

AGRA Impact Series



Nigerian farmers report gains from AGRA-PIATA support

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Had Dauda Barde not attended a training session on good agronomic practices (GAP) by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA), he would still be struggling to feed his seven children.

PIATA is a strategic partnership launched in 2017 by various international organizations to help African farmers better their output through agricultural training, modern inputs, and the introduction to bigger and better markets.

Mr Barde was among the trainees at a 2018 program in the Gbaita village of Niger State, Nigeria. Until then, the 65-year-old had, for over 40 years, cultivated rice on six hectares of land, but the yields were constantly disappointing. However, today, barely three years after gaining GAP skills from the AGRA-PIATA training, his annual production has more than doubled to five tons per hectare up from two.

“Participating in the program was one of the best business decisions I have made. I am able to make more profit from agribusiness than I could ever imagine,” he said.

His life, he confirms, has in the last two years transformed as a result of the extra income from rice sales, allowing him to pay his children’s college fees on time, renovate his home, invest in a cow-fattening project and buy a brand-new motorcycle.

Barde is just one of many Nigerian farmers who have been influenced by AGRA and PIATA to better their agricultural prospects. Through a US \$4million investment, the two institutions have managed to leverage an additional US \$7 million in resources from partners to reach 800,000 beneficiaries in the country.

Nigeria was selected by the partnership as one of 11 countries to lead an agricultural revolution because of its great potential for transformation. In fact, Nigeria is one of the three African countries with the largest potential for agricultural expansion, according to McKinsey. The country has 34 million hectares of arable land or 38 percent of its total land area, and a favorable climate for farming.

The World Bank, too, reports that Nigeria has one of the largest populations of youth in the world, a competitive factor in agricultural production. Yet, for a long time, the West African country has been limited by a lack of agronomic expertise and modern inputs, leaving it to import staple food items like rice, wheat, sugar and fish to supplement its domestic production.



Today, Nigeria remains a net importer of food with an annual import bill of US \$3b, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). This includes about \$1.6 billion that is spent on rice imports from countries such as Thailand and India.

However, things are gradually changing, as AGRA and PIATA register continuous success in the output of farmers receiving agronomic training and other forms of support like access to modern inputs and technologies.

“Thanks to the (AGRA-PIATA) training, I now have extra money to buy more fertilizer for my business and I will use the extra income to assist my family especially my children. I also teach women in my community to farm well and get better yield like I did,” said Grace Madaki, a 32-year-old maize farmer from the Nkojo Village in Kaduna State.

Additionally, the AGRA-PIATA interventions have helped create a conducive environment for agricultural rejuvenation by supporting the Nigerian government in policy formulation and implementation, enhanced coordination with agribusinesses and increased budget allocations to the sector.

The assistance has been positively received by the country’s administrators, among them the Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Mu’azu Abdulkadir, who regards it as inspirational.

“I have come to understand the very many

programs and interventions being implemented by AGRA. They are not only working with us, but also with the sub-national governments. My fair assessment is that these collaborations have been very successful,” Dr. Abdulkadir said during an AGRA-PIATA event last December.

“What we (government) need to understand is what AGRA is doing, for instance, in the area of collaborating with institutions and other stakeholders within the value chain to stimulate activities towards increasing food production focusing on extension services, agribusiness promotion and development, among others,” he added.

AGRA has been working in Nigeria since 2006, supporting the government’s agricultural priorities on building an agribusiness economy for sustainable prosperity through domestic food security, export generation, import substitution and job creation. The organization’s work is in alignment with the Federal Government’s Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) or Green Alternative and the Government’s Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP).

So far, the organization has helped improve the livelihoods of 989,224 smallholder farmers through the strengthening of the maize, rice and soybean value chains. Some of these gains are as a result of a 208% increase in seed production from 21,000MT to 43,671MT. The access to improved seeds, fertilizers and agrochemicals has also been strengthened by linking 1,327 agrodealers to input and output markets.

208%

Increase in seed production due to the strengthening of the maize, rice and soybean value chain.