



▶ Empowering Smallholder Farmers: Aishatu Musa's Journey to Improved Sorghum Farming

- ▶ **Mega Brown Field Day 2023**
- ▶ **Sustainable Seed Systems in North East Nigeria**
- ▶ **Fostering Inclusivity and Skill Development**
- ▶ **Maimuna Madu's Story**

■ Aishatu Musa
Photo by IITA, Yola





Dear Readers,

As we step into the vibrant pages of our October 2023 newsletter, it is with a sense of pride and profound dedication that we share the remarkable stories, initiatives, and achievements that continue to shape the landscape of agriculture and food security in North East Nigeria. The journey of the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity has been nothing short of inspiring. It's a journey that embodies the spirit of resilience, innovation, and collaboration. We've witnessed smallholder farmers transforming their practices, entrepreneurs finding newfound freedom, and communities uniting to build a brighter future. These are stories of empowerment and change, and they are the heart of this Activity.

In this edition, we explore the field inspection exercises by the NIAA and the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) as a crucial step in the seed certification process of the the CBSPs as the state Seed Certification Officers from NASC, Extension Agents, supervisory teams, Senior Agronomists from NIAA IITA, the Activity's Senior Technical Field Officers, and proficient Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) staff work hand in hand to ensure the success of this exercise.

The Mega Brown Field Day in Demsa, Adamawa State was a celebration of innovation and collaboration. We witnessed government officials, experts, and farmers coming together to showcase the advancements in agricultural best practices through the exploration of demonstration plots.

As we continue this journey, let us remember that our mission is not just about agriculture; it's about transforming lives and communities. It's about sowing the seeds of resilience and prosperity.

With gratitude and determination,

Prakash Kant Silwal

Principal Specialist/Chief of Party, Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity

In this issue:

Mega Brown Field Day 2023	02
Aishatu Musa's Journey	03
Sustainable Seed Systems in North East Nigeria	06
Fostering Inclusivity and Skill Development	08
Maimuna Madu's Story	09

Increasing Agricultural Productivity through Innovation & new technologies: Mega Brown Field Day 2023



In Demsa Local Government Area, Adamawa State, an event put together for the commemoration of the 2023 World Food Day unfolded on October 16th, 2023 coinciding with the "Mega Brown Fields Day", a time set aside to estimate the readiness of the harvest season in line with the inputs of the stakeholders. This event brought together a diverse and esteemed assembly of key persons, signifying a resounding celebration of agricultural output and innovation. As we delve into the details of this significant gathering, we find a picture of our commitment to empowering agricultural productivity and innovation in the North East.

The presence of eminent dignitaries lent a special significance to the event. Notably, His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Fintiri, the Executive Governor of Adamawa State, graced the occasion through the representation of the Commissioner for Agriculture, Professor David Jatau. In an announcement of great importance, Professor Jatau unveiled the State Government's commitment to supporting dry season farming, a critical response to the challenges posed by recent flooding in the region.

Also, enriching the event were the contributions of Mrs. Edna D. D Azcura, the Director of Agricultural Services in Adamawa State, and Mr. Yusuf Ibrahim Mohammed, representing Dr. Musa Abba Kolere, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture in Yobe State. The District Head of Demsa, Chief Fidelis B. Ali, and Prof. W. N. Tagowa, the Executive Director and CEO of Wonotanzokan Farms Ltd, brought their wisdom and experience to the gathering. Additionally, the presence of Mr. Ojo Olusegun Emmanuel, the Seed Certification Officer for Adamawa State from the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), and Chief Ohel O. Swade, the Wakili of Demsa, further enriched the event's vibrancy.

Photo: Second Left, Mr Quadri Shakiru (IITA); fourth left, Prof. W.N. Tagowa (CEO Wonotanzokan Farms Ltd); Alhaji Munir Ahmed (IITA); Chief Bassey Archibong (IITA); Chief Fidelis B. Alli (District Head, Demsa); Prof. David Jatau (Commissioner for Agriculture, Adamawa State); Mr Kayode Faleti (IITA); last from left, Mr Azeez Oyeyemi (IITA).

