



**IITA**

**Youth Agripreneurs**

*Agriculture is the future*

# BULLETIN

Issue 40 January 2021

## IYA-trained Agripreneur secures N10 million loan from bank



*Digging of ponds ongoing at the acquired land by Jemide and partner for aquaculture*

An enterprise set up by an IITA Youth Agripreneurs beneficiary in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been able to secure a loan of N10 million from one of the commercial banks in the country.

The business, co-established by Jemide Joseph, trained under the Community Youth in Agribusiness Group (CYAG) project of IYA and Chevron Nigeria Limited, is planning to venture into fish, and plantain production.

Jemide is one of the many Niger Delta youths impacted by the CYAG project, which in 2016 embarked on a mission to engage the youths in agriculture to improve their livelihoods through job and wealth creation.

Leveraging its collaboration with Chevron, IYA through CYAG project was able to change the perception of the youths in the Ijaw and Itsekiri region about agriculture, and helped them depend less on the oil industry.

After four years, some of the trained youths in the region embraced agriculture and established enterprises along the value chains of fish, plantain and aquaculture. Many of them now own farms, either individually or in groups.

One of them is 37-year-old Jemide, a dropout from one of the Nigerian universities. He said while he partook in hooliganism to make ends meet, he became frustrated and thought all hope was lost until the CYAG project was

introduced to his Itsekiri community.

"Initially when they came we thought it was one of the projects that gives money to people," he said. "We thought it was a joke. Our focus was on how we would collect the money and go as usual but they were really patient with us and now I can boast of being a businessman in agriculture because of the training I received from the team".

Jemide who is now planning to return to school to complete his studies in Environmental Science Resources is a co-partner with Morning Dew Harvest Farm in Delta State.

He said he and his partner developed a business plan and submitted to the bank and have now received an initial disbursement of N5 million from the loan.

His words: "The loan would be paid back with 15 percent interest. We would use the initial N5 million they have given us to establish 5 fish ponds because fish is highly lucrative in this region and we would pay back in 6 months. Then we would collect the remaining N5 million in the next 6 months to expand our business".

The father of one is glad to have participated in the CYAG project as it had taken him away from the pains of jobless to the gains of agriculture.

"Life of begging is over, life of following people to create riots is over. I now see life in a better way. I leave home early and resume at my farm to monitor people assisting with the digging of the ponds and I return home later in the evening to my family. I had worked in a fish farm after my training but it is time to operate my own and I am proud of the change," he said.

Jemide is also an agribusiness consultant. He has assisted people in the community to set up private farms.



*Jemide (first from right) and colleagues discussing with the former CYAG project Manager, Ifedayo Ibironke*

## How IYA moved Niger Delta youth from the creeks to the farms



*IYA team embarking on the first assessment visit to the creeks in 2016*



*Field practicals with the beneficiaries*

When it comes to employment or business opportunities, the youth in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria mostly look in the direction of the oil industry. It was therefore a herculean task for the IITA Youth Agripreneurs who tried to sell the idea of agripreneurship in the creeks.

But partnering with Chevron Nigeria Limited, IYA was able to expose youths within the age range of 18-35 years living in the Ijaw and Itsekiri communities to the profitable side of agriculture. The mission was to take them from the creeks to the farm, and help them explore opportunities available along the value chains of aquaculture, cassava and plantain.

Recalling the challenges encountered as IYA tried to penetrate the communities, Project Coordinator, Ifedayo Ibironke, described the experience as "bitter-sweet".

His words: "For me, working with the youth in the Niger-Delta region is something I will not forget in a haste. There were times we were beaten by the youths in their communities because they thought we had collected money from the donor and refused to give them. There were times we were even requested to buy electricity transformers for the communities before we could commence activities. There was a day I deployed excavators to commence digging of ponds and I did not know they had stopped the operator of the excavator from working. When I got there, I received slaps before I could explain the purpose of the project to them. I am however happy that those youths who were rebellious to us when we introduced the project are the ones who succeeded. They have farms and some got jobs as farm managers in big farms in the communities."

Interactions with beneficiaries of the project however reveals that there has been a change of mindset and a shift away from activities like vandalism and disruption of operations of oil companies in the area.

One of the project beneficiaries, New-World Ugbameta, who is now a fish farmer and consultant for farms in the area said the time spent in tending to his farm gave no room for nefarious activities.

"This thing has really helped me and I am sure if it continues, many others like me in the Niger-Delta can also be transformed", he said.

