

STEP to enhance agribusiness learning by upgrading facilities in secondary schools



Adewole Adedamola of STEP-Nigeria (far left) in a discussion with the Principal of Fasola Grammar School, Mr Ayoade Oladebo inside the abandoned workshop of the school

The Start Them Early Program (STEP) has set off the process of

improving the learning environment of secondary schools student in

In Nigeria...

Fasola Grammar School (FGS) has been selected as one of the schools to benefit from the pilot phase of the program. The STEP team in Nigeria on April 26, 2019, visited the school to discuss with its authorities on the process of introducing an agribusiness development program to the students and teachers of the school, with the major aim of changing the wrong perception young people have about agriculture and raising a generation of young leaders in Africa through agribusiness education.

Fasola Grammar School is a government-owned secondary school, established on September 26, 1980 and sits on 60 acres of land at Fasola town in Oyo West Local Government area of Oyo State. It has a current population of 40 teachers and 292 students between the ages 10 and 19 years. The availability of enough land mass will make it possible for the program to establish commercial school farms, which can be used to facilitate practical learning

in modern agriculture, particularly with the use of mechanization.

The school also has an abandoned workshop, which the program intends to revamp to install a Modern Agribusiness Workshop where students can learn about value addition and other skills needed to establish viable agribusiness enterprises. According to the Principal of the school, Mr Ayoade

DR Congo and Nigeria. The STEP teams coordinating the activities of the program in both countries have identified two schools; one in each country, to commence agribusiness education which will also encompass enhancing the practical skills of students in crop and animal production and value addition.

Most secondary schools in Africa especially those in the rural communities lack 21st century facilities in the form of infrastructure, laboratories and classrooms. Hence, this new process to upgrade essential facilities in the schools will improve the quality of education for young people in primary and secondary schools and give them the opportunity to study in excellent conditions.

Oladebo, most young people engage in household farming with their parents as their major source of livelihood in the community, hence, they do not consider it as an interesting or lucrative means of either generating income or developing their career. This new initiative will spur these young people into seeing agriculture from a new perspective, equipping them with necessary agribusiness skills.

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An aerial overview of the abandoned workshop to be renovated



Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (L) inspecting the progress of construction work at WEZA Secondary School



Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (4th from left) with the former governor of South Kivu Province, HE Marcelin Cishambo (2nd from left) during their visit to WEZA Secondary School

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In DR Congo...

The STEP team with the Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga and the former Governor of South Kivu Province, His Excellency Marcelin Cishambo visited WEZA Secondary School to assess the progress of work in the school. The school, which has been engaged in an agribusiness development program since 2015 by Newday Afrika, has seen its students increase their interest in agriculture.

During the visit, Dr Sanginga revealed that IITA will assist with

improving the level of education at the school, equip its students with good practical knowledge and introduce them to agribusiness so they can be useful to the community and the country.

He also explained to Marcelin Cishambo, who has been an IITA partner for many years, that the mission of the Institute is to make the school a great Agribusiness Learning Center in the country, where researchers from around the world would go to train and

share their experiences with young people. The center will also be used to build a network of young Africans who would have acquired skills and knowledge in agribusiness and be able to take charge of their future; young people who are ready to put into practice what they learn to provide more food and create jobs.

IITA will also upgrade other facilities in the school such as the classrooms and agricultural library and equip its science laboratory, making it suitable for quality learning.

Engaging students on **AGRIBUSINESS 101**



A cross-section of one of the lectures on "Agribusiness 101"

Many young people in secondary schools do not have basic knowledge about agribusiness and this is one of the factors contributing to the wrong notion they have about agriculture. Most young people see agriculture only, as "going to the field to farm", and this makes it stand little or no chance of being considered interesting and lucrative.

STEP is working to change this philosophy by engaging students in a

series of mindset-changing activities starting with a short interactive lecture, "Agribusiness 101", using the concept of agricultural value chains.

This lecture introduces students to components of agribusiness and the opportunities it offers in an elementary format. This makes it easy for students to understand and appreciate various careers in agriculture. The lecture is facilitated through a short presentation and an interactive session where students

become involved by sharing ideas and building scenarios to proffer solutions to projected challenges in agribusiness.

In most cases after the lecture, they are organized into groups to go on educational visits to agricultural research institutes or firms, where they get to see modern agriculture practiced on a commercial scale. During visits to research institutes, they interact with scientists who share with them their experiences and show them how research is important in food production.

According to the concept of STEP, this is the initial process in reshaping their mindset towards the possibilities available in agriculture, creating around them an enabling environment to boost their passion, while exposing them to careers and viable businesses that exist in the field.

