



FEED THE FUTURE

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

Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (NIAA) Newsletter

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From a Struggling Farmer to a Prosperous Landowner

Alhaji B. Mindi from Borno, a resilient farmer whose life transformed with USAID's intervention, boosting yields and securing a brighter future for his large family.



Alhaji B. Mindi

- ▶ High-Level Stakeholders' Forum to Elevate Seed System Development in Northeast Nigeria
- ▶ Fatima Gimba's Tomapepo Enterprise
- ▶ Mariam, the community-based Seed Producer and Mother
- ▶ NIAA Staff Planning Meeting

Happening this April!



Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity

High-Level Stakeholders' Forum on Seed System Development:

Enhancing Seed Systems Development for Improved Food Security—A Paradigm of USAID Interventions in Northeast Nigeria

April 16, 2024 | Transcorp Hilton Hotel FCT, Abuja





Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Colleagues,

I am delighted to present to you the February edition of the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity newsletter. As we navigate through the challenges and triumphs of agricultural development in Northeast Nigeria, this edition offers a glimpse into the remarkable progress and transformative impact of our collective efforts.

In these pages, you will find inspiring stories of resilience, innovation, and empowerment that underscore the profound difference made by the Feed the Future USAID project in the lives of individuals, families, and communities across Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, and Yobe states. From struggling farmers to prosperous entrepreneurs, from revitalized seed systems to thriving poultry production, each narrative is a testament to the power of collaboration, determination, and visionary leadership.

Our journey towards agricultural transformation is not without its hurdles. We acknowledge the economic challenges and policy uncertainties that continue to pose formidable obstacles to the sustainability and scalability of our interventions. However, in the face of adversity, we remain steadfast in our commitment to forging ahead, leveraging partnerships, and advocating for policies that foster an enabling environment for growth and prosperity.

As we look ahead to the High-Level Stakeholder Forum on Seed System Development scheduled for April 16, 2024, we invite you to join us in celebrating our achievements, reflecting on our challenges, and charting a course for the future of agriculture in Northeast Nigeria. Together, let us seize this opportunity to galvanize leadership commitment, foster collaboration, and propel our shared vision of agricultural resilience and food security to new heights.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and colleagues for their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to the success of the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. Your continued support is instrumental in shaping a brighter and more prosperous future for the people of Northeast Nigeria.

