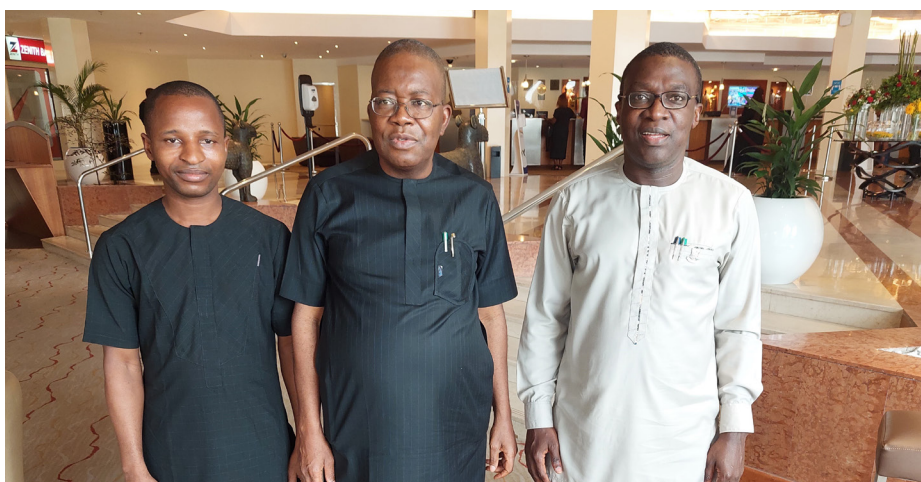


Stakeholders plan for new Zero Hunger Project

In preparation for the launch of the new Zero Hunger Project, [IITA](#), in partnership with [AfricaRice](#), has held separate meetings with government stakeholders from Nigeria and Togo towards achieving Zero Hunger. The Zero Hunger Project team held consultations on 18 and 22 June, and 1 July with representatives from the Nigerian states of Benue, Ogun, and Ebonyi, respectively.

The three-year Zero Hunger Project, funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), will contribute to the Zero Hunger Initiatives (ZHI) within the rice and cassava value chains in the three Nigerian states and two Togolese regions—Plateaux and Kara.

In the first meeting, Zero Hunger Project Lead [Debo Akande](#) and the Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Manager, Oyewale Abioye, discussed the possibility of collaboration with the Benue State Commissioner of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr Timothy A. Ijir, in Abuja. Akande said IITA's support on the Project continues the partnership with the State under the Nigeria Zero Hunger Forum led by Nigeria's former President and IITA Ambassador, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. He added that the Project would focus on cassava in the State and leverage technology and innovation, policy analysis, and policy



(L-R) Zero Hunger Project MEL Manager Oyewale Abioye, Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources Benue State, Dr Timothy A. Ijir, and Zero Hunger Project Lead Dr Debo Akande.

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Farmers prefer locally bred CBSD-resistant cassava clones in DRC



Reasons of choice of farmers are recorded.

The USAID-funded Action to Control Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo project, on 15 June, hosted a Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) to evaluate the CBSD-tolerant cassava clones currently on trial. The PVS took place in the Ruzizi Plain, with farmers invited to participate.

IITA is implementing the project in partnership with the National Institute for Agronomic Study and Research (INERA) to counter CBSD, a disease that causes significant damage to cassava production in DRC. This evaluation follows five years of breeding research at four different stations. At year 3 of the project, most of the best-bet improved varieties grown in the country, in addition to the best-selected clones at the end of the breeding scheme, were subjected to high pressure CBSD stress in four different locations. Out of the 30 cassava genotypes evaluated that year, only seven were CBSD-tolerant in the fields.

These seven clones are currently being reevaluated in a trial field in Kinyinya near Katogota, located in the Itara county, Uvira territory. Fifty participants—including 30 farmers, among whom 70% were women—had the opportunity to evaluate and select their preferred cassava clones according to their criteria.

IITA, INERA, and the National Seed regulation service (SENASEM) organized the participatory evaluation six months after planting to select the best cassava clones, based primarily

on leaf quality for the leaves market segment. Three clones, including one previously tolerant to root necrosis disease in Western DRC, were most preferred by farmers.

At the end of the activity, Project Manager Sikirou Mouritala pointed out, “It is worth noting that the three most preferred cassava clones by the farmers are locally bred genotypes.” The lesson here is that sustainability of production of locally bred genotypes deserves more attention in the breeding program in DRC.

INERA Director Nocy Ruhebuza said, “All the improved varieties introduced to restore cassava production during the mosaic pandemic from the 2000s till today are susceptible to CBSD; and research results submitted for farmers’ appreciation are timely, relieving the pain of cassava stakeholders in the Ruzizi Plain and elsewhere in the DRC.