The project recorded the start-up of 40 agribusiness enterprises, establishment of two community based cassava processing centres and fish ponds, which are operated by the youths.



*One of the trained youths in Warri producing smoked catfish*



*The beneficiaries displaying their products*

## Innovation Award beneficiaries record business start-up in Cotonou

In 2019, the IITA Youth Agripreneurs program was awarded the winner of the International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture in recognition of its commitment to creating agribusiness opportunities and creditworthiness of African Youth.

After receiving the award, IYA decided to invest the \$20,000 cash prize in the establishment of a pilot agribusiness incubation center in Republic of Benin where young people between the age of 18 and 35 would be trained in agribusiness and supported to establish independent agribusiness enterprises.

To commence activities in the country, IYA organized a sensitization workshop where youth and other stakeholders in the country gathered to identify and discuss areas of intervention for the young people using the Innovation Award platform. To accelerate its activities and impact, Innovation Award collaborated with the Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to train and empower the beneficiaries trained in the value chains of rice and aquaculture. Ten of the selected youths who performed well during the training received business grants.

Profiled below are some of the beneficiaries:

### **Oke Owolabi Sonagnon Dieuleveut:**

Owolabi was supported and has registered a company known as Shalom Biscuit, and presently produces biscuits and cookies from local rice produced in Benin Republic. Although he only produces biscuits for now, he intends



Samples of shalom biscuit

to start making other rice based products he learned during the training.

**ASSOU Amélé Ahoefan** produces chinchin from rice. The business is located in Abomey-Calavi, and aims to satisfy the ever growing need for rice based products especially rice chinchin and croquettes.

**Fandy Audrey** is into catfish production using tarpaulin ponds. She used the grant and equipment for the first cycle of the business with the intention to expand later as the business grows.

**HOUENOU Jésubgè Daniel** one of the beneficiaries started his business in catfish production after getting the business grant. He also provides smoked fish on demand.

**Abiola Romain Ognonkiton** was supported with a grant for rice production. He is currently engaged

in the business of rice production and sales of certified seed located in Bantè community. He plans to have another production site in Glazoué community in the nearest future.

**HONFO DJIDJOHO MARCEL** started his business of catfish production in Porto-Novo following the receipt of the grant award. He also invested his personal cash and expanded his business to an earthen pond. He also offers training and consultancy services in fish farming.

**Marriette Agoinon** was the only female in the rice production class during the training while her other females colleagues went for rice value addition class. She said, she has always had interest in rice production.



One of the beneficiaries, Mirlain (M) produces cakes and chinchin from rice

## 103 youth receive YEASA \$75,000 grant



*Uthman Rukayat (right) with YEASA monitoring*

A total of 103 beneficiaries of the Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) project have received the sum of \$75,000 grant as part of the project's efforts to help young people to establish agribusiness enterprises.

The project implemented by IITA in partnership with Afe Babalola University and AfricaRice is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The project beneficiaries who are drawn from Oyo and Ekiti states in Nigeria as well as Republic of Benin received cash and equipment to support the take-off of their small scale agribusiness enterprises in cowpea, maize, plantain and cassava.

The 2020 edition of the YEASA project started with the application phase in July 2020 and progressed to the online training phase where 200 agripreneurs were trained on the key elements of setting up a successful agribusiness enterprise through various production courses and business soft skill. A total of 103 were selected after the business plan screening stage.

The finalists had their businesses awarded the grants after meeting set criteria, like business scalability, unique selling proposition, a good financial statement of the business, and the overall business concept.

The project team has additionally been providing mentoring and backstopping to the youth. Also, through their intense monitoring exercise, they have been able to determine and evaluate the impact of the grant and to understand the business challenges with the aim of providing solutions.

Below is a brief on some of the beneficiaries of the project.

**Name: MOUTANGOU GNAMOU Yepoudoua Remi**  
**Country: Benin Republic**  
**Agribusiness value chain: Garri production**

**MOUTANGOU GNAMOU Yepoudoua Remi** is the sole proprietor of his business located in Calavi, Republic of Benin where he produces a unique type of garri mixed with coconut milk. The product is packaged in 1kg and 2kg packs and sold for CFA 500 and CFA 1000 respectively. Other sizes are delivered based on request. The business supplies restaurants, homes (some are scheduled on a fixed quantity per month) and the open market through off-takers

