

## AGRA Knowledge Series



### Trained pesticide sprayers report increased incomes in safer working environment

**Walking around Gimi Village of the Makarfi Local Area Government in Nigeria's Kaduna State, you are almost sure to meet several youth walking around with knapsack sprayers strapped to their backs looking for farms to apply pesticides and herbicides.**

It is a particularly common sight during the cropping season, when smallholder farmers, eager to control their management costs, find it cheaper to recruit the services of youth already in the business.

To the spraying entrepreneurs, this presents a good way to earn a living. However, for a long time, it was not unusual for them to make losses after using the wrong chemicals and damaging clients' crops, a cost that was deducted from their pay.

Furthermore, the sprayers were constantly exposing themselves to harm, with research showing that 99 percent of the deaths associated with pesticides occur in developing

countries like Nigeria, where only 25 percent of the world's production of pesticides is used.

Among the reasons attributed to these chemical-related deaths are: poor pesticide education leading to extensive misuse, the use of cheap but persistently toxic pesticides, poor legislation, and inadequacies in medical recognition and response to pesticide poisoning.

Realizing the difficult environment in which the Gimi sprayers worked, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA) teamed up to equip them with chemical management knowledge and safety equipment.

“There was a lack of awareness on proper and modern spraying techniques. The youth were unaware that different crops required different pesticides and herbicides. The lack of knowledge subsequently created huge crop losses in different farms, which affected their payment,” said Esther Ibrahim, Program Office AGRA/PIATA Activity in Kaduna State.

A total of 50 youth entrepreneurs were chosen to attend training on the appropriate pesticides for different crops, effective spraying techniques, and personal protection.

“The selection process involved a lot of research; youth in different cooperatives were interviewed about their challenges and spraying techniques, confirming the urgent need for training,” said Mustapha Shuaibu, a community-based facilitator.

At the end of the program, the trainees were given personal protective equipment. This was the turnaround they needed because immediately after, the trained sprayers gained more confidence from farmers, who now appreciate

their ability to safely handle different types of crops, leading to guaranteed payments. The use of PPEs has also helped keep the sprayers safe, effectively saving them the resources they would have spent on medication.

From the assured income, one of the trainees, Mohammed Zakari, has managed to pay for and take the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) test, Nigeria’s entrance examination for tertiary-level institutions. He is now preparing to join medical school.

“I used the money we get from working on people’s farms to take my JAMP examinations for University admission. Luckily I scored 250; I want to study medicine at the Kaduna State University and I am just waiting for admission,” he said.

The training of Gimi sprayers is part of the \$4 million AGRA-PIATA collaboration that has helped leverage an additional \$7 million in resources to equip over 800,000 beneficiaries with the knowledge needed for increased agricultural production.

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**Mohammed Zakari**  
Trainee

