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

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Integrated Agriculture Activity Holds Year 4 Work Planning/Stakeholders' Meeting



As part of preparations for the Activity's expanded scope, Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture held its Year 4 Work Plan/Stakeholders' Meeting in Yola, Adamawa State, and Gombe, Gombe State on the 8th and 10th of November 2022 respectively. The meetings were attended by major players in the agriculture sector from Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe States.

While presenting a summary of the Year Three Work Plan, the Chief of Party, Dr. Prakash Kant Silwal appreciated the participants for supporting the Activity in its many interventions over the last three and half years. Silwal particularly praised their efforts at making food available in the northeast as well as improving the livelihood of women and young people in the region. He announced that USAID has found the Activity worthy of another two-year \$5 million fund and so the American government will proceed with its good work in Adamawa, Borno, and now, Gombe, Yobe.

Apart from the attendance of Adamawa and Borno States Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Officials, seed companies, and community-based seed producers at the Yola meeting, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Umar Daware and the Commissioner for Entrepreneur, Mr. James Iliyasu were also present. Hon Daware commended the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture for supporting the government of Adamawa, most especially for encouraging an organized seed system and blocking other agricultural loopholes. Hon Iliyasu, on his part, praised the varied interventions of the Activity and expressed his optimism about the Year 4 Work Plan.

In his goodwill messages, the Gombe State Commissioner for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Muhammed Gettado who was represented by the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu applauded the USAID for including Gombe and Yobe in such a laudable





Adamawa State Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon Umar Daware (centre) flanked by his Entrepreneurship counterpart, Hon. James Iliyasu (second from right) and members of the IAA Senior Management Team at the meeting in Yola, Adamawa State.

venture. In the same vein, the Yobe State Commissioner for Agriculture represented by Dr. Yusuf Iliyasu Maina commended the various achievements of the Activity hoping that they will surpass their previous records in the two new states.

The Yearly Workplan/Stakeholders'

meeting provides an avenue to obtain stakeholders' inputs into the Activity's Year Four Work Plan. Components 1, 2, and 3 as well as the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit/Security Unit presented the framework with corresponding questions and comments from stakeholders.



The Chief of Party, IAA, Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal addressing a cross-section of participants at the gathering in Gombe.





IAA's Demonstration Plots Move to Harvest Phase

The establishment of demonstration plots (demo-plots) by Integrated Agriculture Activity serve unique didactic purposes. Small holder farmers learn climate smart, good agricultural practices from experienced trainers on these plots. Around May/June this year, about 500 demo-plots were established in both Adamawa and Borno States. Despite the different episodes of flooding encountered in these states, most of the demo-plots reached the harvest phase.

With the rains in June, demonstration trials were established. However, the cultivation of six out of the Activity's seven crops - rice, maize, soybean, millet, sorghum and groundnut – began in June/July. Cowpea was planted in August. Lead farmers took charge of the demo-plots with group members taking part in major activities such as fertilizer application, etc. Fertilizer application was carried out two weeks after the establishment of the plots using the micro

-dosing method and Legume Specific Fertilizer (SSP) for cowpea, soybean and groundnut. Nodumax Inoculant was tried on the soybean demo trials too.

While Field Days were conducted across all the LGAs in September, harvesting/data collection was done in the month of November. The Activity's Senior Agronomist, Field Technical Officers, Research Supervisors and Extension Agents ensured the supervision of the harvesting and data collection exercise in Adamawa and Borno States. The exercise includes training on harvesting techniques, weighing of harvested crops and crop residues, logbook recording and analysis. At the end of the exercise, a report showing the performance of the improved crop varieties/practices versus traditional varieties/practices will be prepared and shared with farmers and other stakeholders. This will enhance the adoption of improved practices.





SILC Group Prepares for a Memorable Christmas

Members of the Wunkithe SILC Development Association, Lamza village, Guyuk LGA, Adamawa State are getting ready for the 2022 Christmas and new year celebrations. Unlike most people, they are a bit more prepared for the festivities. They bought a cow for the end-of-the-year merrymakings.

Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity facilitated the formation of this group as one of its Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC) groups in 2020, the group comprises 25 members (8 men, 17 women) who basically contribute money to meet their primary and secondary needs. They were trained in group dynamism, cooperative management

and financial literacy in 2020/2021 by the Activity. At expected intervals, they hold share-outs where they get their quota of the contributed funds.

