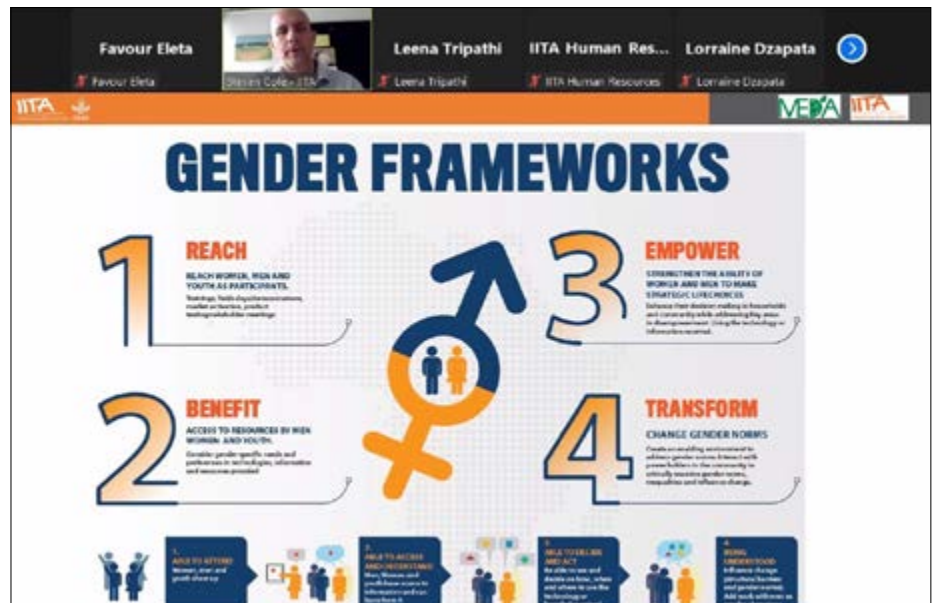


Gender research activities in IITA contribute to African rural development

[IITA](#) seeks to carry out cutting-edge gender research in agriculture. During a seminar on 13 May, to understand the progress of gender research in IITA and its impact in Africa, Senior Scientist and Gender Specialist [Steven Cole](#) presented “The Contribution of Gender Research at IITA to African Rural Development.” [Leena Tripathi](#), Director of IITA East Africa Hub, moderated the seminar.



Sharing relevant gender frameworks during the seminar.

In her introductory remarks, Tripathi commended Cole for his excellent work on gender research at IITA. “I know you are doing an outstanding

job, so the floor is yours to begin your presentation,” she said.

Cole organized his presentation into three parts: Research that has been

concluded and ongoing research that he led and co-led; research he supported IITA colleagues to conduct and colleagues he supported outside the Institute; and other details about

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IITA and DG Sanginga receive excellence award from Circularity Africa

The [Interconnections for Making Africa Great Empowered and Sustainable \(IMAGES\)](#) Initiative, in collaboration with [Africa Circular Economy Research and Policy Network \(ACERPiN\)](#), organized a week-long [Circularity Africa Conference](#) in May 2022 themed “Paradoxes of Natural Resources in Africa”. Members of this initiative and network, a group of sustainable



The Circularity Africa team with IITA DDG-P4D Kenton Dashiell (center).

development enthusiasts from all walks of life, took the opportunity to explore different sustainable approaches to minimize food waste and postharvest loss in Africa and beyond.

The President of IMAGES Initiative, Dr Olawale Olayide, said one of the group's core interests is encouraging and developing a circular economy, where Africa's resources are cyclically maximized, with zero tolerance for waste. The team began the conference by engaging in activities that offset carbon in the air before expending any. They did this through tree planting and rainwater harvesting at Abadina Grammar School, Ibadan, Nigeria. Other days focused on using robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) to deploy technology for sustainable agriculture, so agriculture can continue despite climate change or personnel availability challenges. They also had plenary sessions on avoiding the wastage of resources in Africa.

The last day of the conference brought them to [IITA](#) to relax and explore more ways to maximize Africa's resources and avoid waste. The team was received by [Kenton Dashiell](#), IITA's Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, who emphasized IITA's openness to partner with universities, private, governmental, and non-governmental organizations to develop and deliver agricultural innovations and solutions.

IITA's Benin-based Molecular Entomologist, [Rousseau Djouaka](#), presented the Institute's contribution to circular agri-food systems in Africa, including converting organic wastes to organic fertilizers and [biogas](#) for cooking and power generation and producing protein for animal feeds with the [Black Soldier Fly \(BSF\)](#) technology. Dwelling on the BSF technology as a typical example of a circular economic system, Djouaka said, "The BSF is a fly. They lay their eggs in waste, and these grow into larvae. The larvae decompose the waste and convert it into fertilizer." Ninety percent of the larvae are removed from the waste and processed into animal



Participants learning at IITA's Wastewater Treatment Facility.



