

Akinwumi Adesina’s Foundation strengthens partnership with IITA on agribusiness opportunities for African youth

On 5 February, the Chief Operating Officer of the [World Hunger Fighters Foundation \(WHFF\)](#), [Ada Osakwe](#), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with [IITA](#) at its Ibadan campus. The purpose was to solidify a partnership, established a few months ago by [Dr Akinwumi Adesina](#), Patron of WHFF and [Dr Nteranya Sanginga](#), Director General of IITA.

WHFF is a non-profit organization set up to ensure that Africa youth are at the forefront of the fight against hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. WHFF is working to ensure that youth move into the agricultural sector and become the next global billionaires through agribusiness ventures.

In October 2019, WHFF’s first program—the Borlaug-Adesina Fellowship Program, established in partnership with the [World Food Prize Foundation](#)—was showcased in Iowa, the United States during the launch of the Foundation. The program involves one year of exposure, capacity building, network building, and knowledge building for ten outstanding African youth. The program is particularly for youth between the ages of 21 and 30 years, who are

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Chief Operating Officer of WHFF, Ada Osakwe and IITA DDG-P4D Kenton Dashiell signing the MoU.

IITA trains cassava processors and bakers in Rwanda

According to the 2018 data published by the [National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda](#), cassava is the second most grown crop after banana in terms of cultivated area. The same data indicates that cassava is the fourth most consumed staple crop in Rwanda, as freshly harvested roots or as transformed recipes majorly ugali made from cassava flour.



Baked products from cassava.

So far, cassava has only been processed in Rwanda to produce cassava flour that is mainly used for ugali or fufufu. However, cassava is also a source of good quality flour for baking, which Rwandan cassava processors have not previously been able to produce.

IITA, through the programs, TAAT Cassava Compact (funded by [African Development Bank](#) [AfDB]) and CBSD Control Project (funded by [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) [IFAD]), conducted a five-day training on how to add value to cassava and diversify its utilization and market in Rwanda, especially by processing cassava flour for baking. IITA partnered with the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), Rwanda Youth in Agriculture Forum (RYAF), and Ministry of Trade and Industry in Rwanda to deliver the training.

The course was conducted in two steps with the first focusing on quality cassava flour for ugali and baking by the Kinazi Cassava Plant along with other small and medium cassava processors. For two days, at Kinazi Cassava Plant in Ruhango District, Southern Province, the team learned how to process quality cassava flour (for ugali and baking).

The second step focused on developing baked products using cassava flour. For three days, at the Carl Group Limited, a youth bakery in Kanombe Sector, Kigali City, the team learned how to make different products such as bread, donuts, chinchin, cakes, biscuits mandazi, and chapati.

The trainees included cassava flour processors such as Kinazi Cassava Plant, Akanoze Fufufu Flour, Shekina Enterprise, Abahizi ba cyeza, and Sina Gerard Enterprise

for the first step of the training; and bakers from bakeries like Ester's Aid, Carl Group, Zima Enterprise, Sawa City bakery, and Sina Gerard Enterprise for the second step of the training. To ensure sustainability and scaling of the training, technicians from RAB's postharvest unit attended the training.

IITA experts including [Awoyale Wasiu](#) and Hossana Ngonyani, who are with the TAAT Cassava Compact program from Nigeria and Tanzania, respectively, conducted the training that was seen as successful and beneficial. Rutagungira Yves Nicholas, the supply chain manager at Kinazi Cassava Plant, said of the training: "This is going to raise our production and increase our customers, as we are diversifying cassava utilization and market. So that we not only produce flour for the traditional ugali but also cassava flour for baking. Therefore, this is going to benefit both of us: farmers and the factory. Farmers will be able to supply more cassava roots to the factory and therefore earn more, and the factory is going to increase production and enlarge its market."

On the first day, participants made bread and donuts. At the end of the day, each participant was given 2 kg of quality cassava flour to bake bread based on their standard recipe, and share with others the results the following day. Urwibutso and Sawa City baked different shapes of cassava-based bread at 20% substitution.

One of the bakers, Uwayo Désiré, from Urwibutso Enterprise said that substitution of cassava flour for baking does not change the taste or quality of bread.

"This is really a perfect substitution. The experience gave us very positive results. I used 20% of cassava flour substitution. It is a normal bread as with wheat," added Désiré Uwayo.

Umugiraneza Regis, the manager of Carl Group that bakes bread from sweet potato, added, "Once this flour is on the Rwandan market, we will be eager to start using it. Because it is even very useful to health, as it does not have gluten which is not good for digestion."

The training comes as a response by IITA to Government of Rwanda interest and priority to grow the cassava sector, as part of the broader goal to commercialize agriculture in Rwanda. Late 2018, while attending the African Green Revolution Forum in Kigali, the IITA Director General, [Nteranya Sanginga](#), met with the Minister of Agriculture and committed to help Rwanda diversify the utilization and market base of cassava through processing and value addition.



Top: Awoyale Wasiu training local processors how to produce cassava flour for baking. Bottom: Participants and trainees.

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focused on being innovators or who are already innovators and focused on transforming agriculture through agricultural research and agribusiness.

