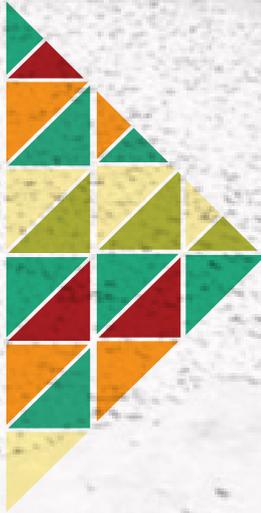
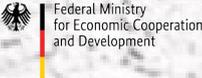


SUCCESS STORIES NIGERIA 2019



KADUNA AND NIGER STATE



Story 1:

PASSAGE AND ASSENT OF THE NIGERIAN AGRICULTURAL SEEDS COUNCIL BILL

Seed system security is one of the top priorities of AGRA as an organization that drives agricultural productivity in Africa. Following the declined assent of the Nigerian Agricultural Seeds Council Bill by President Muhammadu Buhari; AGRA approached NESG and formed a partnership with a focus on systems approach to advocate for the passage and assent of three critical Bills to create an enabling business environment within the agriculture sector. To drive the advocacy process, economic impact analysis/ impact assessment of the three Bills was conducted which shaped the evidence-based policy briefs and other digital and traditional advocacy assets utilized. A mapping of Stakeholders was done to differentiate the policy cluster, operational cluster/implementers and beneficiaries who had power to influence the passage and assent of the three Bills.

Sensitization was conveyed across 5 geo-political zones in Nigeria to sensitize smallholder farmers on the imperatives & impact of the Bills. Support and buy-in was garnered from players across different sectors, agro-allied companies and private & public development organizations with interest in the Bills. Traditional and social media campaigns on the three Bills commenced in November, 2018 and the momentum is currently sustained.

To further deepen engagement with the Legislature and the Executive; one-on-one consultative advocacy meetings were held between the NESG-National Assembly Business Environment Roundtable (NASSBER) and the Clerks of the Committees that presided over the Bills. The Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum and the Attorney General to the Federation were also engaged by NESG-Senior Policy Advisors. NESG collaborated with other implementing partners including, NASC, AFEX, FSS 2020, NIRSAL, FEPSAN, NPFS, FMARD, SEEDAN, Contact Consulting, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investment and Securities Exchange Commission.

The National Agricultural Seeds Council Bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 11th December, 2018 and by Senate on 17th April, 2019. A conference was held between the House of Representatives and the Senate Committees to harmonize the National Agricultural Seeds Council Bills on 30th April, 2019.

The clean copies of the National Agricultural Seeds Council Bill were transmitted to the Presidency before the Presidential Inauguration day (May 29, 2019). The President assented to the National Agricultural Seeds Council Bill on 24th June, 2019.

2018 NG 001:

Advocacy for the passage of the fertilizer quality control bill, Nigerian independent warehouse receipt system bill and the presidential assent of the National Agricultural Seed Council bill.



Story 2:

PASSAGE AND ASSENT OF THE NATIONAL FERTILIZER QUALITY CONTROL ACT, 2019

Prior to the grant support provided by AGRA, Kenya through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Nigerian Economic Summit Group towards the advocacy for the passage of the Fertilizer Quality Control Bill, the Nigerian Independent Warehouse Receipt System Bill and the Presidential assent of the National Agricultural Seeds Council Bill; the Fertilizer Quality Control Bill had seen 4 assemblies (16 years) without a positive record of its passage while the National Agricultural Seeds Council Bill and the Warehouse Receipt System Bill had also been laid for review and harmonization in the National Assembly for several years until 2018.

The first phase of the Advocacy project began with an Inception meeting held with Stakeholders from the public and private sector within the agricultural value chain. Development Partners were also involved at the beginning of the project to harness the much needed support on advocacy towards the passage of the three Agribusiness Bills. An evidence-based advocacy roadmap for the passage of the Bills was designed by NESG and Contact Consulting Limited with a strategy to engage the citizenry, stakeholders in the Agricultural sector and the Government by building conversations around data on what we are losing as an Economy by the non-passage of the agribusiness Bills and what we stand to gain as an Economy when the Bills are successfully passed and signed into law. The theme “*Farm Pain to Farm Gain*” was selected for the advocacy campaign. Committees were inaugurated that constituted the Technical team, Advocacy team and the Contact team at the Inception for the project to kick off. The Technical team of Consultants led by the NESG, Financial System Strategy (FSS) 2020, an offshoot of the Central Bank of Nigeria and Data-Lead Africa prepared the Economic Impact Analysis on Fertilizer Usage in Nigeria that projected findings on an average Nigerian farmer’s usage of Fertilizer per hectare of land to be 7.32 kg/ha. This finding is absolutely a wide contrast to the recommended average of 400 kg/ha. The Bills were reviewed and harmonized by Expert Committee set up and led by Clerks within the National Assembly.

The National Assembly Business Environment Roundtable (NASSBER); a partnership with the National Assembly, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and the Nigerian Bar Association- Section on Business Law is a platform that sits in the NESG secretariat and was created as an avenue for the legislature and the private sector to engage, deliberate and act on a framework that will improve Nigeria’s business environment. This is accomplished through a review of relevant legislations and provisions of the Constitution. The Contact team was constituted from this platform to ensure the follow-up on the status of the Bills and continued engagement with the Legislature and Executive of the National Assembly to advocate for the passage and assent of the three agribusiness Bills.

