

Akinyele Local Government officials honor DG Sanginga

IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, was honored by the Akinyele Local Government Authority, Ibadan, by naming a street after him on 12 January at Akingbile for his dedication and selfless sacrifice in transforming and improving the livelihoods of people within the neighboring community and sub-Saharan Africa at large.

The street, formerly named Road H Oluana, Akingbile, is now called Dr Nteranya Sanginga Close, Akingbile. The ceremony was attended by the *Baale*, chiefs, and representatives of the street naming committee from the local government, as well as IITA Directors,



Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, addressing the participants during the official unveiling of the street sign.

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R4D Special

IITA research shows: Adopting improved cassava varieties reduces poverty

A team of [IITA](#) Scientists led by Wossen Assfaw, have documentary evidence to show that effective adoption of an agricultural technology reduces poverty, especially in the case of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria.

Empirical evidence on the relationship between agricultural research and poverty reduction has suggested that improved agricultural technologies may not necessarily lead to poverty reduction as the poor are often constrained by structural barriers that make improved technologies inaccessible and less profitable for them. Therefore, understanding how and why farm

households adopt improved varieties and their subsequent effects on productivity and poverty outcomes is important to the design of an effective pro-poor technology dissemination strategy.

Over the years, there has been substantial investment in the development and dissemination



A technician examining the progress of work on a cassava plantation.

of improved crop varieties and complementary agronomic practices in Nigeria by national and international research and development organizations. However, despite these major efforts and the importance of cassava for rural livelihood, there is a lack of comprehensive and rigorous evidence on adoption rates and impacts of improved cassava varieties on productivity and poverty related outcomes. As a result, unique nationally representative adoption data was used to measure adoption rates and to estimate the poverty reduction effect of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria.

First, DNA-fingerprinting was used to identify varieties grown by farmers as a more reliable measure of adoption. Using DNA-based adoption data,

there was documentation of the extent to which measurement error in self-reported adoption status may bias the poverty reduction effect of adoption. Second, the use of [Global Positioning System](#) (GPS) to measure farm size. This is because self-reported farm size estimates by farmers might be prone to measurement error, which may affect productivity estimates and hence the estimated poverty reduction effect of adoption. Third, farm-level treatment effects were linked to a market-level model to measure the aggregate poverty reduction effect of adoption.

In answering the key research question, "Does adoption of improved cassava varieties have an effect on poverty?", the poverty reduction effect of adoption of improved cassava varieties was estimated using DNA-fingerprinted

adoption data which showed that 1.62 million individuals have been lifted out of poverty due to adoption of improved cassava varieties. However, our results suggest that this estimate is sensitive to the measurement of adoption status, which means that proper measurement of adoption status is crucial for estimating the poverty reduction effect of technology adoption.

The article can be found here: [Assfaw Wossen, T., Alene, A., Abdoulaye, T., Feleke, S., Rabbi, I.Y. & Manyong, V. 2018. Poverty reduction effects of agricultural technology adoption: the case of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria. Journal of Agricultural Economics 2018: 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-9552.12296>](#)

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management staff, and friends and well-wishers of IITA.

During the official unveiling of the street sign, DG Sanginga expressed appreciation to the officials and all those who came to witness the ceremony. "Even though I have a street named after me in IITA, I feel privileged to have another named after me outside IITA, considering the fact that I am a foreigner. Because of the way I am treated in Nigeria, I see it as a home away from home; and if I had my way, I would like to have a resident permit to

enable me to visit any time. Due to your high level of ambition, I believe some of you will be named after a street in Bukavu, in my home country of DR Congo. Thank you all for recognizing my effort in this special way!"

Speaking on behalf of the street naming committee, Florence Adeleke explained how honored they felt to have a street named after the Director General of a reputable and world-class international organization. "From today, we adopt you as one of us, not minding your country of origin. Even after you

have left Ibadan, your footprints cannot be erased because you have touched so many lives, directly or indirectly, within and across Africa through your transformation initiative. We are grateful for your humanitarian work."

