

## IITA scientist wins best poster award for gender presentation

Devis Mwakanyamale, an [IITA](#) Research Associate in the Institute's Dar es Salaam station, received the best poster award at the [Cultivating Equality Conference](#). The virtual conference themed: Cultivating Equality: Advancing Gender Research in Agriculture and Food Systems was organized by the CGIAR Gender Platform and Wageningen University & Research as the EU Gender-Smart partner. The [4-day program](#) included interactive discussions and contributions to advance gender research in agricultural and food systems.



Mwakanyamale Devis.

The conference was organized following a call during the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 for “bold actions to transform the way the world produces and consumes food” in advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While gender equality is one of the pre-conditions for achieving these goals, it is also important in generating sus-

tainable and resilient agricultural and food systems. This is because gender research and integration in agriculture-related research are critical in guiding positive transformations in food systems and societies worldwide.

During the conference, participants reviewed research that helps understand and advance positive synergies within sustainable and resilient agricultural

food systems and equality in societies globally. The conference also addressed how marginalization and social exclusion in agriculture and food systems are shaped at the intersection of gender with other social dimensions, such as socioeconomic status, age or generation, ethnicity, or religion and belief systems, while exploring the catalytic role gender research can play to help overcome such exclusions. **to page 2**

## IHC visits IITA: Promotes Indian culture

The Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Benin, Chad, and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mr Abhay Thakur, and his team visited [IITA](#) Headquarters on 21 November. The visit was to launch the Indian book collection and partner with the Institute. The books on art, culture, and history donated by the Indian High Commission (IHC) promote Indian culture and expose users of the Knowledge Center to its literature.



High Commissioner Thakur launching the Indian book collection at the IITA Knowledge Center.

Representing IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#), the Deputy Director General, Corporate Services, [Hilde Koper](#), introduced the guests to the activities and different hubs of the Institute, including youth programs

that deal with the commercialization of agriculture.

Koper said collaborating with IITA will put forward the agricultural system, which can be done through improved

technologies and youth engagement in agriculture.

High Commissioner Thakur stated that “partnering with IITA could be a platform to promote agriculture in India and Africa.”

In response, IITA Molecular Geneticist [Ranjana Bhattacharjee](#) suggested that India build a partnership with IITA in the seed sector. She also suggested that there should be a pilot project on oil palm production in Nigeria. This could be done on five thousand hectares of land with seedlings from India. This would be established via a bilateral or multilateral agreement, starting with Oyo State and later scaled out to other states in Nigeria and countries in West Africa.

The team visited the Germplasm Health, Virology and Diagnostics Unit, Bioscience Center, Genetic Resource Center (GRC), and Community Resources Center (CRC).



Mr Abhay Thakur and his team visiting the Germplasm Health, Virology, and Diagnostics Unit.

## IITA scientist wins best poster award for gender presentation

continued from page 1

The conference was an avenue for widening and strengthening the networks of researchers dedicated to advancing gender research. Participants were able to generate conversations that can influence innovation in gender research. The conference featured capacity strengthening, scientific, panel discussion, and poster presentation sessions to encourage key actors towards driving the gender research agenda in agriculture and food systems.

the best for the conference. Thanks to Dr Steven Cole, who encouraged me to prepare the abstract and subsequently the poster, which was submitted alongside the pitch. I also acknowledge the contributions of other co-authors that led to this achievement,” said Mwakanyamale.

Mwakanyamale based the poster on findings from a study that sought to, among other objectives, identify barriers that constrain women’s entry

into the commercialized cassava seed system and specific factors that help women succeed as cassava seed entrepreneurs (CSEs). The development of Tanzania’s cassava seed supply system did not incorporate a gender lens when designing its approach. Thus, recruitment of CSEs tended to favor men, leading to fewer women participating in the cassava seed business. For instance, as of mid-2020, women comprised only 24% of the CSEs.

After the poster session, a panel of three judges used a two-step process to review the available posters. It assessed them based on six criteria: Theoretical/conceptual soundness, Contextualization, Societal implications, Clarity of messaging, Aesthetics, and Conference relevance. Following the assessment, the conference poster jury awarded Mwakanyamale’s poster on “Barriers and opportunities to women’s participation in the commercialized cassava seed system in Tanzania,” the best. Leanne Baumung, [Steven Cole](#), [Ashlea Webber](#), Nadira Sale, and [Regina Kapinga](#) were co-authors of the poster.

“I was taken by surprise as I did not expect our poster would be selected as



Training field for cassava seed entrepreneurs.