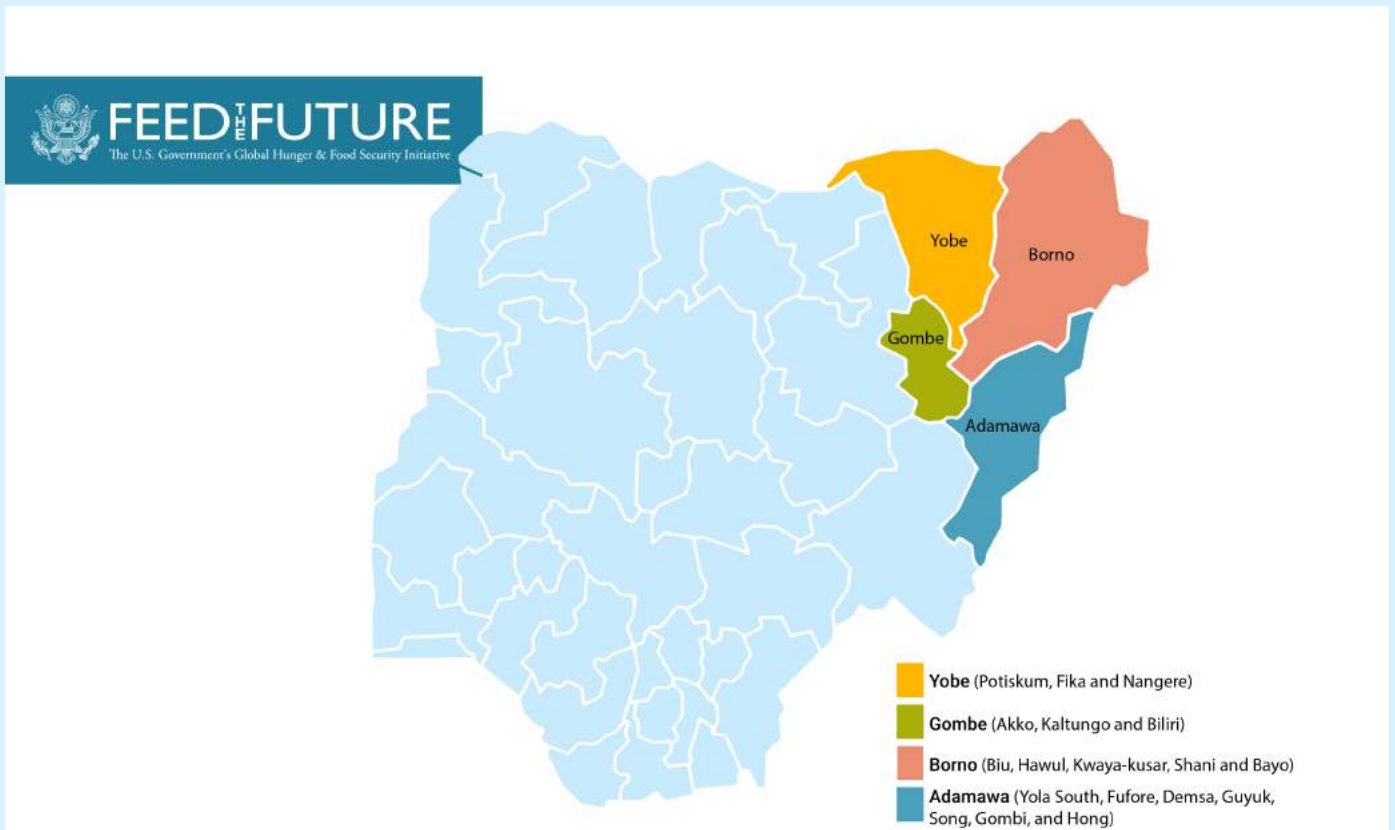
Warm regards,

Prakash Kant Silwal
Chief-of-Party
Feed-the-Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity

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High-Level Stakeholders' Forum to Elevate Seed System Development in Northeast Nigeria



We are excited to announce the forthcoming High-Level Stakeholders' Forum on Seed System Development, scheduled to take place on April 16, 2024, at the prestigious Transcorp Hilton Hotel in FCT, Abuja. This event marks a pivotal moment in our collective efforts to enhance agricultural transformation and bolster food security in Northeast Nigeria.

Under the auspices of the US Government's Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, our mission to catalyze agricultural progress has been steadfast since its inception in 2019. With a renewed focus on seed system development, our interventions have been expanded to address the secondary impacts of global events, such as the Ukraine-Russia conflict, particularly in the states of Borno and Adamawa, and our footprint has extended into Gombe and Yobe states.

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The forthcoming forum serves as a platform to showcase the strides made

by the USG through the Integrated Agriculture Activity in Northeast Nigeria. We aim to spotlight the transformative impact of our interventions in seed system development and applaud the dedicated efforts of all stakeholders involved.

This forum is an opportunity to galvanize leadership commitment from governments, private sector entities, donor agencies, and development practitioners to rally behind Nigeria's seed system development. By providing tangible evidence of success and fostering dialogue among key stakeholders, we aspire to cultivate a shared vision for advancing agricultural prosperity and ensuring food security in the region.

The objectives of the forum are twofold:

1. Showcase and Applaud USG Efforts: We will highlight the tangible outcomes achieved by the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity in Northeast Nigeria, particularly in the realm of seed system development. Through engaging presentations and interactive sessions, we will celebrate the achievements and innovations driving agricultural progress in the region.

2. Engender Leadership Commitment: By presenting compelling evidence of the impact of our interventions, we seek to inspire leadership commitment from governments, private sector entities, donor agencies, and other stakeholders. Through collaboration and collective action,

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we aim to garner support for Nigeria's seed system development agenda and pave the way for sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.

We invite all interested and committed development actors, including public and private sector representatives, development practitioners, and international development agencies, to join us at this seminal event. Together, let us seize the opportunity to shape the future of a sustainable seed system and propel Northeast Nigeria towards greater agricultural resilience and food security.

Stay tuned for further updates and registration details in the upcoming months. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of millions of Nigerians.



▲ One of the improved maize varieties made available by IITA, SAMMAZ 15, on the left and local maize variety on the right from the Activity's Demo plot at Munga community in Hong LGA.

From a Struggling Farmer to a Prosperous Landowner



▲ Alhaji B. Mindi, a Community-Based Seed Producer supported by the Feed-the-Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity

Alhaji B. Mindi is a sturdy man of fifty, who hails from Borno. With four wives and twenty-five children, his days were filled with the hustle and bustle of family life. Over the years, he navigated the challenges of providing for his large family, relying on traditional farming methods to eke out a living from the land.