"A big part of the Borlaug-Adesina Fellowship is why I am here in IITA today," Osakwe said. For three months, the youth will be placed in leading, world-class agricultural research or agribusiness institutes. "IITA has agreed to take two of our ten fellows, to give them the best training in research and agribusiness through the guidance of senior advisers, practitioners, policymakers, and the [IITA Business Incubation Platform](#)," she added.

In the second quarter of this year, WHFF will launch the Agripreneur Fund through which the Foundation will support young agripreneurs with grants and equity participation in their businesses to ensure that the training and skills they have acquired to start their agribusinesses are supported and scaled up with appropriate funding.

More importantly, through the MoU that was signed, IITA would host WHFF offices in its Ibadan campus and through IYA, bring the Foundation closer to the young people, which they serve. In confirmation, [Kenton Dashiell](#), Deputy Director-General,

Partnerships for Delivery (DDG-P4D), mentioned that IITA would always carry WHFF along whenever the Institute organizes events that relate to the youth.

WHFF was set up by Adesina, following his receipt of the World Food Prize in 2017. Adesina, who is President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), publicly committed the prize money to set up a foundation that will support young people in agriculture. Winning the Sunhak Peace Prize, which came with another monetary award, Adesina also committed it to establish the foundation.



Representatives from WHFF and IITA discussing areas of partnership.

Got a story to share?

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YIFSWA-II participates in commercial plant tissue culture production training

On 17 January, YIFSWA-II's Tissue Culture Specialist, [Morufat Balogun](#) attended a one-day training on commercial plant tissue culture production hosted by Phytotech LABS in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

According to Balogun, the participants learned about plant tissue culture best practices and participated in hands-on training to bolster the theoretical lessons of the workshop. She said, "The training was a great refresher course that provided

the opportunity to learn from one of the industry's greats, Dr Mike Kane of the [University of Florida](#), among others, as well as to keep up-to-date with current trends and development in plant tissue culture industry."



Morufat Balogun giving a presentation.



With the institutionalization of formal seed systems, particularly for vegetatively propagated crops like yam, a tissue culture method known as micropropagation is widely used for the commercial production of quality planting material. The significant advantages of using micropropagation for commercial propagation of Early Generation Seed (EGS) tubers are that large numbers of true-to-type, disease-free plantlets can be obtained from a single plant in a short period, propagation can be done throughout the year, and propagating materials can be accommodated in a small space.



When asked how the knowledge was going to be utilized, Balogun stated: "The knowledge gained from the training will be used to backstop key partners involved in the production of EGS in Nigeria and Ghana. In 2019, the project facilitated the capacity building of key National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) and private organizations through training and the provision of infrastructure for EGS production.

"In 2020, these seed enterprises will embark on commercial EGS production to kick start the formal seed yam system. Therefore, the knowledge gained will enable us to provide them with up-to-date technical know-how and backstopping when the need arises," she concluded.

*Top: Morufat Balogun stepping down training on tissue culture.
Bottom: Tissue culture propagation.*

Aflatoxin mitigation in Sudan gets boost with multi-stakeholder partnership

Samil Industrial Co., in collaboration with [IITA](#), hosted a workshop in late 2019 in Al Salam Rotana Hotel, Khartoum, Sudan, to inaugurate the Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Aflatoxin Mitigation in Sudan. The Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Issa Osman Sharif inaugurated the workshop, which involved representatives from many sectors. These included government institutes, universities, research institutes, the private sector (crop producers and traders/ animal feed industry/poultry, and dairy), UN agencies, civil society, embassies, and Development Banks.

At the inauguration workshop the Economic Representative of the French Embassy reaffirmed the commitment of the French Government to contribute to the development of the agricultural sector in Sudan. The grant of US\$3 million was announced for a 5-year project to develop and commercialize Aflasafe in Sudan.

The workshop included an exchange of experiences through presentations of aflatoxin impact on humans and animals, the situation of aflatoxin contamination in staple crops in Sudan, and options to address aflatoxin contamination that include the use of atoxigenic biocontrol products. IITA scientists from

CGIAR, [Ranjit Bandyopadhyay](#) and [Alejandro Ortega-Beltran](#), introduced the participants to Aflasafe and explained the pathway to develop and commercialize Aflasafe in Sudan

Samil was commended by representatives of the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP), [Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa](#) (PACA), IITA, and other stakeholders for starting this unique model of a private sector company leading a national initiative to reduce aflatoxins across Africa and hosting the first multi-sectoral workshop in Sudan. During the event, PACA's involvement with other African countries was highly appreciated

and many participants showed their interest in seeing a PACA program in the country. Participation by the diverse sectors was very high and a shared desire to improve the quality of local crops was evident throughout the sessions. Many participants became aware of biocontrol for the first time.

The second day of the workshop involved brainstorming activities on awareness and policy and a roadmap for stakeholders. The major outcomes for awareness creation were:

- Create a roadmap to raise awareness among all stakeholders.
- Identify the relevant tools and techniques to obtain this awareness.
- Establish an information system for knowledge management to share mycotoxin information.

The discussion on policies and stakeholders' roadmap came up with the following major outcomes:

- Identification of stakeholders and their roles.
- Amendments or draft of new legislation in aflatoxin mitigation.
- Establishment of the roadmap for aflatoxin mitigation.



Workshop participants.