“We decided to engage in weeding services enterprise during the wet season 2022. We bought portable weeding equipment and advertised to farmers within our locality. Who doesn't need constant weeding during the wet season? To our surprise, we made N150,000! Then, we bought the cow in early September. We had enough money to even pay for the inoculation and fattening of the cow till Christmas! We won't have to spend so much on meat this season” said executive member, Yakubu Haruna.





CELEBRATING IAA'S NUTRITION FOCAL PERSONS

In the last three and half years of its operations in Nigeria's northeast, USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity has been emphasizing the importance of highly nutritious foods for households in the region. The Activity's varied nutrition interventions have been possible with the support of state and local governments, community leaders as well as designated nutrition promoters at the grassroots.

So far, the nutrition promoters have significantly contributed to the development and communal acceptance of highly wholesome, readily available complementary foods for 6-23month children. They have also thrown their weight behind best practices in Infant and Young Child Feeding (MIYCF) which has impacted positively and reduced greatly malnutrition, and mortality of under 5 children in their communities.

These nutrition advocates have ensured the adoption of best hygiene practices including recommended WHO

handwashing practices and the use of a customized clay pot (Becky Pot) which has limited the spread of diseases such as diarrhea in homes. Ultimately, they propagate the gospel of homestead farming which has improved many households' nutrition and helped to generate income for families.

In November 2022, Integrated Agriculture Activity organized an advocacy meeting wherein these nutrition promoters in Adamawa and Borno States were awarded certificates in recognition of their contributions to the Activity. The Activity also appreciated Community leaders for their previous backing and sought their continued support especially as the Activity moves into the expanded phase. A total of 550 nutrition promoters in the 12 intervention LGAs of Adamawa and Borno received certificates of recognition. The ceremonies were facilitated by the Activity's Nutrition Officers – Rebecca Tumba and Blessing Edwin.





As part of efforts to expose local women to economically viable ventures, Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity trained 35 members of Zinariya Women Co-operative Society, Demsa (Demsa LGA, Adamawa State) in beekeeping and honey production. This is the second training geared towards empowering women in beekeeping and honey production. The first set of women received training in 2020 with bee-keeping suits, smokers, and other needed materials. Their cooperative societies have since harvested honey and bee wax which they have sold.

The Market Systems and Livelihood Specialist, Mr. Bassey Archibong, explained that the Activity's

Building a Women Bee-Keeping Co-operative Group



Fully Kitted: Trainee women ready to visit the hive for practical during the two-day training

commitment to improving the livelihood of young people and women in the northeast is at the core of USAID's many interventions, especially through the Activity. Mr. Archibong also said that many of these interventions encourage young people and women to take entrepreneurial opportunities available within their communities seriously. He promised that these interventions will continue during the expanded scope of the Activity in 2023 and 2024.

The Lead Trainer, Mr. David Musa commended the Activity for the two-day initiative which exposed the women to the business angle of beekeeping. He said the training was tailored

to the needs of rural women as it was aimed at providing a stable source of income for them.

The trainer appreciated the women for their interest and urged them to seize the money-making opportunity.

"I am so excited about the training. I missed the first training, but I am privileged to be part of the second training. I used to see beekeeping as a dangerous venture. The trainers made it very simple for us when they pointed out the nutritional and medicinal uses of honey during the practical. I didn't even know one can make money from beeswax also. Now I am better informed. Thanks to IAA," said Hannatu Yakubu, a trainee.



Lead Trainer, Mr. David Musa with some of the women at the hive





“Call me a Seed-Seller” – Beneficiary

Whenever you visit Mainahari Community in Biu, Borno State and you need spinach (aleho), tomatoes, okra and yakwa seeds, there is a higher chance that you will be directed to Mallama Aisha Mohammed's house. Aisha is one of Integrated Agriculture Activity's nutrition promoters in her community. The mother of two has been trained in nutrition-sensitive interventions.

In May 2021, Aisha attended a refresher training organized by the Activity on homestead farming. She received different seeds which she planted in her homestead garden.

“The vegetables were so green and beautiful. They were in high demand. I sold many of them, and we ate out of them too. The money I made from selling those fresh vegetables contributed to my family's upkeep. The rest of the vegetables I left because of their seeds.”

Since then, Aisha has stopped buying seeds. About 30 households in her community depend on her for their vegetable seeds. Early this year, she made up to NGN2,500 by selling only seeds.

“The good part is that they keep sending new customers to me because my seeds produce bountiful harvests. You can now call me a seed seller. Big thanks to IAA, IITA and USAID!”





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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