**Name: Bah Abdoul Aziz**  
**Country: Benin Republic**



*Bah Abdoul Aziz (m) with his packaged Garri*

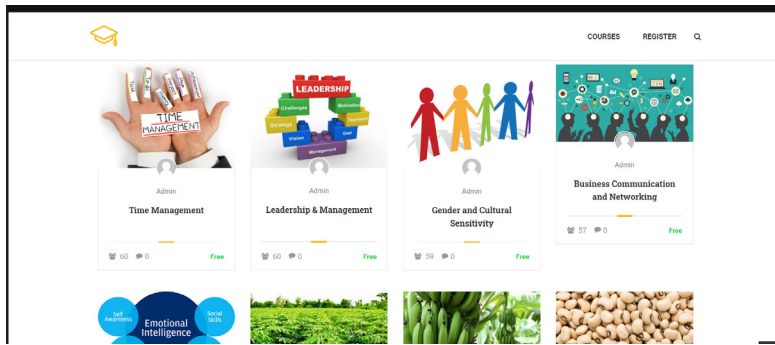
**Agribusiness value chain: Garri production**

**Bah Abdoul Aziz** runs his garri processing business with two other partners in Ketu, Republic of Benin. The factory produces 1.5 tons of garri per day during peak periods and it is packed in 1kg to 10kg bags. The venture which also produces tapioca, lafun, fufu, and starch on demand, provides seasonal employment for 52 persons during the production cycle while the cassava products are exported to Nigeria and also sold to off-takers within Benin.

**Name: Abimbola Taiwo and Kehinde**  
**Country: Nigeria**  
**Agribusiness value chain: Plantain flour production**

The plantain flour processing business is a partnership between two brothers, and located in Oyo town, Nigeria. The interesting thing about the staff working with these youth is that they requested to be paid in kind rather than in cash. They thus receive bunches of plantain fruit as payment. The final product is sold in 1 kg packs to health-conscious customers in churches and open market. They hope to get their NAFDAC registration soon and improve their product branding and packaging.

**Name: Uthman Rukayat Adewumi**  
**Country: Nigeria**  
**Agribusiness value chain: Pap flour, tidbits, and cowpea flour production**  
Uthman Rukayat Adewumi runs her processing enterprise in Ibadan, producing a range of products using maize and cowpea. She produces pap flour, tidbits, and cowpea flour. The business has trained more than



five other agripreneurs from Lagos and Oyo state on tidbits production.

**Name: Adesina Oluwatobi**

**Country: Nigeria**

**Agribusiness value chain: Tidbits production**

Tobi runs her tidbits business in the heart of Ede town in Osun state. The business currently produces 120 dozens of tidbits per week and she has employed one full-time worker who she pays #700 daily.

**Name: Adedayo Joseph Aderinkomi**

**Country: Nigeria**

**Agribusiness value chain: Plantain flour production**

Aderinkomi is a cassava producer and his farm is located in the outskirts of Ogun state. He currently uses his one-acre land which he leased early in 2020 for cassava root production and seasonally employs five workers to help with the farm management activities. He is currently seeking loan opportunities to expand the area

of land he is presently cultivating.

With a few of these success stories in Nigeria and Benin, the YEASA project is stimulating more young people towards starting up their agribusinesses to earn decent incomes.

The project, which has trained over 200 agripreneurs in Nigeria and Benin Republic, plans to train 1,000 unemployed young men and women with least secondary school education in Nigeria and the Republic of Benin in its three years project life with other project partners.

To meet up with this number and give more young people the opportunity to benefit from the project, and at the same time navigate the challenges of COVID-19, the project team adopted the use of online platforms for trainings.

About 10,000 applicants applied for the training program through the website [www.yeasa.org](http://www.yeasa.org). Successful applicants received 4 weeks of intensive online

training on a range of agricultural commodities such as soybean/cowpea, maize, plantain, cassava, agri-machinery fabrication as well as soft skills like business communication, marketing, emotional intelligence, and business plan development.

“We have always appreciated the use of ICT tools in training, but considering that Agriculture is a practical science we have always opted for the more conventional approach. COVID 19 has propelled us to utilize the online training approach and so far, it has worked well. This will enable us to reach out to more youths going forward,” said the IITA-YEASA coordinator, Adunoye Oluyemi.

The Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) project aims to build the technical, entrepreneurial, and soft skills of young adults (18-35 years), as a means of improving their productive capacity and increasing their benefits from existing agri-food systems.



(L-R) IYA trained agripreneurs taking new trainees through the process of cowpea and cassava production

## A walk in the Park

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs has commenced the revitalization of the Oyo state farmers’ training centre located in Awe, Oyo town in Afijio Local Government Area of the state.

