



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

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How N2Africa is attracting Borno State youths to agriculture



N2Africa Management Staff, IITA Youth Agripreneurs (lemon-green shirts) and Borno Youth Agripreneurs (blue shirts) at the 2015 Agribusiness training workshop

N2Africa is a large scale, science-based research-in-development project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with a focus on putting nitrogen fixation to work for African smallholder farmers growing legume crops, through effective production technologies, including inoculants and fertilizers. The project, which is led by the Wageningen University, together with the Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), started in 2011. The second phase of the project started in 2014 and will run for 5 years.

In line with national and continental efforts to stem the burgeoning rate of unemployment, the N2Africa project in 2014, expanded its activities in Nigeria to the north-eastern part, Borno state, to further build sustainable partnerships that will create improved livelihoods and sustainable incomes. The project is specifically providing employment opportunities along the value chains of agriculture and agribusiness for about 2000 youths through the Borno State Youth Agripreneurship Initiative.

The project has supported the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) to organize two training workshops on agribusiness for selected youths of Borno state.

The workshops were held at the IITA Kano station in September 2014 and 2015. Tagged, "Key to Productive Youth Engagement," the workshops were to; enable the young people increase their knowledge in sustainable agronomic practices, develop their entrepreneurship skills in agribusiness,

and promote income generation and self-dependence.

A total of 39 young graduates – 16 females and 23 males, of various disciplines have benefitted from the project. The workshops, which combined lectures, practical sessions, and field visits

ensured the trainee received hands-on experience in managing different agribusiness enterprises. The first set of presentations, which centered on sensitization and mindset

change was facilitated by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs where they shared their 2-year experience of exploring opportunities in agriculture and setting up various enterprises.

The trainees received latest information on best-bet agronomic practices



Odusanya Oludare, one of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs facilitating the session on "Introduction to Entrepreneurship"

and technologies in the production of cowpea, maize, millet, sorghum, soybean and groundnut, and specifically explored the value chains to identify possible enterprising opportunities.

... From page 1

They also learnt the effective and safe use of herbicides in crop production. There were practical sessions on postharvest mechanization where new, affordable and readily available technologies that can easily add value to crops and increase incomes were highlighted.

The session on the use of ICT tools, which is key to retaining the interest of youth and increasing productivity revealed the efficacy of using ICT to gather relevant information for improving productivity and access to market. The trainees were able to develop social media platforms such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter that will afford them opportunities to collaborate and share ideas with other youths globally.

Fish farming was also introduced to the trainees. They received lectures on hatchery techniques, fish pond systems and management, while emphasis was placed on fish feed formulation using soybean, which constitute 45% of locally produced fish feed.

Empowering the trainees to develop bankable agribusiness plans constituted an important component of the training. The workshop featured two national financial institutions; the Bank of Industry (BOI), and Bank of Agriculture (BOA). The resource persons from the banks revealed the nature of funds available, and conditions for securing various loans. A resource person from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) facilitated sessions on understanding the characteristics of micro, small and medium enterprises,

components of business plan, including cash flow, income statement and business sheet. SMEDAN is a government-led institution, which promotes the development of the micro, small and medium scale sector of the Nigerian economy.

The IYA were supported by resource persons from IITA and ICRISAT. The project plans to train a new set of 41 youths at the Borno state Agricultural Development Program (ADP), Biu in February, 2016.



Mr Aliyu Adinoyi showing one of the post harvest machines for groundnut processing to the trainees



Dr Babu Motagi explaining the pollination process of groundnut to the trainees at the groundnut pollination blocks

Trainees speak about their experience



Samson Jibir Wakawa

"I now know the basic steps to follow when establishing an agribusiness enterprise. As an entrepreneur, what you need goes beyond ideas and money. Planning is very important to succeed".



Mairo Sikta

"I am so glad I took part in this learning workshop. It has been 3 weeks of experience-sharing and skills and knowledge acquisition on production, processing, packaging and marketing across the value chains of cowpea, millet, sorghum, maize, soybean, groundnut and especially fishery".



Mercy Haruna Wakawa

"I am so happy to be part of this workshop because I can now confidently turn my farm into "a real business". It is amazing how I can now use social media to receive updates on research in agriculture, partner with agribusiness ventures like IITA Youth Agripreneurs, reach and interact with my target customers and even share my success story".

Who is doing what to promote the Borno Youth Agripreneur Initiative



N2Africa Borno Project team visits the Governor of Borno State - Alhaji Kashim Shettima

N2Africa–Global Management is partnering with relevant stakeholders both in the public and private sectors to create an enabling environment and attract relevant institutional support for the agripreneurs in Borno state.