In those days before the intervention of the USAID Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity being implemented by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), feeding and caring for his family was a daunting task. Despite his decades of experience, his yields were modest at best. His crops—rice, groundnuts, and maize—barely sustained them, with just fifty bags of maize and twenty bags of rice marking the highest yield. Groundnuts, pepper, cowpea, and garden egg supplemented their diet and income, but the returns were meagre.

During the dry season, Alhaji engaged in cattle fattening, tending to his three cattle, two sheep, and goats. While these added some extra income, it was a difficult existence. Education was a priority for Alhaji Bukar, with five children attending secondary school, eight in primary, and five in Qur'anic school. However, the financial strain was constant.

Then, four years ago, Alhaji Bukar's fortunes took a turn when he met IITA. Through their assistance, he gained access to improved seeds of maize and rice. With these new varieties, his harvest soared. He went from fifty bags of maize to a staggering one hundred bags, and his rice yield doubled to forty to forty-five bags per hectare. Additionally, he began practising mixed cropping, increasing his cowpea harvest to twenty to thirty bags per cropping season.

“ Thanks to the improved seeds provided by USAID, our harvests have flourished beyond imagination, paving the way for a more prosperous future for my family and me. ”

-Alhaji Mindi

The impact on Alhaji Bukar's life was profound. With the increase in his crops, he expanded his livestock holdings, purchasing thirteen additional cattle. Some were kept for milk production, while others were fattened and sold, bringing in substantial profits. In total, he amassed over four million naira in livelihood.



◀ Alhaji B. Mindi with members of his large family

Alhaji Mindi with his livestock

Lifted by his success, Alhaji Bukar invested in more land, acquiring seven additional plots ranging in size from less than a hectare to two hectares. He also bought two motorcycles—one for commercial purposes and the other for personal use—further enhancing his mobility and opportunities. In his words, "Thanks to the improved seeds provided by USAID, our harvests have flourished beyond imagination, paving the way for a more prosperous future for my family and me."

The change in Alhaji Bukar's life from a struggling farmer to a prosperous landowner is a success story traceable to his contact with Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture. With the support of USAID and IITA and his determination to change, he had secured a brighter future for himself and his family.



◀ Alhaji Mindi posing with his seed harvest kept in store.



Fatima Gimba's Tomapepo Enterprise

The USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity's non-farm training produces enduring results.



◀ Photo: Fatima (Right) and her food vendor customer (Photo Credit FtF-NIAA)

FATIMA GIMBA, a retired civil servant was mobilized for participation in the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity through the Women Progressive Cooperative Society of KwayaKusar, Borno State. Under the women and youth enterprise development interventions, she participated in multiple production and entrepreneurship trainings organized by the Activity, including crop production, small ruminant rearing and tomato processing into Tomapepo. She elected to start business activities immediately after training (in 2020) with the tomato

processing enterprise.

Armed with the credit of 10,000 naira she got from the internal savings and loans rotation of the women's progressive cooperative group, she produced the first batch of 12 bottles of Tomapepo and was able to sell all the products quickly, this motivated her to do a second batch and consequently remain in business. Madam Fatima Gimba who happens to be the leader of her cooperative group, said of her unique experience with the USAID intervention in her livelihood.

“Early last year, my neighbour’s child was to get married and the tomatoes they bought for the catering wasn’t enough, so I dashed out to my house and brought my products. I seized the opportunity to introduce my Tomapepo to them; they were amazed because it had all the required ingredients, so they bought five big jars. In addition, I regularly sell to a food vendor who sells food in the central market and routinely reinvest the money from sales. This business is special for me because I am retired and I rely solely on my pension which often comes late. I usually do not do anything when the farming season is gone, but now I am engaged and get extra money from the Tomapepo



▲ Photo: Fatima’s Tomapepo bottles ready for the market (Photo Credit FtF-NIAA)

“ I usually sell food on market days and this Tomapepo has saved me time and strength. I love the quality and even prefer it to the Fresh Tomatoes. I also gained new knowledge during the crop production training on fertilizer application, and I was consequently able to harvest 28 bags of maize last season against the 15-20 bags of maize I harvested the previous year on the same piece of land ”

-FATIMA GIMBA

business off-season”.

Her records show that she could make a gross profit of NGN46,070 within the first quarter of production.

The Food Vendor, Aisha Bello, who regularly patronises Fatima’s Tomapepo, gave feedback: “I usually sell food on market days and this Tomapepo has saved me time and strength. I love the quality and even prefer it to the Fresh Tomatoes. I also gained new knowledge during the crop production training on fertilizer application, and I was consequently able to harvest 28 bags of maize last season against the 15-20 bags of maize I harvested the previous year on the same piece of land” She said.