The centre, formerly known as the Rural Community Development Centre, was a farmers’ academy used by Oyo state

government to train farmers, youths and other stakeholders in agriculture.

The centre has since been renamed as Oyo state-IITA Youth Agribusiness Incubation Park Centre, Awe, following the decision of IITA, through IYA, to partner with the state government for the revitalization of the facilities at the centre.

IYA had taken a bold step in June 2020 to transform the centre into an agribusiness park where pilot enterprises could be established to support the development of youth-led start-up agribusiness enterprises through training and low-cost incubation model. The centre will also provide agribusiness support services to

youths and farmers in and around Awe.

Presently, the youths have cultivated about 40 hectares of cassava and renovated the abandoned cassava processing centre which is scheduled to commence full operations on 1 February 2021.

There are plans to establish a livestock enterprise comprising sheep, goat and rabbit. A poultry, aquaculture, beekeeping, and modern vegetable production with the use of the screen

house technology, are also part of the plan. The cultivation of maize, soybean, potato, cowpea, and other crops will be introduced in the next planting season.

Through the partnership, IYA has acquired the oil palm and cashew plantation on the farm.

Some of the renovation activities going on at the park include the conversion of the administrative buildings to offices and training rooms; the construction of a 2500 capacity poultry

and a sheep and goat pen; and the digging and expansion of fish ponds.

Having prioritized the provision of electricity, boreholes and renovation of the hostel facilities at the centre, the state government also commenced the construction of a fence around the facility.

IYA has posted four of its staff to the centre.



*(L-R) Before and after view of the cassava processing centre at Awe*



*(L-R) Before and after look of the wet section of the processing centre.*



*(L-R) Before and after look of a section of the processing centre.*

# ENABLE



# TAAT

**“I am better off as a farmer than as a banker”**



*Ayotomiwa Ogunsua*

A beneficiary of ENABLE-TAAT poultry training, Ayotomiwa Ogunsua, has testified to the profitability of agribusiness, following his exposure to appropriate technologies in poultry business. Ogunsua, who left his full time job in a bank to start a business in agriculture says he does not regret the action.

By providing a platform to train and mentor youth to create sustainable agribusiness enterprises, ENABLE-TAAT is helping to stop cases where some youths venture into agribusiness without adequate training and mentorship, and end up with losses and debts. The program covers nine priority commodities which are: cassava, orange fleshed sweet potato, maize, rice, high iron bean, rice, wheat, sorghum/ millet aquaculture and small livestock.

Ogunsua, a university graduate, had gotten a job with a Microfinance Bank in Ibadan, Nigeria, immediately after completing the mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) but shortly after that, he enrolled for the ENABLE-TAAT program in poultry value chain. This led to his poultry business startup comprising about 250 birds, and the

business has continued to grow. Today, he says agribusiness is paying him more than what the bank offered.

His words: “I am better off as a farmer than as a banker. I have made more from agribusiness in a short while than I did from my bank job because of the impact of the ENABLE TAAT training”

While this might sound like the usual words of businessmen who have made remarkable profit, it goes deeper for Ogunsua, who has equally made social

profit and recognition from his venture.

“I advocate for the involvement of more youth in the agribusiness sector, on television and radio, and people respect my opinion because I am living it”, he said.

On why agriculture seems unappealing to African youths, the young farmer said: “One of the challenges is that we are practicing agriculture as they did in the olden days. We are not seeing agriculture as a sector that needs to be commercialized or mechanized. Even though we now have our own skills, we are still not very exposed to the ease of mechanized farming and the business aspect. ENABLE-TAAT taught me that with the application of the right technologies, agriculture is a goldmine and I remain grateful.”

According to Ogunsua, where the investment is properly monitored, a poultry farmer can make up to 50 percent return on investment in broiler production within 8 weeks.

Ogunsua who has also ventured into orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) and rabbit rearing, currently employs two workers and hopes to export his products outside Africa.



*A team of ENABLE-TAAT with Ogunsua and his staff during a monitoring visit*

## ENABLE-TAAT beneficiaries make N1 million as gross profit in poultry business



*The trained beneficiaries stocking the first set of birds at the agribusiness park in Onne, Rivers state*

A team of ENABLE-TAAT trained agripreneurs have recorded over N1million as gross profit, after two cycles of rearing live broiler. They also made 45 percent return on investment in 8 weeks of production. The agripreneurs who constituted a poultry cluster under the TAAT program attributed their success to the technical delivery of ENABLE-TAAT agribusiness park initiative, as well as the backstopping and monitoring activities provided.