In this regard, stakeholders such as the Borno state government, Borno State Agricultural Development Project, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), financial institutions, Small

and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), CropLife Africa Middle East, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), and the Federal Ministry of Youth Development are pooling resources to ensure that the youths become successful in any chosen field of agribusiness.

All these stakeholders are working and complementing the roles of each other to ensure the success of

the youth agripreneurs initiative in Borno state.

The government of Borno in this respect is expected to provide logistical support to field staff of the project, implement relevant local supportive policy frameworks, nominate participants for training and take full responsibility for the

salaries and the disbursement of N2Africa project allowances for its field staff involved in the program implementation. IITA on its part is coordinating the implementation of both N2Africa-Nigeria and N2Africa-Borno project. The Institute through its youth component is training Borno Youth Agripreneurs on cowpea production, soybean production, safe and effective use of pesticides in crop production, concept of farming systems, and also facilitating the identification of agri-businesses of interest to trained agripreneurs along the cowpea, soybean



Partnership development initiative with the Directors & Management staff of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in Abuja, Nigeria

and groundnut value chains. IITA will also train the Borno agripreneurs on the development of bankable business plans for respective areas of interest to the agripreneurs, link the agripreneurs to input and output markets, and facilitate mentorship and partnership opportunities for sustainability. With the partnership, ICRISAT will train the

agripreneurs on groundnut grain and seed production, and demonstrate post-harvest mechanization equipment to the agripreneurs.

Financial institutions like the Bank of Industry (BOI), Bank of Agriculture (BOA), and Keystone Bank will clarify the requirements for accessing loans from financial institutions; and provide soft loans to approved agri-businesses at rates lower than those for non-agricultural enterprises. The financial institutions will monitor progress in the implementation of business plans and advise the agripreneurs on necessary actions to take to improve performance. On the issue of company registration, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) will provide support by facilitating the receipt, processing, approving and registering names of expected 40 different agribusinesses submitted by the agripreneurs.

SMEDAN is expected to enhance the agripreneurs' understanding of the characteristics of micro, small and medium enterprises for them to be able to manage their businesses as they progress while the CropLife Africa Middle East will provide expertise on pesticides spray service and access to quality equipment and agrochemicals to make the field operation easier.

This special edition is inspired and funded by N2Africa, Borno State Project, Nigeria.



For more information about N2Africa, please visit: www.n2africa.org

Borno State Youth Agripreneurs get start-up grant

Following the workshop organized by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs for 40 Youths in Borno state in September 2014 and 2015, the N2Africa-Global Management has approved grants for the trained agripreneurs to kick-start their agribusiness enterprise.

After selecting 20 potential agribusinesses from the identified crops, the youths chose nine, which included soybean production and marketing, cowpea production and marketing, groundnut production and marketing, groundnut oil and cake production, farm inputs/agrochemical supply, pesticide application services, animal fattening using grain legume crop residue as main feedstuff, poultry keeping using grain legume by-products as feedstuff, local fabrication of labor-saving agro-tools, and fish farming using grain legume as major component of fish feed.

The benefiting agripreneurs have registered their businesses with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) under 40 different names, which were also used to open commercial bank accounts for their businesses. The agripreneurs will also have access to soft loans which will be provided by the Bank of Agriculture (BOA).

In addition, the business plans assessed and approved by the BOA will be funded at 12% interest, while those that satisfy



SMEDAN North West Regional Coordinator, Alhaji Ahmad Madaki making presentation on MSMEs during the training on bankable business plans

the requirements of the Bank of Industry (BOI) will be funded at 5% (if there are matching funds) or at 9% (if there are no matching funds).

To kick-start these business plans, as well as reduce the debt burden (repayment of capital with interest) on the Borno Youth Agripreneurs, the N2Africa – Global Management approved early in October 2015, a grant of NGN 450,000.00 (four hundred and fifty thousand Naira only) for each agripreneur, and NGN

2.5 million for the groundnut oil and cake project. N2Africa – Borno plans to provide the grants in three installments. The first installment was made at a formal ceremony on 3rd December, 2015 in Biu, with the Emir of Biu as the chief host, and the Executive Governor of Borno state as the guest of honour. The remaining two installments will be provided later, subject to good progress and full adherence to acceptable accounting standards by the agripreneurs.

Picture Gallery



Agripreneur Facilitator, Mr Shakiru Quadri delivering papers on bankable business plan to the trainees



Borno Youth Agripreneurs on a field visit to fish ponds at Government Girls Secondary School, Biu Local Government of Borno State

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