Cont in page 5



Empowering Smallholder Farmers: Aishatu Musa's Journey to Improved Sorghum Farming

In Yobe State's Potiskum LGA, a smallholder farmer, Aishatu Musa, has emerged as a beacon of hope and change for her community. Born in 1966 as the seventh child of a family of twelve, Aishatu's journey in agriculture has been one of resilience and transformation. With the support of the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, a USAID-funded initiative aimed at the recovery of household farmers affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, Aishatu's story has taken a positive turn.

For over six years, Aishatu has dedicated her time and energy to farming a variety of crops, including Sorghum, Groundnut, Cowpea, and Ridy. However, her efforts were met with disappointment as her harvest yielded just two and a half bags per hectare, a significantly low return for her hard work.

Intervention and Positive Impact

The turning point in Aishatu's farming journey came through the intervention of the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. With their support, her harvest has seen a remarkable transformation. She now proudly states that she can expect no less than eight bags of seed per hectare, a substantial improvement from her previous yields over the last six years.

Aishatu attributes this remarkable change to the invaluable training and foundation seeds she received through the CBSPs (Community-Based Seed Producers). Some key practices have been pivotal in enhancing her harvest:

1. **Fertilizer Application:** Aishatu transitioned from the broadcasting method to the more effective burying method of fertilizer application, significantly improving nutrient absorption by her crops.

“ She now proudly states that she can expect no less than eight bags of seed per hectare, a substantial improvement from her previous yields over the last six years. ”



2. Weeding: By adhering to the standard weeding schedule of three weeks after planting for the first weeding and six weeks for the second weeding, Aishatu ensures her crops thrive and remain free from weed-related challenges.

3. Thinning: A fundamental change in her farming practice is thinning, where she leaves only two to three stands of crop in one place. This approach has led to healthier and more productive crops.



Photo: Sorghum crop variety (Samsorg 45) introduced to the farmers by IITA.
Photo Credit: IITA Yobe.

The Long-term Vision

Aishatu's newfound knowledge and improved farming techniques are not just for personal benefit. She is committed to sharing her expertise with other female farmers in her community. Aishatu envisions a cycle of knowledge sharing and improvement, where her community benefits from the same practices that have enriched her farming experience.

Aishatu's journey is a testament to the effectiveness of implementing best agricultural practices. Her success has not gone unnoticed, as other farmers in her community now seek the same improved seeds and practices that have elevated her farming output.

Aishatu Musa's transformation from a struggling smallholder farmer to a thriving agricultural entrepreneur is an inspiring example of the positive impact that the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity is having on the lives of individuals and communities affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. With a commitment to sustainable and improved farming practices, Aishatu embodies the spirit of resilience and progress that is at the heart of this USAID-funded initiative.

Agriculture Productivity Intervention component is an Activity of the Nigerian Integrated Agriculture Activity, a USAID funded Activity implemented by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).

Mega Brown Fields Day 2023

Contd from page 3

The welcome address, delivered by Mr. Faleti Olukayode, representing the Chief of Party, Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal, emphasized the event's significance as a platform for farmers to showcase and demonstrate the innovative farming technologies they have adopted through the Activity's intervention. This echoed the core objective of our program - to empower smallholder farmers with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive.

The Mega Brown Fields Day exemplified the very essence of our mission by aligning seamlessly with our overarching goals and result indicators for enhanced agricultural productivity. Here are some of the correlations that emerged from this remarkable event:

Technology Showcase: Farmers seized the opportunity to showcase and demonstrate the new and improved farming technologies they've embraced, showcasing their commitment to innovation.

Community-Based Seed Production: The event underscored the vital importance of community-based seed production systems, highlighted by the presence of Mr. Ojo Olusegun Emmanuel, the NASC Seed Certification Officer for Adamawa State, and the focus on certified seeds. These seeds represent the foundation for sustainable agriculture.

Engaging Key Stakeholders: The active participation of government officials, including the Executive Governor and the Director of Agricultural Services, reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to strengthening the agricultural sector. It's a collective effort, and this event demonstrated the collaboration needed for success.