STEP teams in DR Congo and Nigeria have engaged about 450 students who have been educated about agribusiness and have visited IITA station and agricultural firms.

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In DR Congo...

Some of the students of WEZA and Bwindi Secondary Schools have benefitted from the program. They have received lectures on “Agribusiness 101” and have visited the IITA Kalambo station. At the station, they visited different laboratories such as the Biochemistry and Pedology Research Laboratories, where they interacted with scientists. It was also an opportunity for them to see what they are taught in school.

On April 11, 2019, STEP organized a field trip for 66 students of Kashekesheke Institute in Bukavu to the demonstration field established by the members of STEP in DR Congo. The aim of the trip was to stimulate the interest of these students in agriculture and encourage them to create enterprises in agriculture after their studies. During the trip, they learned the importance of agricultural entrepreneurship and how it can provide solutions to unemployment and food insecurity on the Continent.



WEZA Secondary School receiving lecture from one of the researchers at IITA Kalambo Station, DR Congo



Students of Kashekesheke Institute on a field trip to STEP Demonstration field at Murhesa, DR Congo

In Nigeria...

Seven schools (292 students) have visited the IITA Headquarters to learn about agribusiness. They also toured the facilities of the Institute, such as the laboratories and the Farm Mechanization Unit to learn about the use of farm machinery and the importance of producing food through mechanization.

During one of the interactive lectures on agribusiness with some of the students, the STEP team discovered that they had never heard of agribusiness before the lecture. This gave the team an opportunity to extensively teach the concept of agribusiness and the career opportunities that abound therein.



Students receiving a short lecture on mechanization at IITA's Farm Office in Ibadan, Nigeria

Students of WEZA Secondary School receive training on farm mechanization

The STEP team working in DR Congo have trained the students of WEZA Secondary School on the use and benefits of mechanization in food production. The objectives of the training were to show the students the efficiency of using

mechanization and train them on how to use a rototiller.

The training which took place in the school on March 27, 2019 is in line with the framework of the STEP; to strengthen the capacity of secondary

school students on agricultural production using mechanization and equip them with the right business skills and knowledge needed to establish profitable enterprises.

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One of the students at WEZA Secondary School trying out the rototiller during the practical training

The students were taken through the theoretical training, focused on the benefits of using the tiller and the practical training where they learned how to use the tiller on their school field.

The students realized that mechanization is key to making more profit from agriculture because of the possibility of cultivating a large area of land. They were intrigued when they compared the amount of work done by one rototiller with the use of hoes.

According to the students who participated in the training, the area of land that took the tiller two hours to complete, would have taken 20 of them with hoes three days to complete.

Exploring partnerships to advance agribusiness in secondary schools



Dr Kenton Dashiell, DDG-Partnerships for Delivery (3rd from left) discussing with the Managing Director of Mawnex Nigeria Limited, Winifred Obanye during the partnership meeting at IITA Ibadan, Nigeria

On March 28, 2019, the STEP team in Nigeria led by the Deputy Director General-Partnerships for Delivery, Dr Kenton Dashiell met with delegates from Mawnex Nigeria Limited. The meeting was focused on generating ideas and creating synergy on how best to engage schools across Nigeria on establishing commercial farms.

According to the Managing Director of the company, Mrs Winifred Obanye, Mawnex Nigeria Limited is the first Nigerian company to be a member of the

Scopes of Crops, Livestock and Aquaculture of GLOBALG.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practice), the world's largest certification of agricultural products, whose mission is to connect farmers and brand owners in the production and marketing of safe foods to provide reassurance for consumers.

The company intends to partner with IITA's Start Them Early Program (STEP), to use a school farming campaign to introduce the "POWER of 5" program to Nigerian secondary schools. This program will enable

schools establish commercial farms and produce raw materials which will be taken up by a Market Project being coordinated in partnership with the Lagos State Government in Nigeria.

In DR Congo, the STEP team met with the Director of French Institute and the Marketing Officer of Equity Bank in Bukavu to discuss ways students can benefit from the Institute. The Director revealed that the Institute has also started working on an exhibition, which will enlighten students about food security, hence, partnering with STEP will contribute to the impact of the exhibition. He also advised that considering the target group of STEP, partnerships can also be sought with other international organizations such as FAO, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and Swiss Corporation that also prioritize empowering youth, especially the ones in secondary schools.

The team also met with the Marketing Officer of Equity Bank to discuss the possibility of opening a special bank account for them. This will help to encourage them become driven towards becoming agripreneurs and enable those who have businesses save their proceeds.



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