The cluster, comprising 3 young people – Apawarisia Samuel, Obarijima Onyomi and Vivian Okuboyeio, leveraged the facilities of ENABLE-TAAT incubation park for their start-up, following their training between November and December 2019.

The agribusiness park initiative was designed to backstop clustered

agripreneurs during the early days of their business startup. The backstopping is usually in the form of infrastructure, services, mentoring and linkage.

The program increases agricultural productivity through the deployment of proven and high-performance agricultural technologies at scale along nine commodity compacts including cassava, orange-fleshed sweet potato, aquaculture, small livestock, high iron beans, maize, and rice.

Giving kudos to the poultry cluster, Apawarisia said: "For most of us who are new to structured business environment, the clustering experience has greatly improved our abilities to work in a team, enhanced our leadership skills, and business ethics; and improved inter-personal relationship with our colleagues, clients and customers."

The huge profit has undoubtedly motivated the agripreneurs and changed their perception about agriculture. They commended the ENABLE-TAAT model for youth engagement in agribusiness, stating that it had mitigated uncertainties associated with start-ups.

Having gained the confidence to take calculated investment risks, the agripreneurs have initiated the process of scaling outside the incubation facility. Some of the trainees have also stocked birds outside the agribusiness park for the expansion of their enterprises.

# Creating pathway for youth in agriculture

The ENABLE-TAAT, the youth compact of the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) recently organized a 4-week intensive training in aquaculture for 39 young graduates as part of its mission to extend agribusiness opportunities to youth in Africa.

The training equipped the youths with technical skills in the aquaculture value chain and also imparted in them soft skills and business management skills needed to become successful business owners and employers of labor.

The techniques and technologies disseminated were in line with the technologies promoted by the aquaculture compact of TAAT coordinated by WorldFish. The aquaculture compact had provided ENABLE-TAAT with facilities such as the Tilapia cage culture system to facilitate the dissemination of aquaculture

technologies to farmers and youths.

During the first week, the trainees were engaged in theoretical modules on aquaculture. Many of them shared their prior knowledge of fish farming and were able to see the knowledge gaps. In the following weeks, the trainees were engaged in deep practical sessions on catfish hatchery operation and management, catfish pond production techniques and management, tilapia cage culture and fish product development and processing (smoking, filleting, fish crumbles, etc.).

Other aspects of the training included modules on soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, business communication, business development and leadership management. Also, trainees were taught to write business plans and advised to form a cooperative society to power their business ideas to reality

and facilitate quick access to funds.

After being exposed to new and modern technologies in aquaculture through the ENABLE TAAT training, the trainees testified to an expansion in knowledge and expressed their enthusiasm to create their own startups. It was a rare opportunity for many of the trainees.

Lydia Akinboade, one of the training beneficiaries, said, "I never even imagined that such free training would be this in-depth. I am grateful for this opportunity to learn so many new things in fish farming through ENABLE-TAAT and I'm starting my own enterprise in 2021."

After training, ENABLE TAAT offers mentorship and backstopping to its beneficiaries. The compact also links them to loans and grant opportunities.



A group photograph of the beneficiaries during their induction at Awe



The trainees during a practical session on pond management



The trainees during a practical session on catfish value addition





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Transforming African Agriculture



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NEWS

## Young Africa Works-IITA project receives over 60,000 application



**YOUNG AFRICA WORKS - IITA PROJECT**

**CALL FOR APPLICATION**

This training empowers young women and men with critical skills to start a career in agriculture. The training further provides a learning space for young entrepreneurs passionate about starting a business in the field of agriculture. Finally, the training offers mentorship and internship opportunities to provide practical knowledge and tools required to start a business in agriculture.

LOCATION: LAGOS, KADUNA AND KANO STATES

TO APPLY, visit  
[youthagripreneurs.org/young-africa-works-iita](http://youthagripreneurs.org/young-africa-works-iita)

APPLICATION PERIOD  
12 November-12 December 2020

FOR ENQUIRIES: Email: [Youngafricaworks-iita@cgiar.org](mailto:Youngafricaworks-iita@cgiar.org)  
Call: 09062081803 (Kano), 09062081804 (Lagos), 09020957065 (Kaduna)



**YOUNG AFRICA WORKS - IITA PROJECT**

...an innovative approach to agribusiness training and start-ups for Nigeria's young people

**Thank you** for your interest to participate in the training program of the Young Africa Works - IITA Project.

Your response to our call shows your passion in contributing your quota to the development of the agri-food sector in Nigeria.