Call to Action: Chief Fidelis B. Ali, recognizing support from USAID, issued a compelling call to action directed at the farmers. His words underscored the pivotal role of farmers in our collective endeavour to eradicate hunger within the community. This event was not just a showcase but a call to commitment.



Photo: Participants at the event inspecting a demonstration plot. Photo credit: IITA, Yola.



Photo: Cultural troupe performing at the event. Photo credit: IITA, Yola.

The Mega Brown Fields Day in 2023 stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and the unwavering dedication to progress and innovation in the agricultural landscape. It was a moment to celebrate achievements and to set our sights on a future of increased agricultural productivity and innovation. As we continue our journey with the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, we remain committed to our mission of empowering smallholder farmers and advancing food security in Nigeria. The Mega Brown Fields Day 2023 is a shining example of what can be achieved when we come together in pursuit of a common goal. The soil is fertile, and the future is bright.

Stay tuned for more updates and success stories in our ongoing efforts to recover and empower household farmers affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Together, we sow the seeds of hope and prosperity.

Transforming Agriculture:

NIAA's Impact on Sustainable Seed Systems in North East Nigeria



The USAID Feed-the-Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, with a primary focus on establishing a sustainable seed system in Northeast Nigeria, is actively collaborating with the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) and other key partners. Through meticulous supervisory and inspection visits to Community-Based Seed Producers' (CBSP) farms, NASC plays an important role in this process of advancing our collective mission.

The NASC is saddled with the responsibility to regulate and coordinate the production, marketing, trade and use of seeds in Nigeria. The synergy between the NASC and NIAA has thus helped in taking us closer to the mission of developing a sustainable and robust seed production and distribution system, poised to drive economic recovery and growth in the intervention states of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe.

The Collaborative Force

Field inspection exercises by the NASC is a crucial step in the seed certification process of the the CBSPs. The state Seed Certification Officers from the National Agricultural Seeds Council, Extension Agents, supervisory teams, Senior Agronomists from NIAA IITA, the Activity's Senior Technical Field Officers, and proficient Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) staff work hand in hand to ensure the success of this exercise.

The sheer scale of these efforts is impressive. During the course of the inspection visits, a remarkable 1,285 community-based seed

Photo: L-R CBSP farmer Mallam Abubakar Abdullahi from Tikau Kamai, EA Samaila Yarima and Mallam Ishaku Abdulkareem at Tikau Rimi community assessing the harvested Samsorg 49 one of the early maturing sorghum varieties distributed to CBSP farmers in Yobe State. When most of the sorghum fields are struggling to survive Samsorg 49 stood out. Yobe communities' farmers are praising the technology in extra early maturing sorghum given by N-IAA. Photo credit: IITA, Yola.

producer farms have been scrutinized across the four intervention states. This immense undertaking reflects the gravity of the endeavour and the determination to establish a sustainable seed system for the region.

A Commitment to Sustainability

This initiative embodies the core philosophy of the USAID Feed-the-Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity: it's not just about economic growth, but about nurturing enhanced productivity among small-holder farmers in the targeted states. This approach underscores the enduring commitment to enhancing the resilience and vitality of North East Nigeria's agricultural sector. With the persistent dedication of USAID and its implementing partners to these vital seed systems, the future of agriculture in North East Nigeria shines brighter than ever before. This commitment is steering communities towards sustainable growth, enhancing productivity, and ultimately ensuring food security and prosperity in the region.

In North East Nigeria, NIAA's dedication is sowing the seeds of transformation, and with the USAID's unwavering support, a bountiful harvest awaits, promising a brighter future for the region's small-holder farmers. Together, we are nurturing the roots of prosperity and resilience in the agricultural sector, ensuring a sustainable and food-secure North East Nigeria.