The ceremony came to an end with a vote of thanks from Iheanacho Okike, IITA Cassava peel specialist, saying to whom honor is due, honor is given. "I especially congratulate you because this is as a result of your outstanding and excellent performance in improving livelihoods."



DG Sanginga (4th from right) with Akinyele LGA Street naming committee members.

Got a story to share?

Please email it with photos and captions every Tuesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.agha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.

IITA bags #AgTwitterCup 2018 award for communicating on African agricultural transformation

The effectiveness of social media in passing information cannot be underestimated as it is both educative and engaging. It is on this platform that the inaugural edition of [#AgTwitterCup2018](#) launched in October 2018 was based. The competition was organized by IITA researcher, [James Legg](#), with social media consultants John Agboola and Olumide Idowu, who were hired to handle social media and awareness raising among young people during the CGIAR BigData annual convention in Nairobi, Kenya.

The team of three came up with an idea of promoting communication activities done through Twitter around the topic of Agricultural Transformation in Africa, intending it to be fun for participants as well as serve the important purpose of strengthening groups and individuals' Twitter engagement.

With five different entry categories (Individual, Group, African Institution, International Organization, and Young Woman), the competition was launched on 25 December with about 1,000 nominations. A set of seven judges (including the three conveners, one from Africa, and three from institutions outside of Africa) reviewed all nominations with focus on Number and density of tweets in 2018, Quality of tweets, Profile, and interaction before the selection process was concluded on 4 January 2019. The best 8 nominations in each category were selected.

At the final round, emerging as winners in each category were [Aina Tolulope](#) (@Ainatolupe1) for Individual, [Farm Republic](#) (@FarmRepublic) for group, [National Agricultural Research Organization](#) (@narouganda) for African Institution, [IITA](#) (@IITA_CGIAR) for International Organization, and Aina Tolulope (@Ainatolupe1) for Young Woman.

IITA and the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) of Uganda are both large and successful institutions with a long history of developing and promoting agricultural research products. Increasingly they have both recognized the importance of seeking to modernize African agriculture, and each has been active in communicating on this topic through Twitter.

Aina Tolulope and Farm Republic represent the cream of the growing

movement of individuals or groups that are using ICT tools to strengthen agricultural development as well as communicate the importance of promoting agriculture as a modern business. ICT tools have been instrumental in increasing the engagement of the youth on this topic, and it is notable that young women are playing a very strong role in this communication activity. An excellent example is Ms Aina Tolulope, winner of both the individual and young woman categories. She is the young founder and CEO of Tolulope Foods and Farms, producing high quality processed cassava products and frequently seen on Twitter providing agribusiness advice to other young farmers in her home country of Nigeria.

Farm Republic, also based in Nigeria, is an agribusiness consultancy company which provides advice to growers on crops to grow, farm management and marketing of farm produce. They also do contract farm management. In a very short period of time on Twitter, they have developed a strong presence and have a committed following who dramatically succeeded in pushing them to the top of the most competitive of all of the #AgTwitterCup2018 categories.

Mikaila Issa, IITA Social Media Coordinator, commenting on the award winning, said, "We are very happy at IITA Communication Unit to receive this award and also to celebrate our colleagues from other IITA hubs who have been nominated. As our slogan says 'Communication is everyone's business' and we are very impressed with the online engagement of our scientists to communicate about their research and promote African Agricultural transformation."

The most notable achievement of #AgTwitterCup2018 was to raise the profiles of new, young individuals or groups who are actively looking for ways to change the way that agriculture is done in Africa. Since transforming African agriculture is increasingly seen as a flagship development goal for the continent, then promoting and rewarding those trying to achieve this is a priority. With this in mind, the conveners are already planning for the second edition for the year 2019.



Young women using social media to promote agriculture.