We received **65,271** applications from **Kano, Kaduna & Lagos** states.

**SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED SOON.**

Young Africa Works - IITA Project...Building a new generation of Agripreneurs

The Young Africa Works-IITA project implemented in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation has received 65,271 applications for its proposed training program across three states in Nigeria.

In November 2020, the training team of the project launched a call for young men and especially women between the age of 18-35 years residing in Lagos, Kaduna and Kano to apply for the training program.

The training will focus on agribusiness development that will provide young people with the opportunity to grow their businesses through coaching and mentoring, and learn modern farming and value addition techniques. Young people will also be exposed to agricultural product marketing skills, market linkages, and career orientation through job placements and internship opportunities.

These skills will engender the establishment of viable agribusiness enterprises and bridge the gap between

youth and potential employers in the agricultural sector. It will give young women—70 percent of the participants—a special opportunity to enhance their participation and adopt entrepreneurship.

To highlight women's participation, the training and the project seek to create productive partnerships between young men and women and apply a gender-based approach to address some of the challenges faced by young women in the agribusiness sector in Nigeria.

The call for application which closed on the 12th of December 2020 recorded a massive response from young people with Lagos receiving over 19,000 applications, Kano and Kaduna receiving over 27,000 and 18,000 respectively.

To be a beneficiary of the training, a participant is expected to have attained a minimum educational qualification of Diploma and Junior Secondary School certificate. He or she must be a resident of the state and willing to commit at least 6 weeks to the training while also

demonstrating passion for agriculture.

The selected candidates will be screened at various centres across the three project locations.

Participants will acquire business and soft skills that will facilitate their integration into the professional field. The training will cover the following value chains: maize, soybean, rice, horticulture, orange fleshed sweet potato, groundnut, aquaculture, and poultry.

According to Aline Mugisho, Executive Manager of Young Africa Works-IITA project "there will be no development in Nigeria without the youth. The best way to end poverty is to create opportunities, and this is what this project is all about. By creating career opportunities and youth-led enterprises, we are planting a seed of change for the next generation. It is in this line that the Young Africa Works-IITA project was developed by the youth and for the youth."

## Young Africa Works-IITA project training program kicks off in Kano, Kaduna and Lagos



*A staff of Young Africa Works-IITA sensitizing women on the need for them to participate in the program*

The training program of the Young Africa Works-IITA project is scheduled to kick off on the 1st of February, 2021.

The training which will run concurrently at the three project locations in Kano, Kaduna and Lagos states will focus on imparting skills that will prepare the selected beneficiaries for employment and entrepreneurship.

The Young Africa Works-IITA project is designed to give young people the opportunity of either securing gainful employment in the agri-food system or becoming independent agribusiness owners along the value chains of maize, soybean, rice, horticulture, orange fleshed sweet potato, groundnut, aquaculture, and poultry.

The project which initially launched a call for application in November 2020 received over 60,000 applications from young people residing in the three locations.

**IITA office, National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service office complex**

**Zaria, Kaduna State.**

**Telephone: 09020957065**

About 1800 beneficiaries will be participating in the pilot phase of the training. In order to observe COVID-19 safety measures during the training, the project will operate two training sessions while working with identified partners who are experts in the listed value chains.

The training program which will run for six weeks will cover orientation program, classroom training, practical sessions, excursions to successful agribusiness firms, mentorship through sharing of success stories, soft skills training, team building exercise, experiential learning, and internship with technical hosts.

Agribusiness technical hosts have been identified for beneficiaries who selected the employment track while reputable agribusiness firms will be handling the experiential learning sessions for beneficiaries who opted for the entrepreneurship track.

### Our locations

**Lagos State Agricultural Development Authority**

**37 Oko-Oba, Agege Motor Road, Agege Lagos State.**

**Telephone: 09062081804**

Speaking about the training, the Project Training Coordinator, Evelyn Ohanwusi stated that capacity building is an important step in creating the next generation of agripreneurs.

She said: "The training which is a mix of theoretical and practical methodology towards the employment and entrepreneurship track will better position the beneficiaries to secure fulfilling jobs and establish their own enterprises respectively. E-learning is also a focus for the project to achieve wider reach and also adapt to the new normal due to the global pandemic."

At the end of the training, the applicants will have the opportunity to start independent agribusiness enterprises leveraging the project's partnership with financial and de-risking institutions in Nigeria to secure credit facilities for establishment of agribusiness enterprises.

