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NIGERIA INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY
NEWSLETTER,
21ST EDITION, FEBRUARY 2023



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Operation Expanded Scope

As Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity expands to Gombe and Yobe States, the Activity embarks on an expansion expedition into impacting positively more lives in the northeast. The expansion journey started with program and security assessment visits to the new states in October 2022. This was followed by the Year 3 Work Plan/Stakeholders' Meeting in Yola and Gombe in November 2022. At the meeting, major players in the agricultural sectors from Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, and Gombe States made important suggestions about the Activity's proposed work plan in the four states. By January 2023, work had started. Connections with public and private sector partners in the new states were established to achieve the Activity's overall goals of supporting the vulnerable populations through improved agro-input and extension advisory services; strengthening the institutions that form the market



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system and the networks that serve smallholder farmers disenfranchised by conflict, and facilitating the engagement of youth and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities.

In February 2023, the Activity's Agricultural Productivity unit alongside the Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) unit continue the data validation/verification of the 2,750 Community-Based Seed Producers (CBSPs) in the four states and 30,000 smallholder farmers in Adamawa and Borno States ahead of the 2023 wet season. The 30,000 farmers who are shortlisted from the Activity's 62,000 farmer database must possess 0.5-1-hectare farmland suitable for the cultivation of the selected crops (rice, maize, cowpea, and soybean). Other criteria for the selection include the active participation of the farmer with the Activity in the last three years and a willingness to employ good agronomic practices (GAP) and other proven practices/guidelines of the Activity. Also, for Gombe and Yobe States, the Activity moves into a partnership with the states' Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs) through signed implementation agreements. This kind of partnership with state ADPs

should also be cemented in Adamawa and Borno States by March 2023.



Mobilization of farmers in Tumu Community, Akko LGA, Gombe state.

On the Business Development, Nutrition, and Livelihood Interventions, the Activity renews the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Capital Agricultural Development Limited (CADL). This private-sector partnership will provide input financing and off-taking services to farmers, 2,750 CBSPs, and smallholder farmers with loaned agricultural inputs. Thus, both parties conclude the profiling of the beneficiaries. For nutrition interventions, a coordination meeting was held with the nutrition team of Feed the Future Nigeria Rural Resilience Activity to



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explore areas of collaboration and identify as well as prevent areas of intervention duplication between the two USAID-funded activities in Gombe and Yobe States. Also, the IAA Nutrition team visited some community leaders including the District Head of Gadaka community, Fika LGA, Yobe State, Alhaji Lamba Adamu Ba. The team shared the scope of the Activity during the visit and solicited support for the proposed strategies and interventions.



IAA nutrition officers during a sensitization meeting with agents of Women in Agriculture (WIA) in Potiskum, Yobe State.

community leaders including the District Head of Gadaka community, Fika LGA, Yobe State, Alhaji Lamba Adamu Ba. The team shared the scope of the Activity during the visit and solicited support for the proposed strategies and interventions.



Integrated Agriculture Activity team on an advocacy visit to the District Head of Gadaka Community, Fika LGA, Yobe State, Alhaji Lamba Adamu Ba and other leaders in his community.

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Mobilizing women in Daziga community, Potiskum LGA, Yobe State



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Making Entrepreneurs Out of Rural Women

For some uneducated women living in rural communities, the challenge is usually the lack of a solid economic status. Without learning a trade or acquiring a skill, these women depend exclusively on their husbands for the day-to-day running of their homes. Consequently, the amount

spent on accommodation, healthcare, education, and other basic needs is determined by the husband's income, which in most cases is meager.

Fortunately, Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity is helping to change the narrative by empowering

women in this category. The Activity provides small and medium-scale micro-processing training where women are taught how to commercially process (and package) cereals and legumes for the consumption of members of their communities.

Millet Doughnuts for Sale

When Mrs. Zara Abubakar, 45, was invited to the micro-processing training in her local government, she thought it was just one of the usual gatherings organized by random non-governmental organizations for local women. Indeed, Zara's housewife status permits her to try out new recipes but she was not interested in recipes made from cereals and legumes she was used to. All the same, she decided to attend.

"I saw a number of women who were excited about the training. What other recipes can they teach me from what I already know? I just went with the flow. They taught us different drinks

and meals we can make from maize, sorghum, groundnut, soybean, rice, and millet. When it got to millet, I became so interested. I didn't realize there were so many things you could make out of millet. The millet doughnut got me thinking about how new it is in my community. Most people are used to doughnuts made from wheat flour. That was when the idea of selling millet doughnuts dropped in me."

With barely NGN1,500, Zara started her doughnut business. The business was shaky at first but when people realized how neatly processed her goods are, her patronage increased within the neighborhood.

Considering how promising the business is, Zara raised her capital to NGN15,000 with the help of her husband. She currently makes a daily profit of NGN1,500.

"Nothing compares to the joy of making your own money. I have tried doing some petty businesses in the past but lost all the money. This one pays me well. I do not have to turn to my husband for everything I need in the house. I can now also contribute to the daily running of my home. This is the best feeling ever! Thank you, IAA, and thank you, USAID!", Zarah said.



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Mrs. Zara Abubakar preparing her millet doughnuts

Pasta, Anyone?

35-year-old Mrs. Fatimah Mohammed was used to pasta made from wheat flour. However, she did not realize that millet flour could be transformed into pasta too until she attended the micro-processing training organized by Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity in her local government.

“Pasta (Taliya) made from flour is very common here in Fufore, Adamawa State. Regardless of your purse, you can buy pasta and it doesn’t take long to cook. When I heard about the

millet pasta, I was surprised. They taught us how easy it is to make and told us how nourishing it is for the whole family. That was when I picked interest.”