# Northeastern Nigerian farmers maximizing crop residues with the Stover Crusher

To assist smallholder, mixed-crop and livestock farmers in processing crop residues, USAID, through its Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) being implemented by [IITA](#) and partner, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), is training these farmers to use the Crop Residue Utilization Machine or Stover Crusher.



*Top: Activity staff train participants to use the Stover Crusher. Bottom: Senior Research Supervisor, Joseph Abikoye, guides trainees on mixing the right nutrient proportions after crushing.*

In November 2021 alone, 1,470 farmers and herders (including 544 females) in Adamawa and Borno states participated in the Crop Residue Utilization and feed formulation training. The purpose of the training is to expose these farmers to the potentials and possibilities of the Stover Crusher.

Since commencing the training, beneficiaries continue to commend the efforts of the IAA for the intervention. They acknowledge the Stover Crusher's ability to crush large amounts of crop residues within a short period. Also, the farmers attest to how well they can utilize leftovers on their farms for income generation and maximum profit. For these agriculture producers, using the machine automatically translates to a "zero-wastage" situation wherein no residue is left to be burned, and the environment is better protected.

For trainees in these local communities, the self-powered, locally fabricated engine will greatly encourage goat-rearing within the localities.

The practice has always been to tie-down goats after roaming for food. Tying these animals down predisposes them to theft. With a machine like this, goats are left to roam freely and feed within the perimeter of the residence.

"The trainees in the four local government areas appreciated the Stover Crusher so much; some asked if they could rent the machine. Others plan on contributing money to buy the machine for their personal and communal use," said Senior Research Supervisor Joseph Abikoye.

The Activity, issued under the US Government's Global Food Security Act, was awarded by USAID Nigeria to the IITA and its partners in July 2019 towards economic recovery in North-East Nigeria. It supports vulnerable populations in 12 Local Government Areas of Adamawa and Borno states by engaging in basic farming activities to improve food security, increase agricultural incomes and enhance resilience among smallholder farmers through strengthening institutions and market networks, and youth and women in agribusiness activities.

## Got a story to share?

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



# AKILIMO Integration kicks off in Ghana

The [African Cassava Agronomy Initiative \(ACAI\)](#) visited Ghana to integrate AKILIMO in the country. Through the Ghana Cassava Centre of Excellence (GCCE), ACAI linked up with existing private, non-profit, and government institutions and international NGOs that can integrate AKILIMO into their operations. Discussions have been progressing since 2020 via virtual meetings; physical meetings could not be held because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The field trip was to follow up on these previous interactions and assess the willingness of the GCCE to integrate AKILIMO into their operations and improve their relationships with cassava farmers in their networks.

The meeting objectives were to use existing maps developed to benchmark already established major cassava production areas, classify interested partners, and identify which AKILIMO decision support tools (DSTs) or formats are of interest. The ACAI team also aimed to check existing

opportunities and the environment where partners work to align AKILIMO DSTs or formats.

The visit also sought to find existing extension agent (EA) structures or commercial interests that can trigger the bundling of AKILIMO with other services to ease its use and ensure that GCCE can be a point of entry to coordinate all other partners in this ongoing initiative.

GCCE organized the field meeting and engaged seven institutions from Eastern, Volta, and Central Regions in discussions. These institutions are Sky 3 Investment Ltd, Asuogyaman Agro Industries and Processing Ltd, Tropical Starch Company Ltd, Caltech Ventures Ltd, Ministry of Foods and Agriculture (MoFA), Kpeve Agric Station, Ghana Export Promotion Authority (Africa Trade House, Accra), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in North Ridge, Accra.

These institutions are private, public, or donor organizations. They are mainly operating in cassava production, processing (garri, High-Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF), starch, and ethanol), seed multiplication (stem cuttings for high starch yielding varieties—for example, Sika Bankye, Ampong, Amansan, Doku Duade, Duade Kpakpa, AGRA, Otuhia, Broni Bankye, Esam Bankye, Bankye Hema, etc.), out-grower schemes, extension services, policy advocacy for digital agriculture and access to finance for cassava production.

In a recent development, ACAI team members—Data Scientist [Meklit Chernet](#), Agronomist and West Africa Coordinator [Christine Kreye](#), and Scaling Specialist [Thompson Ogunsanmi](#)—discussed how GCCE would train identified partners to accelerate using AKILIMO in Ghana. They also agreed to showcase AKILIMO nationally in the 2021 edition of Ghana's national farmers' day.



Members of the ACAI team visiting Asuogyaman Farms.

## 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.