President Circularity Africa Dr Olawale Olayide (left) and his colleague presenting the Award of Excellence to IITA.

feed. The remaining substrate is used as fertilizers for plants and pressed into oil for running engines.

The team toured the IITA campus, stopping at the Lake and wastewater treatment facilities, where they learned valuable lessons on waste treatment and management in a circular economy.

To wrap up the visit, the team presented

an institutional award of excellence to IITA for its invaluable contributions to the progress of agriculture and agricultural systems in Africa. They also honored IITA Director General, Dr [Nteranya Sanginga](#), with a personal award for his outstanding contribution to sustainable agriculture and food systems transformation in Africa.

Contributed by Folake Oduntan

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.



work he has carried out over the past three years at IITA.

The first research he presented was in the Best Cassava Project in Tanzania, where cassava seed entrepreneur (CSE) recruitment and training was set up without using a gender lens. The project recruitment tended to favor men, and by mid-2020, only 24% of staff recruited and trained by the project were women. Cole and colleagues carried out a gender study to understand the barriers affecting women's participation as CSEs and proposed ways the project could be more gender-responsive and transformative. Cole also mentioned that he and his colleagues received a grant to set up a transdisciplinary approach to develop a mixed-methods research tool. The project is ongoing, but the aim is to improve the measurement and understanding of decision-making on agricultural matters within households and determine how this impacts critical development outcomes.

Concerning the research where he supported IITA and external colleagues, Cole cited the Feed-the-Future Mozambique Improved Seeds for Better Agriculture (SEMPEAR) Project; the CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals; a COVID-19 study in the Democratic Republic of Congo; the development of a book chapter on assessing women's empowerment in agricultural research; and a pilot study and book chapter on gender-responsive cassava breeding.

Cole highlighted ongoing collaboration with a group of CGIAR gender scientists and colleagues from Rome-based agencies to develop guidelines on measuring gender transformative change for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. He and other IITA gender scientists have strengthened the IITA Gender Science Network (GSN), which consists of social and biophysical scientists who promote gender research and integrate gender perspectives into their activities at the Institute. He added that the GSN worked with the Communication Office to set up a [gender web page](#) for showcasing materials on gender research. "Recently, the team launched



*IITA's gender research will impact households in rural regions.
Photo Credit CIP/H. Rutherford*

a gender webinar series to increase the visibility of gender research activities. The first webinar took place in March, and the next will come up this month," he said.

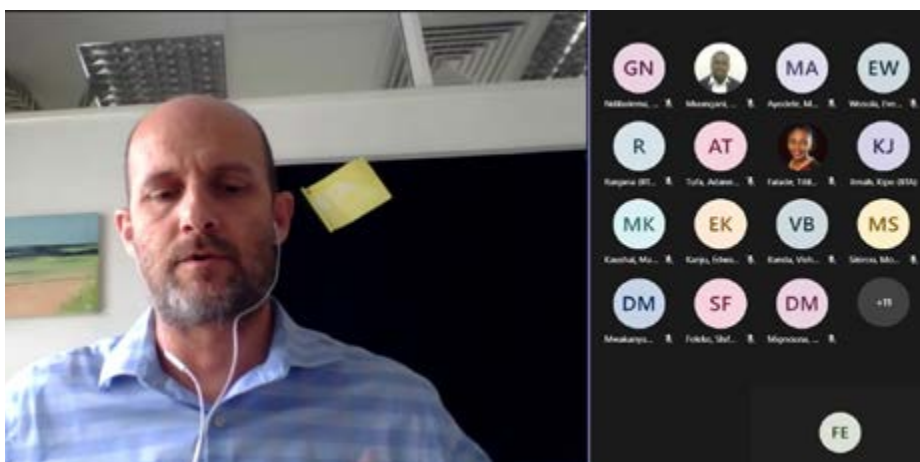
Sharing resource mobilization efforts of the gender team, Cole stated that IITA had received over half a million US dollars from the GENDER Platform since 2020. He also mentioned other resource mobilization efforts that have increased scientists' abilities to carry out gender research at IITA.

Speaking of the future of IITA's Gender Team and the GSN, Cole highlighted the need to grow and develop these while mobilizing resources to carry

out gender strategic research, add new gender transformative research projects within IITA, and help the Institute build strong gender research for development partnerships in and outside the [One CGIAR](#).

Other plans include delivering One CGIAR commitments, such as collaborating with agronomy teams to develop and scale gender- and youth-responsive agronomic solutions. He also plans to learn from the IITA Cassava Breeding Unit to inform gender-responsive fish breeding efforts in Nigeria and support gender colleagues to deliver on their research in OneCGIAR Initiatives.

Contributed by Favour Eleta



Steven Cole speaking with members of the Gender Science Network (GSN) in a previous meeting.

