

2021 dry season rice farming: IITA-NIAA supports 200 rice farmers with inputs

The USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (NIAA) in Yola, Adamawa State, on 25 January, officially kicked off the 2021 dry season farming. The commencement was commemorated with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the [IITA-NIAA](#) and Fadhila Crop Science Ltd (FCSL).

[to page 3](#)



(L-R) Commissioner for Reconstruction, Rehab, Reintegration and Humanitarian Service, Adamawa State, Mr Elijah Tumba; Commissioner for Livestock and Aquaculture Development, Mr Usman Yahaya Diyajo; District Head of Yola, Alhaji Mohammed Mustapha; Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Umar Iya Daware; Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Lami Ahmed; Chief Executive Officer, Fadhila Crop Science Ltd., Ms Nanona Usoro; Chief of Party, Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (NIAA), Dr Prakash Kant Silwal; and Deputy Chief of Party (NIAA), Mr Olukayode Faleti after exchanging the signed MoU.

IITA scientists promote gender equality through agriculture in new publication

[IITA](#) scientists, in partnership with more than 55 other [CGIAR](#) researchers and partners, have published a book that highlights over 30 years of history and wealth of gender knowledge. The IITA team contributed to four out of ten chapters of the book— chapters 2, 4, 9, and 10. The book "[Advancing Gender Equality through Agricultural and Environmental Research: Past, Present, and Future](#)" was launched in November 2021.

Chapter 2, “Examining choice to advance gender equality in breeding research,” was co-authored by IITA Associate Social and Gender Scientist [Bela Teeken](#). The chapter explores how breeding research can promote gender equality. It critically examines what has been done to address gender dynamics in current breeding structures and processes. It explores further plans to ensure that breeding programs can advance gender equality. Progressing toward gender equality in agriculture requires that women and men have equal capabilities to make agricultural innovation decisions, specifically technology choices. The authors were explicitly concerned with technology choices relating to the plant variety or animal and fish bred by resource-poor smallholders in low-income countries.

In Chapter 4—“Promise and contradiction: Value chain participation and women’s empowerment”—co-authored by IITA-Benin Visiting Scientist Sounkoura Adetonah, the authors reveal that research and development actors now have a growing interest in developing more “inclusive” value chains. This increased interest is due to expanding agricultural production for the global market. “There is an urgent need to strengthen the contribution of agriculture and natural resource management to gender equality through the development of inclusive value chains including the participation and empowerment of women and men,” says Adetonah.

IITA Senior Scientist and Gender Specialist [Steven Cole](#) co-authored Chapter 9—“Assessing women’s empowerment in agricultural research”—exploring the steady rise of the empowerment in the international development agenda. Feminists highlighted women’s empowerment at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, leading to the Beijing Declaration referring to “enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world.” Collective struggles to challenge patriarchal structures and intersecting structures of class, ethnicity, caste, and race previously shaped women’s subordinate position in society. Now, “empowerment” animates the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5): “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

The book’s tenth chapter, “Toward structural change: Gender transformative approaches,” co-authored by IITA Social Scientist and Gender Expert [Gundula Fischer](#), reviews the gender approaches applied in agriculture over the past decades. It

lays out how these must be re-thought to remove inequalities sustainably. “Gender norms are an important leverage point for accelerated and lasting progress. They are the socially agreed rules of how men and women should behave. Gender-transformative approaches address these norms and shift them towards more equity,” says Fischer.

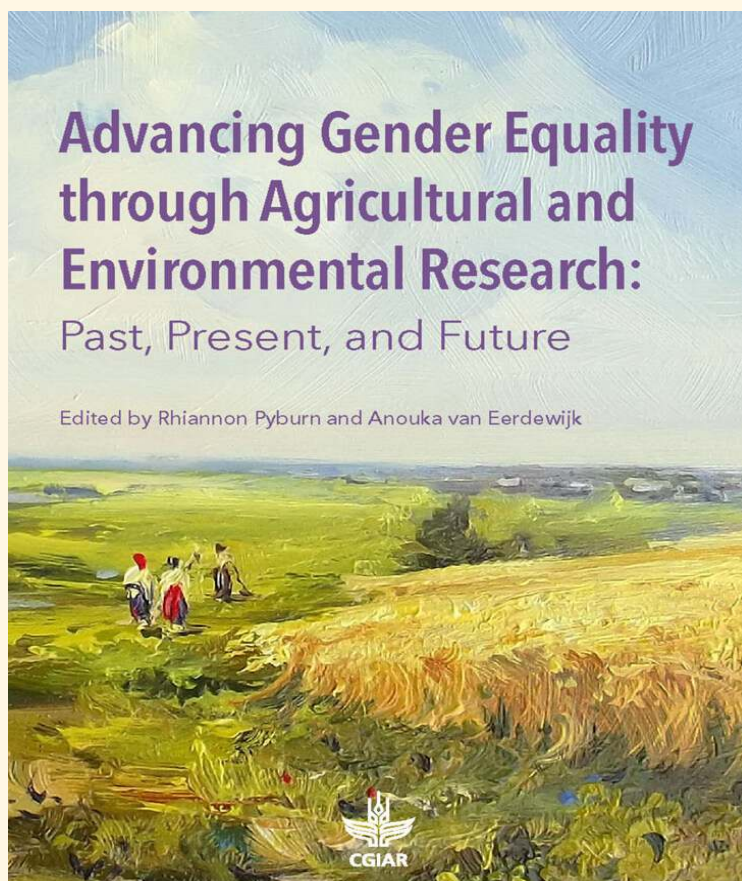
Almost a quarter of a century after the Beijing Declaration, and with less than 10 years left to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, The Guardian announced that the SDG Gender

