

Silent revolution as farmers attest to the productivity of “chin-chin” yam

A silent revolution is happening in Nigeria’s yam production systems. Pebble-sized seed tubers, known as mini tubers by researchers and “chin-chin” yam by farmers affiliated with the Yam Improvement for Income and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA II), could change how yam is produced in Nigeria. This follows the experiences of some farmers and seed entrepreneurs like Alhaji Mohammed Isa Galadima from Paiko Local Government Area, Niger State.

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Left: Mini tubers generated for single node vine cuttings. Right: Seed yam harvested by Open Day participants during field demonstrations.

Youth aquaculture enterprise demonstrates profitability in Zambia



The youth compact of the [Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation \(TAAT\)](#) has the mandate to empower African youth economically. It does this by exposing youth to agribusiness value chains and various profitability mechanisms.

An inspection and update visit to the site after stocking fingerlings.

The compact, also called ENABLE-TAAT, has recorded recurring success among the youth who make their livelihood from the aquaculture value chain in Zambia.

At the end of 2021, ENABLE-TAAT beneficiaries from the “Mkushi Youth Skills” Fish Cluster harvested over 1000 kg of fresh fish from their fishponds. With the start of a new year, the youth continued to operate and manage their fish farming enterprise; they restocked some fishponds and embarked on the second production cycle. Income generated from their previous harvest has been reinvested in the

purchase of fish feed and 19,000 juvenile fingerlings from Chalata Fisheries, which the Ministry of Fisheries operates.

The cluster has a reserve of 278.5 bags of fish feed, covering the whole culture period of six months. Joseph Mwitwa, the Cluster Coordinator, has assured ENABLE-TAAT Zambia of another profitable cycle. He said all group-owned facilities and resources would be well managed to grow fish to the desired market size and generate more profit at the end of the culture period.

The youth cluster plans to harvest and sell their fish on a client-order basis, establishing clients within Mkushi Town and the neighboring region. This will affect subsequent production cycles and stagger the fish harvest to ensure a continuous supply of fish in Mkushi. The agripreneurs have been able to attract a good market and are looking to maintain the enterprise such that it becomes the largest supplier of fish in Mkushi.

ENABLE-TAAT continues to provide mentorship for the youth through the various stages of their progress to ensure sustainability. *Contributed by Dolapo Ogunsola*



The Mkushi Aquaculture cluster, in the company of the Southern African hub Director, Dr David Chikoye.

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Alhaji Galadima attested to the productivity of the mini tubers, noting that he harvested tubers ranging from 0.75 g to 2.2 kg during an Open Day at [IITA-Abuja Station](#). The participants saw ware yam tubers of about 2.5 kilograms grown from mini tubers.

YIIFSWA-II Seed System Specialist [Beatrice Aighewi](#) said, “Although we are promoting the production of the mini tubers for certified seed production, it is good that farmers see the potential of these quality seeds. They can produce big tubers if they are well managed and can stay in the field long enough to bulk.”

Narrating his experience of cultivating the mini tubers and their benefits, Alhaji Galadima said, “During last year’s stakeholder meeting, Dr Aighewi of YIIFSWA showed us mini tubers that can be used to produce yam. I laughed when I saw them because they were as small as *chin-chin* (a popular snack) or even beans. So, I asked, how can these “chin-chin” yams grow?”

Despite the disbelief, he experimented with the tubers on his field after Aighewi encouraged them to try them out. “Since it was from IITA, I collected some to try on my field. I stored them and checked consistently to see if they would sprout. When the rains started, an eye came out, so I quickly took them to the field, made mounds, and planted them. The harvest was amazing. I got large tubers from them,” he continued.



YIIFSWA-II Seed System Specialist, Dr Beatrice Aighewi addressing Open Day participants at the seed exhibition booth.

Alhaji Galadima noted that though the mini tubers are for seed production, farmers can adopt the “chin-chin” yam for ware yam production. They performed well in the field because they are disease-free and clean, and of good quality.

“When they sprout, they have high vigor, so they do well and give you what you want. You don’t need big setts to give you big tubers again. They all germinate, and as a farmer, that gives me peace to know that it will germinate when I plant my seed. That is not the case with seeds bought from the local market. Some seed setts don’t even germinate, and the productivity is very low,” said Galadima. “I am happy

with this development, especially now that we’re looking to export yam. It is also cost-effective for the farmer and seed producers. You don’t need to use trucks to transport seed tubers anymore. You can easily transport what you need to plant a hectare in a small bag. It’s amazing.”

Galadima thanked YIIFSWA for developing various efficient yam propagation technologies that have helped him meet farmers’ demands as a seed yam producer. “The availability of seed has been our problem, but the solutions and developments from IITA have solved every problem in yam production,” he concluded. *Contributed by Oiwaja Odihi*

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.

CSAT projects involve farmers to improve production resilience in Mali and Niger

At the beginning of each year, the CSAT-Mali and CSAT-Niger projects hold evaluation and planning workshops for their activities. Following the suspension of COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions, the projects held physical meetings in both locations, from 7 to 14 March in Bamako and from 14 to 18 March in Niamey.

Stakeholders in the agricultural sectors of both countries attended the events. In Mali, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Rural Development, the Director General of the Institute of Rural Economy, and the representative of the Royal Norwegian Embassy all participated in the meetings. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Director General of INRAN, the ICRISAT Country Representative in Niger, and the permanent secretary of CNRA presided over the opening ceremony in Niger.

