

Impact stories attracting more agricultural investment from DR Congo and donors in 2022 - IITA DG

“Telling the stories of the impact agricultural research is making in Africa can only generate positive returns and ensure that those who are invested in the cause of food security are kept abreast of the progress being made and can do more.” [IITA](#) Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) said this in December at the Institute’s headquarters during a meeting with his media team. [to page 2](#)



IITA Director General, Chief Nteranya Sanginga, speaking with the media at his chieftancy conferment ceremony.

IITA DG Nteranya Sanginga becomes Yoruba Chief

[IITA](#) Director General [Dr Nteranya Sanginga](#) was conferred with the chieftancy title of Aare Afurugbin Ola of the Source (Lead Sower of Wealth and Prosperity of the House Oduduwa) on 11 December in recognition of his outstanding contribution to agriculture, research, and development in Africa.



The Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Enitan Adeyeye, Ojaja II, speaking with the newly conferred Chief Nteranya Sanginga.

The conferment ceremony at the palace of the Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Enitan Adeyeye, Ojaja II, highlighted the achievements of one of Africa's illustrious sons who has contributed significantly to socioeconomic development, especially in the area of agriculture on the continent.

In a statement issued by the IITA media office at the Institute's headquarters in Ibadan, "Dr Sanginga, a citizen of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), who has spent a considerable part of his career in Nigeria, was conferred with the first international honorary chieftaincy by the Ooni (king), who is one of the most powerful and influential traditional rulers in Africa."

"The chieftaincy title is coming at a time when Dr Sanginga is also celebrating 10 years of displaying exceptional commitment to initiatives that have placed the African continent on the global stage, especially in the science, research, and agricultural space.

Providing smallholder farm families with innovations that promote increased production, food, and nutritional security as well as generating employment opportunities for young women and men in the in Africa", said [Kathy Lopez](#), IITA Head of Communication.

"With over 30 years of experience in agricultural research and development, focusing on areas such as applied microbial ecology, plant nutrition, and integrated natural resources management in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia.'

"Dr Sanginga has worked as a researcher with the University of Zimbabwe, International Atomic Energy Agency in Austria, Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of International Centre of Tropical Agriculture (CIAT-TSBF), and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA); before resuming as Director General at IITA in 2011."

Speaking at the event, IITA Ambassador, and former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, said that the chieftaincy title is not only significant but also deserving of Dr Sanginga, who he described as the Father of African Youth.

According to the 51st Oonirisa of Ile-Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Enitan Adeyeye, Ojaja II, who sits in Ile-Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba people—the largest ethnic group in West Africa—the honorary chieftaincy title will strategically promote the socioeconomic and cultural ties between Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, two of Africa's most resource-rich countries.



IITA Director General Chief Nteranya Sanginga and his wife Chief (Mrs) Charlotte Sanginga.

Dr Sanginga, who is the first African to head IITA, is a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) for advancing science in developing countries. He has been honored with several international awards like the International Foundation for Science Sven Brohult Award for contributions to agricultural and agroforestry research.

Several dignitaries graced the conferment ceremony, including former Governor of Oyo State, Rasheed Ladoja; Deputy Governor of Osun, Mr Benedict Alabi; and Secretary to the Osun Government, Prince Wole Oyebamiji; Princess Toyin Kolade, the Iyalaje Oodua; and members of the ruling council in Ile-Ife.

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Dr Sanginga was recently conferred with the chieftaincy title of Aare Afurugbin Ola of the Source (Lead Sower of Wealth and Prosperity of the House Oduduwa), in recognition of his remarkable contributions to agriculture, research, and development in Africa, by the Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Enitan Adeyeye, Ojaja II. In a statement, Dr Sanginga said that Africa would witness more development if we shared more stories about the remarkable progress going on about how research innovations are improving lives among farmers and farming communities.

According to Dr Sanginga, the media buzz around his recent chieftaincy conferment has gained the attention of several countries in Africa and donors across the globe. He announced that the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), his home country, is launching a project worth millions of dollars in 2022, with

IITA leading the implementation of activities.

In a statement issued by the IITA media office at the Institute's headquarters in Ibadan on 14 December, the DG has reiterated his commitment to ensuring that millions of lives are impacted across Africa with the cutting-edge research and innovations delivered by the Institute.

With close to 40 years of experience in the agricultural research and development space, DG Sanginga, who has spent a considerable part of his career in Nigeria, revealed that the announcement coming from the DR Congo government has renewed his passion for creating more enabling environments for young people.

"There is so much more to be done, and IITA is positioned to deliver in the coming years, with the support

of everyone at the Institute," said DG Sanginga.

In the last 10 years, Dr Sanginga, through the Youth-in-Agribusiness program at IITA, has influenced and helped thousands of youth graduates in Africa to embrace agriculture as a business and a major source of income. He is replicating this initiative with secondary school students under the [Start Them Early Program \(STEP\)](#), where teenagers are learning about agriculture as a business with various modules.

Dr Sanginga, who is the first African to head IITA, revealed that other donors have also indicated an interest in supporting some projects in the Institute. His recent chieftaincy title can only herald development and progress for Nigeria and DR Congo. IITA has the research and capacity to strengthen and push the process, he added.

Honda to work with IITA in developing African agriculture

The Honda Team from Ogun State visited [IITA](#) Headquarters on 8 December to strengthen the partnership between IITA and Honda and explore future areas of collaboration. The team was joined by other representatives from Honda Head Office in Japan, who could not make it down to Nigeria due to restrictions from the newly discovered Omicron variant of the coronavirus. They joined virtually nonetheless.