Index’s findings show that no country is likely to achieve gender equality by 2030. This aligns with the most recent Global Gender Gap Index, which indicates that on the current route, it will take approximately 170 years to achieve gender equality—a wait of seven generations or two and a half lifetimes for the average woman.

The book offers an opportunity to change and reframe the global debate on gender equality. It also defines the partnership that people have to build in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment as a goal.



IITA researchers and contributing authors: (from top left, clockwise) Gundula Fischer, Sounkoura Adetonah, Bela Teeken, and Steven Cole.



Front cover of the book, “Advancing Gender Equality through Agricultural and Environmental Research: Past, Present, and Future”.

With the MoU, 200 rice farmers will access seeds and other agricultural inputs for the 2021 dry season farming.

The NIAA Chief of Party, Prakash Kant Silwal, expressed profound optimism about the partnership. He charged the farmers to be good recipients of the support, grow more, and pay back the inputs provided in due course. He used the occasion to reiterate the Activity's efforts to support smallholder farmers in Adamawa and Borno states.

In her remarks, the FCSL Chief Executive Officer Naona Usoro explained that her organization acknowledges IITA's global recognition and the Activity's remarkable performance in the target states. She said this informed their decision to collaborate with IITA. She expects that the partnership will transcend rice farming and extend to cultivating other grains such as maize in subsequent seasons.

Dignitaries and senior government officials witnessed the ceremony,

including the Adamawa State Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Umar Iya Daware; Commissioner for Aquaculture Development, Mr Usman Yahaya Diyajo; Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Lami Ahmed; Commissioner for Reconstruction, Rehab, Reintegration, and Humanitarian Service, Mr Elijah Tumba. They also participated in the input distribution to selected farmers.

Increasing youth agribusiness employment in Tanzania

ENABLE-TAAT continues to impact the youth agribusiness ecosystem in Tanzania, leading to increased youth employment in the sector. Elisha Otaigo, a 32-year-old MSc Environmental Economics graduate, partnered with his three university classmates to start NovFeed TZ, a company that produces affordable fish feed using black flies.



Otaigo Elisha (Left) and business partner Benjamin Amos looking at the progress of the larvae at NovFeed Tz in Dar es salaam.

Otaigo and his partners have created employment for four youth to manage activities through the farming unit. NovFeed also uses a business model that has created income opportunities for 21 other youth and women—they take the farm products on credit, sell in the market, return the agreed cost to the company, and keep the profits. This model solves a capital challenge that is common to many startup entrepreneurs.

“I was inspired to work with Otaigo and his partners because I want to be a good farmer like them. They have taught me how to manage the farm following good agricultural practices. Also, I earn income that supports my livelihood,” said Kulwa Misana, who works as a caretaker at NovFeed.

Although the company's core activity is fish feed production, it also has two equally important units: Open field and greenhouse farming of vegetable and fruit crops such as tomato and capsicum (red, yellow, and green). These are grown throughout the year using the drip irrigation system taking water from a borehole to a water reservoir. The other one is the piggery unit that produces quality cross pig breeds—Duroc, Large white, and Landrace—for pig farmers.

NovFeed also uses their farm for practical learning, inspiring youth to engage in agribusiness. So far,

the team has trained and assisted four youth entrepreneurs in starting their own farms. The objective is to create a chain of youth who believe in agribusiness as employment.

“We hope that these youth will be ambassadors to others about agribusiness: that they can engage in farming even when they are educated, earn money, and make an impact in the community by being job creators,” Otaigo said in an interview.

The team recognizes the role of ENABLE-TAAT, the youth compact of the [Technologies for African](#)

[Agricultural Transformation \(TAAT\)](#), in their achievements. The youth compact supports youth enterprises with mentorship and links them with experts and technologies. For NovFeed, ENABLE-TAAT soft skills training programs on passion, focus, expertise, and teamwork are key elements making the company thrive.

“Training with the youth for a year and a half now has nurtured my passion for farming. I got technical support from the scientists, especially in agribusiness, which also opened my eyes to see the big opportunities in agriculture,” Otaigo said.



Amos Benjamin (left) attends to tomato plants at NovFeed TZ, and (right) looks at the floating macrophytes used as protein sources to replace fishmeal and soy meal in fish and poultry production.

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).

