which has the mission of fighting all forms of human impoverishment.

# IITA Youth Agripreneurs celebrate with FARA at *Jo'burg* as they showcase youth's involvement in agriculture



*IITA Youth Agripreneurs, IITA Scientists and other participants at the session discussing youth engagement in agriculture*

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and Dr Nteranya Sanginga, the Director General, received commendations at the 15th anniversary of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) held at Johannesburg, South Africa, 26-29 November 2014.

At the event, there were various sessions and panel discussions where representatives of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs: Odusanya Oludare and Owoeye Molayo, championed the cause of youth engagement in agriculture.

The panel discussion began with presentations from the two agripreneurs who showcased some of the activities and the prospects of involving the youth in agriculture to reduce the level and effects of youth unemployment in Africa.

In their presentations, the IYA representatives stated that the importance of youth involvement could not be over-emphasized as this would reshape the agricultural sector and give it a new face.

While commenting on the activities of the group, Dr Fina Opio, the Executive Director of Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), stated that changing the mindset of young people would go a long way in improving the sector.

She stated, "If we can change their mindset and let the youth know they can run agriculture as a business, I think they will make headway. I have visited IITA and seen what their young people are doing. I even went to Ondo State in Nigeria with them and wish to congratulate them. I love their energy." She called for support to sustain the zeal and enthusiasm displayed by the youth.

Giving kudos to IITA, Dr Simon Mwaze of the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) stated that young people needed to be mentored so as to keep them on the path which they had chosen. He said, "They know what to do; they just need to be mentored."



*Owoeye Molayo giving a presentation at the discussion session*



*L-R: Chief Afred Dixon, Fina Aquiline, Dr Chrysantus Akem, Owoeye Molayo, Noel Mulinganya, Odusanya Oludare and Dr Gbassey Tarawali*



*HE Tumusiime Rhoda-Peace, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union (2nd from left); Dr Akin Adesina, Minister, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nigeria (3rd from left); and Dr Jimmy Smith, Director General of ILRI (4th from left), during a panel discussion at FARA@15.*

# Agripreneurs of the year

Some young people view agriculture as a less lucrative sector where they can barely make ends meet. Some of them still consider it a backbreaking labor where there is small room for career advancement.

However, the experience of the IYA model shows that with necessary institutional support, young people now see agriculture beyond the subsistence level and have diversified into value added aspects including agribusiness, logistics, market information, and technology. Established in 2012 at IITA headquarters in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, the IYA team can presently boast of spreading its activities to DR Congo and Tanzania. The group will be going to Kenya as well as Zambia this year. They have recorded series of harvests and sales.

Their success story is based on the hard work and commitment of its members. As a result, some members who have distinguished themselves in the course of discharging their duties in 2014 will be celebrated here:

**Prince Amani Kabobya** is a member of IITA's Kalambo Youth Agripreneur (IKYA). He is a graduate of Crop Production from the Catholic University in Bukavu. Referred to as a role model by his colleagues, Amani works tirelessly round the clock sourcing for markets for the group's produce as well as motivating his colleagues towards achieving set goals. He presently has offers to work as a master baker with some partners following trainings he coordinated on production of cassava bread.

**Omole Toluwalase and Gbadamosi Muritala** are also distinct examples of outstanding agripreneurs. The duo left the southwestern part of Nigeria to go to the northern region to manage field activities there.

Tolu stationed in Mokwa, Niger State, cultivated about 18 hectares of soybean

and maize. Some of the scientists who visited the field in Mokwa commended Tolu for efficiently managing the field.

Muritala, on the other hand was stationed in Zaria. He cultivated 20 hectares of soybean and maize fields. In spite of all odds in the area, he harvested good yields from the fields.



Omole Toluwalase



Gbadamosi Muritala



Omole Toluwalase (2nd from right) with colleagues; Jinadu Olaide (far left), Idowu Bose (2nd from left), Ogunsanmi Roseline (far right) and baby agripreneurs at Mokwa, Niger State

## AfDB is joining hands with all important stakeholders to reduce the rate of unemployment in Africa -- Dr Jonas Chianu

*The Principal Agricultural Economist of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr. Jonas Chianu, in this short interview shares AfDB's thoughts about youth unemployment.*

**From AfDB perspective, what can you say about youth unemployment in Africa?**

From the perspective of the African Development Bank (AfDB), what I can tell you is that we know that youth unemployment in Africa is a challenge to development, and the Bank (AfDB) is joining hands with all important stakeholders including the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and others to see

what can be done to reduce the rate of unemployment in Africa.

**What can you say about the Youth program in IITA (IITA Youth Agripreneurs)?**

The youth program in IITA is quite nice and it is one of the programs that we thought is a good idea-- to organise the youth so that they start thinking about how best they themselves can contribute to the solution of youth unemployment in Africa.

**What advice do you have for the youth**



Dr Jonas Chianu

**agripreneurs as they continue to tackle unemployment?**

My advice is that you (IITA Youth Agripreneurs) keep on doing the good work you are doing and try to improve on what you are doing.

## Photo gallery: Pictures from the fields



*Omole Toluwalase (L) and Idowu Bose (R) at Mokwa, Niger State*



*IITA Youth Agripreneurs at soybean harvest point*



*IYA team at Mokwa station during maize and soybean harvest*



*A soybean field before harvest*



*A maize field before harvest*



*Bags of harvested maize at Mokwa, Niger State*

**Writers/Contributors:** Michael Nathaniel, Lamidi Funmilola, Adenmosun Adetola, Adefioye Adedayo, Okeshola Adeola, Owoeye Molayo, Odusanya Oludare, Obafemi Victoria, Adesanya Omotomiwa, Olaniyi Ajobola, Ohanwusi Evelyn, Bekee Barituka, Edwin Justinian, Veronica Kichanta, Noel Mulinganya, Lebon Mirali **Layout/design** Adefioye Adedayo  
The newsletter is produced by IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Ibadan and the IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs (IKYA)  
Editor: Godwin Atser (g.atser@cgiar.org)