IITA Cassava Specialist elected as the new ISTRC president

On 7 December, [Richardson Okechukwu](#), IITA Cassava Commodity Specialist and Head of Onne Station, was elected as the President of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops-Africa Branch ([ISTRC-AB](#)), for his commitment and expertise on Root and Tuber Crops (RTC) along various value chains. He takes over from the President, Prof Lateef Sani, whose tenure was supposed to end in 2020, but who was elevated to be the new President of ISTRC worldwide, at a symposium held in Colombia.

ISTRC-AB was created in 1978 to stimulate research, production, and utilization of root and tuber crops. Their activities include encouragement of training and extension, exchange of genetic materials, and facilitation of contact between stakeholders working with root and tuber crops.

Speaking on his new position, Okechukwu expressed delight and pledged to do his best to ensure that the society is sustained while achieving its quest for economic growth in Africa. "Being the president and a



Richardson Okechukwu.

staff member of IITA, will further help me give the members the leverage and opportunity to have a detailed understanding of what we do in IITA. Moreover, with the support of the executive members, students working on root and tuber crop will benefit from our capacity building programs and other

initiatives and this will help to put every member on the same page".

"It is a big responsibility, but I will do my best to ensure I meet the expectations and promote the society. The AB of the ISTRC is the biggest member of the ISTRC globally and was the first to be established. To that end, we have a lot of obligations to provide good information to our end users and proffer solutions to problems pertaining to roots and tuber. We also have the challenge of making sure our research is what is needed and useful to the farmers and processors, of which I am ready to take up the task and work towards making that a reality" he added.

ISTRC-AB is the biggest umbrella body for all root and tuber workers, researchers, students, scientists, and every stakeholder involved in the root and tuber value chain, which covers crops like yam, cassava, potato, ginger, and some minor root crops. The principal aim of the society is to improve the production of root and tuber crops and, in turn, contribute to food security in Africa.

Social media coverage culminates in top Twitter awards

Social media is a critical component of [IITA's](#) integrated communication strategy to create greater engagement with its network of strategic partners, experts, and influencers who support the Institute's vision of transforming African agriculture.

The IITA Communication Unit organized a competition for the most proficient Twitter users among the scientists and hubs during the 2018 Partnerships for Delivery Week (P4D Week) themed "Beyond Research," held at the IITA Headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria, 26 to 30 November.

The competition had three main categories: Best IITA Scientist Twitter User, Best IITA Hub/Station Twitter User, and Special Award for IITA Promising Scientist Twitter User. These awards recognized the scientists/hubs' contributions to the overall successful social media coverage of the program using the hashtag [#P4Dweek](#).

IITA Plant Health Specialist [James Legg](#) ([@jamesplegg](#)) emerged as the Best IITA Scientist Twitter User with the highest score of over 70 tweets with 1,000 engagements and 65,000 impressions.

In the second category, IITA Eastern Africa Hub took first place with a high score of over 500 tweets from more than 70 users. The tweets with the hashtag [#iitaEastAfrica](#) had over 50,000 engagements, and 3,000,000 impressions.

Pat Udomkun, IITA Food Scientist ([@pat_foodsci](#)) won the third category with the highest score of over 30 tweets, over 100 engagements, and 23,000 impressions.

IITA Head of Communication [Katherine Lopez](#) expressed her appreciation to all the participants stating, "We're proud of our scientists' commitment to [serve](#) as IITA brand ambassadors when at events, on mission, or sharing content. We will keep building in-house social media capacity to empower staff in advocacy,"

Social media offers high visibility, increases the opportunity to engage with all the actors in the [agricultural](#) development sector, and helps [rural](#) communities gain a voice, making development bottom-up.

"What we really want to achieve with social media at IITA is to promote the Institute as a thought leader and 'go to'

knowledge broker that adds clear value to discussions on agricultural research for development, biotechnology, food security, agribusiness, etc.," said Mikaila Issa, IITA Social Media Coordinator who led the P4D Week Twitter Contest.



James Legg is named Best IITA Scientist Twitter User during the 2018 P4D Week.