Mariam, the Community-Based Seed Producer (CBSP) and Mother



◀ Photo: Mariam Ali and his children (Photo Credit FtF-NIAA)

In rural Biu LGA of Borno State Nigeria, Mariam Ali, a 32-year-old mother of five, has faced many challenges in sustaining her family as a farmer. This is her primary source of livelihood, which is supplemented by her husband's petty firewood sales in the dry season. Understandably, they struggled to meet their needs. Despite Mariam's tireless effort in cultivating maize, groundnuts, and beans, her yields consistently fell short, barely affording sustenance and livelihood for the family.

Three years ago, Mariam's path changed when she was selected as one of the beneficiaries of the Feed the

Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. Tasked as a community-based seed producer, Mariam received groundnut seeds and expert mentorship in good agricultural practices. Undeterred by initial challenges like inadequate rainfall, she persisted with

“Entering her second year as a community-Based Seed Producer, Mariam's maize harvest thrived, courtesy of the innovative farming practices and nutrition training introduced by the program.”

the support of the IITA agricultural experts' guidance, refining her techniques and amplifying her production capacity.

Entering her second year as a community-based seed producer, Mariam's maize harvest thrived, courtesy of the innovative farming practices and nutrition training introduced by the program. Mariam was empowered with new knowledge and she seized the opportunity to diversify her income streams, venturing into micro-processing and homestead gardening, unlocking new avenues with a minimal investment of seven thousand nairas (N7,000).



▲ Photo: Mariam Ali' in her new home construction site (Photo Credit FtF-NIAA)



▲ Photo: Mariam Ali's Harvested Seed Storage (Photo Credit FtF-NIAA)

By September 2024, Mariam's micro-processing has blossomed into a thriving business producing a range of nutritious snacks including ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUF), popcorn, tofu, and peanuts. These products not only met local demands but also provided a sustainable livelihood stream for Mariam's family, with weekly profits soaring between 3,500 to 5,000 naira, which boosted Mariam's entrepreneurial spirit.

Driven by her aspiration to secure a brighter future for her children, Mariam wisely reinvested her earnings into the

business and local savings through which she pays their tuition, catering to them in various ways, and she is currently constructing a new home—a symbol of her family's advancement.

Despite their challenges, Mariam and her husband stood united, supporting each other in their journey towards prosperity. Reflecting, Mariam expressed profound gratitude for the opportunities afforded by the Feed the Future USAID project. "Honestly, I began to appreciate farming and life after my encounter with the Feed the Future USAID project. Farming has become more tangible, micro-processing has had the most significant impact on my life, and my family's livelihood has drastically improved. I am deeply grateful." she remarked.

Focus on Northeast Nigeria's Agricultural Recovery: NIAA Planning Meeting

In a bid to steer Northeast Nigeria towards agricultural recovery and economic stability, the Activity recently convened a pivotal Staff Planning Meeting. Held on February 26th and 27th at the esteemed Evolution Hotel in Gombe, this gathering brought together dedicated staff members from all four implementing states—Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, and Yobe. Led by the esteemed Activity Chief of the Party, Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal, the meeting served as a strategic platform to chart the course towards achieving the diverse objectives outlined within the Activity's comprehensive framework.

Collaboration, Cooperation, and Coordination: Key Themes

At the heart of the sessions lay a shared commitment to foster collaboration, cooperation, communication, and coordination among all stakeholders. Recognising the interconnectedness of

their efforts, participants delved into constructive discussions aimed at synergizing their actions to maximize impact. The exchange of insights and perspectives served to refine existing strategies and explore innovative approaches tailored to the unique needs of each state.

Driving Strategy and Strategic Thinking

Amidst spirited deliberations, the gathering also underscored the significance of strategic thinking in navigating the complex landscape of agricultural revitalization. Attendees engaged in robust brainstorming sessions, harnessing collective expertise to identify opportunities, mitigate challenges, and forge pathways towards sustainable growth. The Activity remains poised to catalyze enduring change across Northeast Nigeria by aligning its endeavours with a coherent strategic vision.

▼ *Accompanied is a picture gallery showcasing moments of collaboration, camaraderie, and strategic planning captured during the event*





▲ Group photograph at the end of the sessions



◀ Sub-team celebrations at the meeting



◀ The CoP, Prakash Kant Silwal anchoring a session at the meeting