[Kenton Dashiell](#), Deputy Director General- Partnerships for Delivery, welcomed the team and shared IITA's history and present activities, including those in the hubs and stations across Africa. While explaining the goal of the Institute, Dashiell mentioned that IITA focuses on small-scale farmers but also understands the need for large-scale agriculture, which requires mechanization. He added that IITA could not solve the problem of mechanization alone, hence the need for a strong partnership with private sector actors like Honda.

"Without partnerships, IITA will fail. Hence, we are open to a professional relationship and even friendship," he said.

Giving a presentation on the activities of BIP and the Agribusiness Mechanization Unit in partnership with other companies, Diallo Thierno, Consultant at IITA's Post Harvest Engineering Unit, stated that low access to mechanization for both production and processing is the major constraint to increasing food production in Africa. About 60 to 70% of farmers use crude tools to farm and process crops, and according to FAO, farmers form about 70 to 80% of the African population. "However, IITA believes that when adequate mechanization is introduced, Africa will not only feed its own population but will increase food production for the rest of the world," he said. He further mentioned several companies IITA has partnered with to produce good agricultural machinery and organized training on using them.

Following the presentation, Takatsugi Kawano, Director General of Honda, explained their interest in developing African agriculture through agricultural products and machines. "We understand that most farmers in Nigeria operate on a small scale and we are wondering how we can promote our products to these smallholder farmers," he said.

Responding, Kolawole Peter, IITA Post-Harvest Specialist, mentioned that Honda produces the best machinery in Africa, but it seems to be expensive; as a result, there are now imitations. He suggested that IITA and Honda could develop good and affordable machines for farmers that no company can compete with. "We are ready to assist Honda to push out its products to farmers," Kolawole said.

Discussing the next step, Hirohide Ichikawa, Honda Managing Director at Ogun State, said to expect products in partnership with Honda and IITA after giving feedback to the head office in Japan.



The Honda and IITA Management teams.

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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.



Researchers to resolve challenges of rural youth employment in the agricultural sector for improved livelihood

A recent [study](#) has shown that many rural young people are still interested in agriculture as a present livelihood option and imagined future. This opposes the general belief that young people in rural areas have turned their backs on agriculture. The research acknowledges that rural young people actively combine work in agriculture with other non-farm self- or wage employment and domestic work. The male youth are majorly involved in farming, while females feature more in supportive value chain roles. However, while young people will continue to be involved in agriculture as many have a passion for it, and because there are few other options, there is uncertainty about the scope—within the limited opportunities—for obtaining decent livelihoods from agriculture.

These livelihoods are being built under severe and persistent constraints due to infrastructural deprivation, taxation/levies of agricultural produce, limited access to productive resources, and the seasonal nature of economic activities. This has created instability, diverse risks, limited financial reward, and a lack of protection. Despite these challenges, access to land within the study sites remains the assuring asset, partly stable for rural youth engagement in agriculture, while other opportunities like training on how to access soft loans from the government do not reach the intended youth. With hard work and support from their families and social networks, male and female youth set about to build their livelihoods with the

hope that the gains from it will not only meet their immediate needs but will be enough to make an impact in their communities.

The overall qualitative research was led by the Institute of [Development Studies \(IDS\)](#), UK with funding from the [International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#). It was conducted in four African countries, including Nigeria. In Nigeria, the research was carried out in Osun and Anambra States. While [IITA](#) focused research on two sites—Oba-Oke and Idi-Amu communities—in Osun State, the [National Root Crops Research Institute \(NRCRI\)](#) focused on Umumbo and Igbariam communities in Anambra State.

From IITA, Olamide Olaosebikan and [Béla Teeken](#), Gender Specialists and Bello Abolore, Senior Research Supervisor, were part of the research team. For NRCRI, Tessy Madu, Social and Gender Researcher at NRCRI and Benjamin Okoye, Socioeconomist, were part of the research team. The analysis of 416 interviews using life histories, photo voices, and eight focus group discussions with young people between 15 and 29 years gave the findings.

Young researchers were part of the project research team. They undertook roles as enumerators, facilitators, and workshop coordinators. The research became an active process of developing young people's capacity

to participate, validate, lead, and think about appropriate policies. The research also heightened awareness and provided an opportunity for rural youth to articulate their views through the research validation workshop and make important inputs to an informed and evidence-based policy brief published based on the research.

The study's results and recommendations highlighted in the policy brief were that access to resources such as infrastructure, inputs, and training is crucial for addressing identified challenges. Beyond meeting basic needs that are mostly not youth-specific, interventions must be linked to the potential to raise productivity and income in both agricultural and non-farm livelihoods. Also, youth identified non-farm income as essential to raise funds for investment in agricultural practices that are more mechanized, making them more profitable with less drudgery involved.

The recommended policy promotes creating accessible education with special attention for the disadvantaged position of girls related to their culturally assumed role of caretakers. This role especially becomes even more restrictive when they reach the age when society believes they should marry and have children. The policy would inform the provision of sustainable infrastructural facilities and basic amenities and strong linkages to all economic sectors. The policy would also involve reducing or canceling levies concerning the movement of agricultural produce. Although many of these recommendations are not necessarily youth-specific, they concern the rural population.

“Aligning policies and interventions with existing initiatives and opportunities within the rural space and with youth's active and entrepreneurial spirit can complement efforts on rural youth development and rural transformation in Nigeria generally,” said Teeken. “It will also largely contribute to reverse outmigration from rural areas to cities,” Olaosebikan added.

“Special thanks to Dr Victor Manyong for initiating the collaboration between IDS and IITA on this research,” Teeken added.



Youth representatives (squatting), Government officials, NRCRI-IITA Director representatives, and community leaders.