In late 2022, Fatimah started her pasta business with just NGN500. 5 months after, her capital increased to NGN1,500. She makes between NGN800 and NGN1,000 profit from every production.

“At first, my customers were afraid to try the millet pasta because they were not used to it. Some even visited my house

to be sure of the ingredients I was mixing together. Now, they are the ones telling others about my product. Others even prefer this type of ‘taliya’ from those made from wheat”, Fatima explained.

Fatima uses the profit from her sales to support her husband in paying the children’s fees and buying school books. She wishes to expand her pasta business and hopes to commence the sale of other meals and drinks she learned during the training.



Mrs. Fatimah Mohammed demonstrates how she processes and packages her millet pasta.



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For the Love of Children

Ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) may not be common in the Mararaban Chigari community of Fufore LGA, Adamawa State but people like Mrs. Aishatu Musa, 35, are rising up to the challenge. In a majorly nomadic community, children 5 years and under are usually fed with whatever their parents find; hence, a high level of malnutrition. With RUTF, children with moderate acute malnutrition can enjoy a blend of locally-available

nutritious ingredients which can help them stay healthy. These ingredients include healthy-looking peanuts (free from aflatoxin), milk, soybeans, sugar, and vegetable oil. "After the micro-processing training, I started producing RUTF for my baby. I was encouraged by how chubby and healthy he looked because of what I was feeding him. My baby was fine but other children in the neighborhood weren't. That was when I thought I should start selling to other parents

so that their children can gain some weight and stop falling ill often. It wasn't really about making profit but helping children". Aisha explained. Aishatu started the business with NGN2,500 and currently makes NGN500 as profit per production. She looks forward to expanding the business in the nearest future. It is her utmost desire that every mother with children aged 5 and under embraces the wonders of RUTF in their communities.



From start to finish: Mrs. Aishatu Musa shows our she processes her RUTF for sale to her customers



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Inclusion: The Integrated Agriculture Activity FY 2022 Example

When Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity received its initial award grant from USAID to contribute to the economic recovery of northeast Nigeria, the major tasks were to contribute to food security; increase agricultural incomes of the vulnerable populations, and improve resilience among smallholder farmers and their families in Adamawa and Borno States. In addition to these, the Activity also needed to assist these individuals to achieve an improved nutritional status as well as support the economic relevance of the youth and women population in this region. Since 2019, the aforementioned have been the blueprint for the Activity's many interventions in the northeast. Interestingly, the Activity has remained very objective in ensuring that gender inclusion remains an

important criterion in selecting its intervention beneficiaries. Despite the many cultural and conventional norms that seem to be fashioned against women, the Activity has succeeded in helping women maximize their agricultural potential in Adamawa and Borno States. For instance, 38% of participation in the Activity's agronomic events for FY 2022 involved women. Like their male counterparts, the women were trained in climate-smart, good agricultural practices (GAP) and also had access to the certified seeds sourced by the Activity. Some of the female Community-Based Seed Producers (CBSPs) who benefitted from the Activity's input financing schemes were extremely outstanding as they contributed enormously to the cultivation and distribution of

these seeds within and beyond their localities. Worthy of mention are the female Extension Agents (EAs) who act as liaison officers between the state Agriculture Development Programmes (ADP), the Activity, and the smallholder farmers. Their facilitation has been of great benefit to some of the 62, 666 farming households in Adamawa and Borno States. Comparatively, women received the most support in the area of nutrition from the Activity. FY 2022 statistics indicate that 74% of the total beneficiaries from the various nutrition interventions in Adamawa and Borno States were women. These individuals received training in the preparation of complementary foods using locally available nutrient-dense foods, good hygiene practices, micro-processing, storage, and preservation of



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Remarkably, 2,290 of the 3,900 members of the 156 Savings and Intending Lending Communities (SILC) facilitated by the Activity in Adamawa and Borno States are women. These groups were created to help alleviate financial burdens through regular savings, share-outs, and loan facilities. Some of the loan facilities secured on this platform have helped many women, especially widows, in attending to their basic family needs, paying their children's education fees, and expanding their businesses. By the end of

FY 2022, \$239, 934 worth of loans had been accessed under this intervention. The enterprise platform of the Activity remains ever-receptive to the female gender. About 57% of total beneficiaries in FY 2022 entrepreneurship events turned out to be women. In the last three years of the Activity's operation in the northeast, women have formed a bulk of the 7,986 beneficiaries in the farm and non-farm entrepreneurship categories. Beneficiaries under this platform include Internally displaced Persons (mostly

women) who were trained in some areas of entrepreneurship and are now economically self-sufficient. With the expanded scope, the Activity is poised to include more women in its list of beneficiaries for FY 2023 and beyond. The plan is to engage at least 40% of women as Community-Based Seed Entrepreneurs (CBSEs) in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe States. The nutrition and enterprise components are also working to reach more women with their interventions.



More women belong to IAA's Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) because it affords them the opportunity of meeting their primary and secondary needs through SILC share-outs and loan facilities



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About the Activity

The Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) issued under the US Government's Global Food Security Act was awarded by USAID Nigeria to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and its partners in July 2019 towards the economic recovery of North-East Nigeria, in the wake of the devastation caused by the ongoing insurgency in the region. The Activity supports vulnerable populations in 12 Local Government Areas of Adamawa and Borno states to re-engage in basic farming activities and aims to advance the objectives of inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth, strengthened resilience among people and systems, and a well-nourished population, especially among women and children in targeted locations.

To achieve these objectives, the Activity works with a coalition of public and private sector partners to facilitate improved agro-input and extension advisory services to serve vulnerable populations; strengthen the institutions that form the market system and the networks that serve smallholder farmers disenfranchised by conflict, and facilitate the engagement of youth and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities.

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