**International Institute of Tropical Agriculture**

**Sabo Bakin Zuwo Road, Kano State.**

**Telephone: 09062081803**

# Young Africa Works-IITA project takes youth in agribusiness campaign to radio



As part of efforts to increase visibility of the Young Africa Work-IITA project in Nigeria, the project team in Lagos State participated in a radio program where they enlightened the public about the opportunities available for young people through the project.

The interview which was hosted by Ayo Famurewa on the program titled 'Jordan Breakfast Show' was aired on Jordan 105.5 FM in Lagos State.

Abimbola Ayanniyi, the state project administrator represented IITA while Felicia Okotie, the state training officer represented the project partner, Africa Project Development Centre (APDC) at the interview.

IITA partnered with APDC for the implementation of the Urban Agriculture component of the Young Africa Works-IITA project in Lagos State.

During the interview, Abimbola explained that Young Africa Works-IITA project focuses on devising an innovative approach to agribusiness start-ups and training for Nigeria's young people within the overall Mastercard

Foundation Young Africa Works strategy.

She mentioned that the project would provide the required skills needed to secure dignified and fulfilling work in agrifood value chain for young people between the age of 18-35 years. She noted that the project has mapped out objectives and methodologies for delivery to track the success and impact rate of the project. She stressed that the project is unique in its style because of its strategy to ensure 70 percent women participation to tackle the gender marginalization in the sector.

She explained that the project introduced two career tracks-employment and entrepreneurship for the trained youths to have a range of options to choose from. The entrepreneurship track will identify and expose the beneficiaries to successful agribusiness enterprises and models attractive to young people along the value chains of rice, soybean, maize, cowpea, groundnut, poultry, fish and horticulture.

"The beneficiaries who selected the entrepreneurship track will be guided to develop a bankable business plan after

their training and the project will leverage on its partnership with NIRSAL, Sterling bank to facilitate access to sources of finance and other credit facilities that could aid business establishment. There will also be post training support for these beneficiaries to monitor the growth of their businesses" she said.

For the employment career track, Abimbola pointed out that the project is aware of the skills gap between youth and potential employers, and better placed to match the two interests through commercial internship and mentorship in order to further advance skills development and employment in agri-food value chain. Youth emerging from this track will be provided assistance to find decent jobs through professional placement services. The project is working with *Jobberman* to achieve this.

Speaking on the concept of urban agriculture as it relate to a mega city like Lagos, Felicia stressed that APDC will introduce technologies that will make agribusiness easy and practicable for young people who have no access to land. She revealed that APDC will introduce technologies for operation of commodities along the value chains of horticulture, poultry and aquaculture. She added that the activities in Lagos will feature collaborative operations of an urban farming incubation and training center.

She mentioned that the highlighted commodities are for the pilot phase of the project while more will be introduced in subsequent years.



## Project strengthens partnership in Kano



*The Kano team in an interactive discussion with the Executive Director of WOFAN, Hajia Salamatu Garua*

With the aim of working in six local government areas in Kano state, the Kano state team of the Young Africa Works-IITA project has identified partners in six Local Government Areas to assist in driving the deliverables of the project in the state.

To pilot activities in the state, the team has proposed to work in Rano, Garun Malam, Gaya, Tarauni, Bichi and Minjibir local government areas with a focus on promoting the value chains of soybeans, rice, groundnut, horticulture, aquaculture, poultry and Orange Flesh sweet Potatoes (OFSP).

In pursuit of effective delivery of the qualitative training contents the team after rigorous search of qualified training centers, picked three agribusiness training centers with vast experience in delivering top-class services in agribusiness development. They are: Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), Adolescent Health and Information Projects (AHIP), and Ultra-Fine Foods Company Nigeria Limited.

The team also identified and struck partnerships with 15 thriving agri-food businesses who will serve as technical hosts for internship.

### **Brief on agribusiness training centers identified**

**WOMEN FARMERS ADVANCEMENT NETWORK (WOFAN):** WOFAN was established in June 1993 and incorporated with the Kano state Government as a community Development Association in 1995 and

later registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission in 2004. With its headquarters in Kano, WOFAN partners and works with registered multipurpose cooperatives, CBOS, community service groups, private firms, and research institutions towards achieving a holistic development of the people. Over 1500 women, men and youth groups located in many local government areas (LGAs) across 5 northern states have formed working groups of WOFAN of which each group has 20-30 members. WOFAN has a number of core activities it pursues to support its mission statement, goal and objectives. WOFAN generally involves the household in its activities with the aim of improving gender relations by encouraging

the involvement of men and women in project intervention at all levels.

