

# AGRA impact series

## Essa Smallholder Farmers gets access to Farm Inputs through One-Stop Agro dealer Shops

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As part of efforts to increase access to agricultural inputs for farmers in rural communities, the North Central Input and Agro Dealers Association of Nigeria (NOCAIDA) established and flagged off a one-stop-shop for agro inputs using the AGRA renovated warehouses at Essa village, Katcha, and Lavun LGA Niger State Nigeria.

These centers have increased access to inputs in the 2020 season. Before this, farmers in the community walked long distances to access inputs at Bida, which is the closest urban center as well as spend huge amounts of money on transport to ferry their goods back to the community.

Rice farming has been an age-long practice for Essa smallholder farming community in Katcha Local Government Area, of Niger State, a largely agrarian State in North Central Nigeria. For years, farmers lacked access to appropriate farm inputs due to the remote location of their community. Farmers had to travel miles away to Bida, the closest urban center, to buy farm inputs (fertilizer, seeds and agrochemical), leading to increased costs of production. Consequently, many of the farmers resort to cultivating seeds saved from the previous season. This resulted in low tonnage of produce after harvest.

Umar Mohammed Badeggi, a Community Based Advisor (CBA), determined to change the condition of farmers in his community, used part of his income from his farm to procure farm inputs from Bida, which he in turn sold to farmers in his community.

Initially, he ran into losses because the majority of farmers were not aware that farm inputs were then available in their community. He had not marketed his shop leading to the low patronage.

However, this changed in May 2020. The Essa community was selected by the North Central Agro-input Dealers' Association (NOCAIDA) as one of the communities in which was to be established a one-stop-shop for agro-inputs under the AGRA-supported Niger State Rice Consortium project.

NOCAIDA established a last-mile access to agro-inputs center for the community. Smallholder farmers procure farm inputs from agro-dealers, who then sell their inputs at the one-stop-center. Many of the agro dealers also deliver products to their doorstep on credit.

At the launch of the center in May 2020, Alhaji Suleiman Mustapha Rijau, the Managing Director of Niger State Ministry of



Agriculture and Mechanization (NAMDA), emphasized Niger State Government's commitment to adopt the PIATA AGRA model to distribute inputs to 13 input sub-stations across the state. The flag-off featured inputs (seed, agrochemical, fertilizer) exhibition and sales from 17 major input companies and hub agro-dealers directly to 200 farmers. The association also used the platform to continue farmer sensitization on social distancing, handwashing; use, and distribution of facemask to participants

Umar, through NOCAIDA intervention, has now become a major agro dealer in his community. Most of the farmers buy agro inputs from his new shop located at the center. This has enabled farmers in the community to have easy access to farm inputs. Now, Umar is able to grow a larger portion of his farm, all 15 ha, due to the extra income from the sales of farm inputs.

Umar is happy that CBAs have been empowered to become better agro dealers in his community. "Thanks to AGRA-PIATA for coming powerfully to help the CBAs and smallholder farmers in our community. I will use the proceeds I have from my shop to acquire more farm lands from the nearby community to expand my business, I can comfortably take care of my large family because I have more than one stream of income."

The center has also kick-started the business of agro dealership for some youth in the community. It identified and trained six youth, and have been selling input on commission basis for NOCAIDA.

NOCAIDA taught the agro-dealers in the community on proper marketing skills and some received credit facilities to enable them acquire shops in the community market square. It undertook awareness campaigns in remote areas of the communities for agro-dealers. This has saved smallholder farmers time and money to purchase the required inputs from their locality instead of travelling long distances.