■ Photo: NASC Inspection of a CBSP Rice field (FARO 52). L-r: Mr Habibullahi Ibrahim Senior Technical Field Officer (Gombe State), Mr Andrew Kigbo, NASC Seed Certification Officer and Ms Fatsuma Mela, a CBSP beneficiary at Kadalintin Community, Biliri LGA, Gombe State. The field looks very promising and the farmer is really excited the farmers close to her farm are already making bookings for the seed for the next wet season. Thank you USAID, she says.

Stay tuned for more success stories and updates in the ongoing journey of transformation in our next newsletter.

Fostering Inclusivity and Skill Development:

Exploring a Partnership for Women and Disabilities Empowerment in Yobe State



Photo: Yobe State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MoWASD) facility, Damaturu.

Exploratory Visit to Women and Girls' Entrepreneurship Development and Empowerment Hub in Damaturu, Yobe State: Forging Synergies with the Yobe State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MoWASD).

In respect of gender mainstreaming and inclusiveness, the Youth and Gender component of the Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity visited the Women and Girls' Entrepreneurship Development and Empowerment Hub located in Damaturu, Yobe State towards fostering partnership and synergy. This visit was driven by the objective of identifying collaborative opportunities with the Yobe State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MoWASD), particularly in the domain of women's enterprise development and the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The specific focus revolved around skills, acquisition an important component in the empowerment of these target groups.

During this insightful visit, Alhaji Mohammed Tijjani Ali, the Director of Human Resources and Management, personally facilitated a comprehensive tour of the facilities available at the hub in Damaturu. This gesture underscored the commitment of the Activity to fully understand and assess the resources and capabilities within the hub. Crucially, the visit has paved the way for the exploration of a potential partnership agreement. The envisioned collaboration would primarily revolve around vocational skills training tailored for persons with disabilities, utilizing the facilities provided by the women and girls' entrepreneurship development and empowerment hub. Notably, this prospect mirrors a successful precedent set in 2021 when a partnership agreement was established with Unicef in Borno State.



The feasibility of such an agreement hinge on the alignment of objectives and mutual consent between the involved parties. This endeavor represents a step forward in the collective pursuit of enhancing the livelihoods and empowerment of women and persons with disabilities in Yobe State. The vision is not just a partnership but a synergy that champions inclusion, skill development, and empowerment for those who need it the most.

EMPOWERING LIVES: MAIMUNA MADU'S JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABILITY

Revisiting the 2022 Non-farm Enterprise Skills Acquisition training for the Youth and Gender component of the Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, Miss Maimuna Madu, a participant from Kwaya-Kusar Local Government Area, Borno State, has proven the long-term effect of the training she received.

A young breadwinner who takes care of her aged mother and three younger siblings, Maimuna received enterprise training in 2022 through the USAID Feed the Future's Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. Maimuna's journey began with her participation in the Activity's Non-farm Enterprise Training in cosmetics production. After the training, she was inspired to transform her newfound skills into a thriving enterprise, recognizing the untapped market potential within her immediate community. Armed with determination and the backing of her savings of N20,000 and a loan of N50,000 from her local loan group, she took the bold step of initiating her cosmetics production venture.

Now, Maimuna has fully paid back the loan she took and left with a savings of N160,000 while she ploughs back her returns into the business. She has also trained five young women from her community in the craft of cosmetology. Beyond the monetary gains, she has found a source of income that allows her to actively contribute to her household's well-being. The days of struggling to meet responsibilities such as medical care, school fees, food, clothing, and financial insecurity have given way to an era of multifaceted utility. Maimuna's story embodies the true essence of emancipation, both within her home and the broader community.

This also reflects the broader impact of sustainable empowerment of the USAID Feed the Future NIAA intervention in the North East of Nigeria. Her story resonates with countless individuals who, like her, have discovered newfound purpose and self-reliance through the farm and non-farm training organised by the NIAA.



Photo: Maimuna, displaying her cosmetic products.



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

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 18 Local Government Areas of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe 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.

Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated
Agriculture Activity IITA-Abuja,
Beside Old WaterWorks, Kubwa,
Abuja FCT, Nigeria

Mobile: +234-9062927839
Email: P.Silwal@cgiar.org



@niaausaid



niaa_usaid



niaa_usaid



niaa_usaid