STIHL and C.WOERMANN partner with IITA to enhance smallholder farmers' productivity through agricultural mechanization

STIHL, a company specializing in agricultural equipment production for smallholder farmers, is working on bringing affordable farming mechanization closer to the end-users in Africa. Hence, in partnership with C.WOERMANN and IITA, STIHL organized a hands-on training program on agricultural equipment usage and maintenance. The training, which took place at the IITA headquarters on 11 May, assembled farmers and agro-input dealers from various parts of Nigeria.

The training was in two phases: the first featured a practical session on machines for soil and trees, such as brush cutters, tillers, earth augers, and palm harvesters. The second phase focused on the practical operation of machines for water, such as water pumps, mist blowers, and sprayers. Ewokolo Achiri, STIHL Marketing Manager for West and Central Africa, and Volker Rohlich, STIHL Training expert, showed the participants how to operate and maintain the machines using the correct quantity of STIHL oil and fuel mixture. IITA Postharvest Specialist Peter Kolawole assisted with the demonstrations.

During the training, Achiri informed the participants that STIHL produces various agricultural products for land cultivation to pre-harvest. "The main thing about our products is how they fit the farmers looking for small-scale machines. They are portable products that are power-driven, gasoline-driven, and can be used on any surface type," Achiri said.

Adebowale Akande, Head of IITA Agribusiness and Mechanization, shared his joy about the steps STIHL, C.WOERMANN, and IITA are making towards agricultural mechanization. "Even though Nigeria has a long way to go in agriculture, I am happy that we are taking some steps," he said. He also suggested that training and machinery be made available in other parts of Oyo State, where many farmers are interested in mechanization.

Highlighting the benefits of the partnership and training to the Institute,



Participants learning to use the power tillers.

IITA Postharvest Engineer Diallo Thierno said the STIHL showroom at IITA gives visiting dealers an idea of the role IITA can play in running technical training programs for dealers in West Africa and beyond. He added that IITA enjoys more publicity in Africa and engineering networking in Germany through this partnership. "A major benefit of this partnership to IITA is that farmers are getting solutions to their mechanization problem, resulting in increased productivity. This is part of IITA's goal," he said.

Following Thierno's speech, C.WOERMANN's Sales Manager Olubunmi Cole said, "We are happily working with IITA because the Institute is

known worldwide for fantastic agricultural research and implementation."

Klaus Okunowski, Managing Director of C.WOERMANN, mentioned that the training is the project's first phase of bringing machinery closer to customers. Sharing project plans, Okunowski stated that there would be regular training on the use and maintenance of agricultural machinery. He added that the machines and necessary spare parts would be easily accessible to customers. "There will be a readily available technician for repairs and listening to clients' requests for other machines," he concluded.

Contributed by Favour Eleta



Ewokolo Achiri showing participants how to use the STIHL brush cutter.

IITA Forest Center wins AFR100 grant to plant trees

The TerraFund for AFR100 has awarded the [IITA Forest Center](#) another grant to reforest 300 hectares of degraded forest reserve in Olokemeji, Ogun State, in western Nigeria. The Forest Center is gaining increased recognition for its efforts and expertise in implementing holistic reforestation solutions to the world's dwindling forest cover.

The TerraFund for AFR100, managed by One Tree Planted, Realize Impact, and the World Resources Institute, set out to restore 20 million hectares of forestland by 2026. In a two-week call for applications from reforestation organizations, they received 3,200 applications from 31 countries. IITA Forest Center became one of the first 100 to win the grant for restoring forests in Africa by growing trees.

The project will restore 300,000 trees in 3 years in more degraded portions of the Olokemeji Forest Reserve, Ogun State. The project will monitor the planted trees for another two years, supporting the sustainable growth and development of the trees. IITA Forest Center, as is her custom, will again take the opportunity to sensitize the host community and their school pupils on biodiversity conservation.

IITA Forest Center is already in partnership with Nigerian Breweries Plc and the Ministry of Forestry, Ogun State, to reforest 618 hectares of degraded forest reserve in Olokemeji in the #ReforestOlokemeji project. One year since the project commenced, the team has planted over 40,000 seedlings and recorded several community development impacts. The TerraFund for AFR100 will expand and build on the progress made through the already existing Olokemeji Reforestation Project.

IITA Forest Center joins other [AFR100 winners](#), including Aerobic Agroforestry, Nigerian Conservations Foundation, and Powerstove Offgrid Electricity Limited, among others, to reforest Africa for improved livelihoods and health for people and the planet. The Forest Center looks forward to expanding its mandate to grow, manage, and restore forest cover and foster conservation education through this project.

Contributed by Folake Oduntan



The bridge leading to Olokemeji Community which hosts the forest reserve.



The IITA Forest Center office by its Tree Heritage Park.