“Farmers expressed their wish to see these selected clones made available for multiplication during the next growing season beginning in September. According to Fatuma Kayengele, a farmer from Katogota, “These innovations will allow us to



Farmers evaluating the cassava stems and leaves.

increase our production and incomes and fight hunger, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis.

After farmers selected the three best clones, the provincial coordinator of SENASEM, Mazambi Jonathan Byakombe, assured them that their involvement in the activity ensures that the best-selected genotypes are published in the national catalog as soon as possible.

The next step will be to assess the root quality and CBSD-resistance of these clones at harvest.



Group discussion with farmers to identify their criteria for clones selection.

engagement for technology uptake to achieve its objectives.

The Hon. Commissioner thanked IITA and IFAD for selecting Benue State and focusing on the cassava value chain. He highlighted seed production, off-taking, and processing as the main challenges facing the State's cassava sector.

At the Ogun State consultations, a joint team from IITA and AfricaRice led by the Zero Hunger Project Co-Lead Francis Nwilene of AfricaRice met with the Ogun State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr Adeola Odedina, and his team. Nwilene said the Zero Hunger Forum is an initiative by the World Food Programme (WFP) to support states in Nigeria to achieve food security.

Thanking the Project partners for considering Ogun State as one of the beneficiaries, the Hon. Commissioner remarked on the State's uniqueness in agriculture because of their proximity to major cassava off-takers in Nigeria. He cited instances of increasing demands from starch, garri, fufu, and cassava flour factories, which would require improvement in the cassava

seed system to meet higher production levels. Issues around reviewing the State's obsolete agricultural policy were also highlighted as critical areas needing ZHI support.

During the meeting with the Ebonyi State Hon. Commissioner of Agriculture Chief Moses O. Nomeh, he mentioned that the State was working with USAID to develop a strategic policy on agriculture for the State and will be interested in working with the ZHI further. Nwilene added that since the Project will focus on rice in Ebonyi State, improving the quality of the processed rice is key.

The State will be interested in introducing the Grain quality-enhancer, Energy-efficient, and durable Material (GEM) Parboiling technology in rice processing. Nwilene informed the Ebonyi State Hon. Commissioner that the Project's capacity development focus will be on productivity enhancement, building farmers' capacity to access credit from the financial institutions through in-kind value chain financing, and promoting rural entrepreneurship for women and youth. Climate-smart agricultural practices will also be introduced in the farming communities.

One key project engagement approach is through partnership with the IFAD loan-funded Value Chain Development Project (VCDP) in each state to achieve ZHI's objectives. The ZHI project team had held two separate meetings with the VCDP team in the three states, where they mapped the needs of the VCDP beneficiaries to align them to the ZHI project goal.



The Zero Hunger team with Ogun State government officials.

IITA to strengthen collaboration with BUK

An IITA-Kano delegation led by Station Head Alpha Kamara visited the Vice Chancellor Bayero University Kano (BUK), Prof Sagir Adamu Abbas, on 9 June to strengthen the collaboration between both organizations.

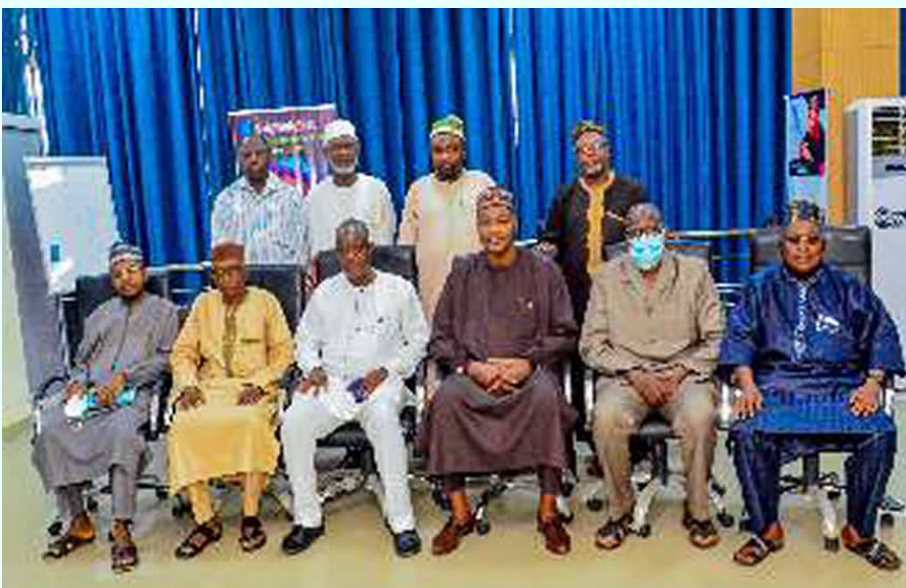
Kamara noted that IITA had been in partnership with BUK for a long time, from the early collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture.