**ULTRA-FINE FOODS COMPANY NIG. LTD:** Ultra-Fine Foods is an agri-business, food processing and manufacturing company. The company specializes in plant physiology, nutrition, processing and manufacturing. They produce both raw materials and formulate competitive plant origin solutions to finished goods. Ultra-Fine Foods Company Nig. Ltd is one of the leading providers of consumer food products in Nigeria. It became operational in 2004 with the backup of an extensive business experience. The company has gradually etched itself into the Nigerian foods, beverages and animal feeds market by maintaining quality control backed by best technology in all its operations. The company has, as part of its plans for expansion, invested in a big plant solely for the production of processed tomatoes, tomato juice and food seasonings. It has built a reputation as one of the most innovative indigenous companies in Nigeria, specializing in the manufacture of natural foods made from fresh fruits while promoting trade relationships that go beyond the shores of Nigeria.

The company is still aiming at training of local farmers in animal feed production, crop production such as rice, sorghum, maize, millet, groundnut, and soybeans. It also aims to change the negative attitude of people toward modern ways of agricultural activities and its production.



*Some of the machines used for teaching women on value addition at the centre*

## ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND INFORMATION PROJECTS (AHIP)-

The institute was established in 2005 to develop humans in leadership, livelihood, and other vocations. One of the sources of livelihood encouraged is agriculture. Since most of the students are women and may not have land or the means to go big on farming, the institute has always encouraged agribusiness and agripreneurship. AHIP employs the services of volunteers in agricultural economics, livestock production, and crop production. The volunteers are drawn from the Kano Agricultural & Rural Development Authority (KNARDA); Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano, and Kano Agricultural Supply Company (KASCO).

### Rahila Msheila- Kano Administrator



Rahila Msheila holds a B.Sc in Business Administration and is a member of Nigerian Institute of Management. She has over 5 years' experience in finance, administration, auditing and procurement garnered from working with International Non-Governmental Organizations funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on various projects cutting across governance, the WASH and health sectors.

## Welcoming new staff

Serving as a volunteer presentations coach, she also has experience working as a communications and security liaison. Prior to joining the IITA-YAW project she was with John Hopkins Center for Communication Programs' Breakthrough Action-Nigeria project, where she liaised with over 350 community volunteers and supervisors on administrative tasks across Local Government Areas in Kebbi state.

### Peter Iroagbalachi- Project ICT officer



Iroagbalachi Peter is a Digital Projects Developer, with a strong drive towards studying, developing and promoting enterprise-wide technologies and platforms especially in agribusiness, research and development in a gender inclusive manner. He is always looking for solutions to problems or challenges by leveraging existing technological solutions and building new ones where necessary. He completed his MSc degree in Computer Sciences (Business Computing) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (2018). He has 6 years' experience of programming for web technologies using Agile approaches with excellent skills in User Experience, Human computer Interaction, Infographics and Visual analytics. In the past 3 years, he has gained vast experience while working with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) as a website and infographics developer, developing,

revamping and managing websites for various projects within IITA including the main IITA website. He has developed various visual content for the promotion of IITA visibility and online presence. He is currently the ICT Officer for Young Africa Works- IITA project.

### Maryam Nawrah Lawal-STEP Training Officer



Maryam Nawrah Lawal is a passionate trainer and advocate of youth entrepreneurship as well as gender and development practitioner. She is actively engaged in promoting growth within the agri-business and economic growth sector. Maryam has over 11 years' experience in Community Development Services and has served as a lecturer and youth mobilizer through creating linkages between and among parents, students and their environment at various capacities. She uses radio drama, storytelling, simulations, and community theatre to create awareness on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), climate change adaptation and mitigation and the importance of agribusiness as a means of self-reliance. Her capacity has been built on giving support and capacity building through training/ step down training of farmers, school young farmers' clubs and vocational groups to alleviate poverty, enhancement of self-reliance and make agri-business a demand driven vocation for youths and young school leavers.



We started the production of the IYA bi-monthly newsletter in 2013. The initiative was born out of our zeal to educate and inform youths and other stakeholders about our activities. The medium has served as an advocacy and resource mobilization tool for IYA. We have celebrated our achievements and expressed our views through the platform. To all our readers, we say thank you. To our editors, and contributors, we appreciate you all.

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