

IITA increases visibility in Southern Africa Hub (Zambia)



IITA Zambia audience listening to Dr Peter Chinwada's presentation on fall armyworm.

To increase IITA's visibility and showcase the impact the institution is having in the Southern African region, Zambia in particular, IITA-Zambia has embarked on a series of seminar presentations at Zambia's highest learning Institution, the University of Zambia (UNZA) in Lusaka. The seminars, which are conducted every semester in collaboration with the School of Agricultural Sciences, targets learners, academicians, and other stakeholders interested in the agricultural sector.

Since July 2019, IITA has held four such seminars at UNZA with Dr David Chikoye (Hub Director) paving the way for hub scientists through a talk on "Transforming Smallholder Farming Systems in Southern Africa: The Role of IITA" during the informal launch of this collaborative seminar series. Chikoye's presentation highlighted CGIAR's mission, and gave a general overview of IITA and its presence in the Southern Africa region. He further showcased the role that IITA is playing in agricultural transformation.

The Dean, Faculty of Agriculture welcomed this initiative and, in his remarks, thanked IITA for this great

opportunity of knowledge sharing and opening doors for UNZA researchers and students. In August 2019, Dr Peter Chinwada (TAAT Fall Armyworm Compact Coordinator) also gave a seminar on the topic "Fall Armyworm Response Under the TAAT Program: Approach, Lessons Learnt So Far and Recommendations". Chinwada's presentation highlighted some of the activities IITA is undertaking in managing FAW and the lessons learnt. Following this seminar, the audience applauded the approach being taken by IITA in transferring proven technologies to end users and requested IITA to organize a FAW workshop in which different stakeholders could share their experiences on FAW management.

To crown the seminar series for the semester, Drs Alena Arega and Pheneas Ntawuruhunga presented in September. In his presentation titled "Social Science Research at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA): Foresight, Technology Adoption & Impact Assessment", Arega highlighted the four major areas of social science

research in IITA which includes Strategic foresight and ex-ante analysis of R&D investments, Technology adoption and impact assessment, Gender and youth, and Markets and value chains.

Ntawuruhunga's talk on "IITA cassava breeding in Southern Africa Region: Strategies, challenges, achievements and opportunities for commercialization", focused on the importance of cassava, major production constraints, achievements/progress made by IITA and challenges versus opportunities that lie in breeding cassava. At the end of both presentations, seminar participants (staff members and other stakeholders) bought into IITA-promoted crops (most especially cassava) and saw opportunities into health, nutrition, and wealth security.

With the overwhelming response and support received from UNZA through the School of Agriculture, IITA's work and impact will have far reaching benefits and will extend collaboration in the future.

IITA International School holds PYP Training



IITA International School PYP Training

The visit of Kate Beatty, an experienced Primary Years Programme (PYP) leader and trainer for the International Baccalaureate (IB), was a high point of The International School of IITA's journey to PYP Authorization. Beatty traveled from Germany to facilitate a two-day workshop for all staff of the school along with members of the IITA management team in October on Investigating Inquiry.

The IB is one of the world's leading international education bodies with over 5,000 member schools in 157 countries across the world. Ibadan is closely linked to the history of the IB as the International School at the University of the Ibadan was among the first schools to run the IB Diploma Programme in the 1960s. The IB Primary Years Programme was introduced in 1997 and becoming an authorized PYP school will demonstrate The International School of IITA's commitment to providing world class 21st century education to the IITA community.

The IB authorization process is rigorous and there is an expectation that all staff have been fully trained in the unique features of inquiry-based education. All faculty members of IITA school had previously undertaken a PYP online introductory course and the Investigating Inquiry workshop provided an opportunity to further explore the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning in the classroom. Key aspects of the course included reflecting on how an inquiry-based classroom may be structured differently from a traditional classroom, considering how to create a culture of curiosity in classrooms, understanding that learning

experiences may use different levels of inquiry, reviewing how inquiry can serve as a natural differentiator, ensuring that all children reach their full potential, and developing life-long learners.

As part of the commitment to become an IB World School, the staff and leadership of the candidate school should be fully engaged. The facilitator was encouraged by the inclusion of not just teachers but also ancillary staff and administrative staff. She was particularly pleased by the commitment of both the Head of Human Resources, Lilian Mendoza, and the DDG-Corporate Services, Hilde Koper-Limbourg, who participated fully in all activities of the workshop, showing the commitment of the IITA management to this process.

A key takeaway of the workshop was the development of a bespoke inquiry-based model for use across

the school. The school staff are refining the model, which draws on the extensive research in this area and identifying appropriate inquiry questions for children across the school. The model will be shared with the school community early next term.

The school expressed their thanks to the staff of the Hospitality and Travel Services and Resource Mobilization, Protocol, and External Liaison units for their support in organizing the workshop. Former Head of School, George Piacentini, was also cited for his support in arranging the workshop, as well as Edith Ekun, the school's PYP coordinator for making sure the workshop was a success.

The next step in the school's authorization journey will be the visit from the IB Schools Visit team which will take place in January 2020.



PYP training facilitator Kate Beatty (middle) flanked by (from left) Hilde Koper-Limbourg, DDG-CS; Derek Smith, Head Teacher; Lilian Mendoza, Head of HR, and Edith Ekun, PYP Coordinator.

Head of Abuja Station commissions heavy-duty harrow

To improve effectiveness on delivering the goals of IITA, Dr Gbasse Tarawali, Head of Abuja Station, commissioned a high-powered, heavy-duty harrow for field use. The machine performs multiple tasks such as superficial plowing, shattering of clods, preparation of soil for sowing, and burying of organic substance remains.

Tarawali acknowledged that the purchase of the machine is a good development that will assist scientists in carrying out their research work in Abuja and its environs. He congratulated the Station Administrator, Adebunmi Abiodun Ganiyat, and the Research Farm Unit staff, Akinola Oyedele and Adebayo Oluwaseun Gabriel for generating money to acquire the machine without depending solely on the Institute.



Tarawali and team commissioning the heavy-duty harrow

The heavy-duty harrow was purchased with the cost recovery budget and is available for hire through the RFU

Abuja station as the unit intends to generate more funds to service the fields of scientists and other farmers.

Introducing IITA M&E Unit

The M&E Unit is responsible for coordination and provision of M&E technical guidance and support at the institutional level to IITA Management, scientists in the Hubs, CGIAR research programs, and projects. They provide support in these components of M&E: Theory of change and impact pathways, Logical/result frameworks, constructing performance indicators, M&E strategy, Learning agenda, Management information systems support, and Evaluation research and training. The staff composition of the Unit is one IRS, two NRS, two short-term staff, and one intern.

Contact h.webber@cgiar.org for technical guidance and support.



Monitoring & Evaluation unit

IT Unit follow-up on team building

The IT Unit gathered together on 29 October at Chicken Chaos just across IITA headquarters for a follow-up to the team building weekend held earlier this year. To set the right atmosphere, a slideshow of the Team Building was shown, accompanied with good music.

The main part of the program was to analyze, update, and further elaborate the action points agreed

during the Team Building weekend, notably to make them more concrete and implemented in everyday work. This was done in the form of group work, brainstorming, SWOT analysis, presentations, and discussions. The outcome was a specific Team Charter for the IITA IT Unit, which will be used in the next team building event.

Team building is not an isolated activity; it is a continuous process!

The participants also enjoyed numerous ice-breakers, chats, food, and drinks in a relaxed environment outside the campus.

Quotable quote

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

– Helen Keller

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IT team building follow-up