He thanked BUK for partnering with the Center for Dryland Agriculture (CDA). He said he hoped both parties would diversify the collaboration to include MSc and PhD programs and hoped to have IITA resource scientists from BUK.

In his response, the Vice Chancellor assured the visitors of the University's readiness to support the Institute. He said the door was open for any request on resource persons or equipment for research.

"If you need any scientists from BUK or equipment for research, our door is always open," he said.

Professor Abbas encouraged IITA to publicize their activities via BUK's Media outlets, such as BUK Radio Station and the Official Bulletin, to expand its reach.



The IITA-Kano delegation with BUK Vice Chancellor, Prof Sagir Adamu Abbas.

Improved eating: Healthy benefits of fortified snacks

Eating healthy snacks is one way to combat poor nutrition, while legumes can replace animal-based proteins in various preparations. Snacks fortified with legumes, particularly soybean, are nutritious enough for household consumption. They are rich in protein, fiber, and minerals such as iron and zinc, and are satiating.

Researchers carried out a recent [study](#) to evaluate the physical, nutritional, anti-nutritional properties, and consumer preferences of five snacks produced from maize and soybean.

The five maize-based products prepared from high quality maize flour (HQMF) and high quality soybean flour (HQSF) were plain maize finger, spiced maize finger, spiced fortified maize finger,, plain maize chin-chin, and soy-

maize chin-chin. In addition, the soy-maize chin-chin product was prepared using 100% HQMF and HQSF in an 80:20 proportion.

Lead researcher, [IITA](#) Food Science and Technology Associate Scientist [Emmanuel Alamu](#) revealed that soy-maize chin-chin has the highest energy value and protein. However, tannin concentration was highest in a product containing soy and lowest in 100% maize finger with the value of 1.13 mg/g. Tannins (polyphenols) are known for their anti-oxidative and anti-inflammatory properties.

The study also revealed that present in all the products, especially soy-maize chin-chin and spiced maize finger, is amylose, which is beneficial to hyperinsulinemia and obesity sufferers. It slows glucose release into the bloodstream. In addition, maize fortified products produce dietary fiber,, generate short-chain fatty acids that prevent cardiovascular diseases, and improve bowel health and glycemic control. Hence, the consumers reasonably accepted maize fortified with soybean flour.

As one of IITA's missions is fighting hidden hunger, eating healthy snacks will improve the nutritional status and boost the overall nutrient intake of consumers. Furthermore, this will develop maize and soybean value chains, providing economic value and job opportunities.



Nutrient-fortified snacks from high quality maize flour (HQMF).

Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Always clean your hands; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks properly; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; and practice general sanitation and hygiene.

Got a story to share?

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



ENABLE-TAAT provides youth networking platform at Tanzania open day

ENABLE-TAAT has held the Tanzanian edition of its open day to increase youth inclusion and development in agriculture value chains. The open day provided an excellent networking forum for farmers and youth in Tanzania to share different knowledge and ideas about agribusiness to develop their capacity and promote and showcase youth agricultural products to increase their income.

The exhibition brought stakeholders from different sectors, including financial institutions like the Equity Bank, which encouraged youths to engage in best entrepreneurial practices, such as forming affiliated groups to make it easier for them to obtain bank loans to advance their agribusiness activities. The bank also promised to provide loans to all youth who formed cooperative groups.

“Our main goal is to help young people achieve their goals, so we pledge to provide them with helpful loans. Our best initiative is to encourage all young people who have not yet formed cooperative groups to do so and give us their proposal so that we can provide them with a loan according to their needs,” said Equity Bank Loan Officer, Clara Nyalusi.

In addressing marketing challenges, Dar es salaam Regional Agriculture Officer Dr Elizabeth Mshote stressed the importance of using the different experts available to resolve the problem that has proven to be a significant impediment to farmers in achieving their objectives. “If we want to solve our marketing problems, we need to strengthen close cooperation with marketing officers and business development officers so that they can tell us what is needed and what we are supposed to do to reach the needed target,” Mshote said.

The participants visited demonstration fields to observe and learn from various activities conducted by youth and experts. The youth and farmers applauded the event for the opportunity to interact with experts and find solutions to problems across value



Showcasing products of youth-led enterprises to participating stakeholders.

chains. Rosemary Mbagha, one of the youth participants, said, “This exhibition has inspired me a lot to be consistent in my agribusiness establishment, and I urge IITA to continue with this initiative so that more young people would benefit from this.”



Interactive session among the youth and farmers.