The collaborators first assessed the projects' activities in 2021, then set the milestones for 2022.

In his opening speech, the Director of [IITA](#) Sahel hub and CSAT Project Coordinator, [Tahirou Abdoulaye](#), thanked all the project partners for their excellent collaboration and recalled the good results achieved by the project.

IITA West Africa Director [Michael Abberton](#) expressed appreciation to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway. He also expressed his satisfaction with the results achieved by the project in such a short time. In Niger, he mentioned IITA's intention to sign an agreement to coordinate its activities better in the country.

A distinction of this year's meetings was the involvement of farmers, the direct beneficiaries of the projects' activities, in the planning. Listening to the farmers directly and understanding



*Top: An indigenous processor exhibiting her products during the visit of the participants in her company. Photo credit: Fatoumata Dolo.
Bottom: Farmers and other participating stakeholders at the Mali workshop. Photo credit: Fatoumata Dolo.*

their expectations would help develop adequate solutions.

By the end of this third year, the projects hope to address all topics aimed at facilitating the adoption of technologies to cope with climate change and, by extension, improve life and ensure food security in rural areas.

During the workshop, the partners also visited farms and local product processors to provide a solid and constructive program to ensure that the CSAT projects will have a successful year. *Contributed by Fatoumata Dolo*



Stakeholders at the workshop. Photo credit: Fatoumata Dolo

Destiny Edooro emerges winner of STEP Agri-Competition

Destiny Edooro, a student of Gbagada Senior Grammar School, Bariga, Lagos State, has won the maiden edition of the STEP Agri-Competition.

Comprehensive High School, Badagry, Lagos State.

Edoro was excited to have emerged the winner and said the competition was very tasking and stimulated his interest in researching agriculture.

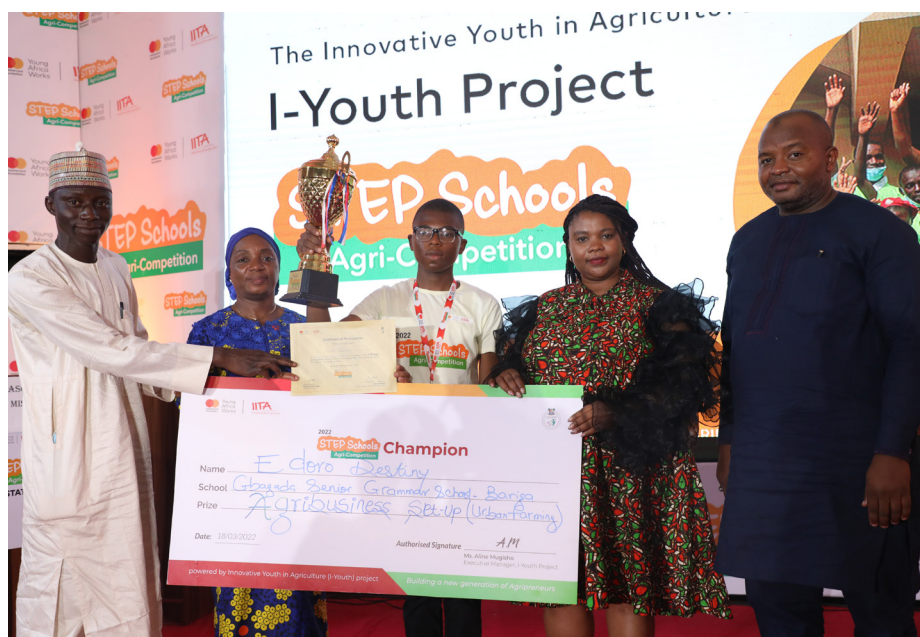
“This competition has made me research agriculture. It has developed my interest in agriculture, and I have acquired more knowledge. I hope to train younger ones in agriculture and advance the study in Nigeria,” he stated.

The Commissioner of Education in Lagos State, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Abolaji Abayomi, commended [IITA](#) and the Mastercard Foundation for the initiative. He said such competitions would place prominence on agriculture and assist in eradicating the negative beliefs about the sector.

Young Africa Works Executive Manager [Aline Mugisho](#) said the I-Youth project has invested in younger youth to nurture them to build a better future in agriculture. She expressed optimism that a new generation of innovators, agribusiness agripreneurs, and entrepreneurs would emerge from the initiative.

The competition winners were awarded agribusiness enterprise kits, laptops, and tablets.

The STEP Agri-Competition attracted stakeholder participation from the public and private sectors, teachers, parents, and students. *Contributed by Adetola Adenmosun*



Destiny Edooro (middle) receiving the STEP Agri-Competition winner's prize.

The STEP Agri-Competition, organized by the Innovative Youth in Agriculture (I-Youth) project, targeted students from public secondary schools in Lagos State. The I-Youth project implemented in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation Young Africa Works targets youth between 15 and 35 years.

The STEP component of the project, which focuses on secondary school students, adopts various innovative approaches to change their perception of agriculture. The STEP Agri-Competition is one of

these approaches. It aims to attract the students to learn about modern agriculture, change their perceptions, and attract stakeholders in the sector to promote agriculture right from secondary school level.

Six students reached the knockout stage from the initial 12 selected contestants. Edooro emerged as the winner of the hour-long competition. The second and third positions went to Joshua David of Comprehensive Senior High School, Alapere, Ketu, and Asokere Misimau of Ajara Senior