The development of evidence-based policy briefs for the three Bills and dissemination of stakeholder engagement materials has been on-going since November, 2018. Some of the successes achieved in the first quarter of the advocacy project is the engagement with three hundred and fifteen (315) smallholder farmers through the regional sensitizations in two geo-political zones in the South-South, South-East, South West, North West and North-Central of Nigeria. A “Tell a Friend” sub-campaign was also initiated with the smallholder farmers to have a wider reach and sensitize farmers that couldn’t be mobilized to the regional sensitizations. The sub-campaign was designed as a medium to disseminate advocacy-based Farmers’ almanac to grass root farmers through partnerships with other Agro-based organizations including Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), The Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), Oxfam and Association of Small-Scale Agro Producers in Nigeria (ASSAPIN).

In addition to the reach of smallholder farmers recorded, the sub-campaign initiative enabled the



Hon. Dandutse Muntari-Chairman
House Committee on Agricultural Production and Services presenting opening remarks and the National & Sub-National Agribusiness Legislative retreat held by the NESG to support Agribusiness Legislative Reforms in Nigeria.



Mezuo Nwuneli
Managing Partner, Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers presenting The Agribusiness Environment in Nigeria and the Need for Appropriate Legislations to Unlock Our Potentials in Agriculture and Nutrition

NESG to reach 6000+ smallholder farmers. The smallholder farmers pledged to lend their voice and advocate for the passage of the three Bills through their platforms such as their Farmers' Cooperative Societies and Farmers' Association Town Hall meetings.

The successful passage of the Fertilizer Quality Control Bill was recorded in the Senate on 20th March, 2019 and in the House of Representa-

tives on 2nd June, 2019. The harmonization of the Bill and concurrence meeting was completed by Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and it became an Executive Bill before the close of the 8th National Assembly. In the wake of the 9th National Assembly, on the 16th October, 2019, the President assented to the Fertilizer Quality Control Bill and it was enacted into law.



Salisu Abdullahi, Clerk of the Senate Committee on Rules and Business



Dr Fortune Ihua, Clerk of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (a cross-section of National and Subnational Clerks and Legislators on Agriculture).

The engagement with the Legislature culminated into an agribusiness Legislative retreat post-passage of the agribusiness Bills to ensure proper design of implementation strategies and synergies through dialogue between the National & Sub-national clerks, legislators, Directors of Agriculture Services and Commissioners of Agriculture and Rural Development.



(L-R) **Mr. Nnanna Ude**, Senior Fellow Legislative Reform Strategy and Programme Management, **Mezuo Nwuneli** (Managing Partner, Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers), **Hon. Muntari Muhammad Dandutse** (Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Agricultural Production & Services, **David Adama** (Policy Program Officer, AGRA, Kenya), **Engr. Badmus Jatto** (Director, Farm Input Support Services FMARD).



Mr. Nnanna Ude
Senior Fellow Legislative Reform Strategy and Programme Management delivering a presentation on NASSBER: The Economic Impact of Legislations

Story 3:

SEEDING THE FUTURE IN ACHA-JEBWA

Without good seeds, yield and crop quality diminishes. And for as many smallholder farmers who lack this foundation, technology has modernized not just the variety of seeds, but day-to-day operations on the field.

As a rice farmer in Acha-Jebwa, Ismaila depended on the methods and training handed down over the generations in his family. With little access to modern agricultural techniques and materials, his ability to compete in today's markets was already severely diminished.

In April 2018 however, a call for the formalization of farmer groups reached his ears, and along with many from his community, he met with representatives of Sasakawa Global 2000 (SG 2000), the National Agricultural and Mechanization Development Agency (NAMDA), Tecni Seed and Da-All Green, major partners in AGRA's food security initiative for Niger state. There, he was able to partner with the initiative, and received his first batch of demo seeds, along with some savvy new techniques to maximize yield.

"Techniseeds supplied us with the Faro 44, we were also given the baby demo and mother demo. Ten (10) grams of Faro 44 distributed to the farmers to produce this year. It is expected that by next year, they will have more of the improved seedlings. SG 2000 also gave us training on how to properly set up our demo plots. These demo seeds were used to show the new farming and processing methods for rice; how to properly transplant, the proper spacing (20cm), fertilizers and chemical application, from planting to harvest period. The interest towards rice farming and processing is immense, but the main challenge is capital for this to progress further, this is why the availability of loans is paramount to the farmers."

Responding to the various challenges of rice production and milling, including inadequate aggregation centres and price instability, farmers of the Agbollo Acha-Jebwa community have taken the bull by the horns. Thanks to the efforts of The Nigeria Agro Inputs Dealers Association (NAIDA), farmers like Ismaila who have been partnering with FBOs working in their locale. Through this formalization and registration process, the farmers as a collective group, purchased 70 bags of paddy rice at N6000 per bag, allowing them to increase the productivity in the paddies and increase overall yield.

By revolving the earnings until the profits appreciate, the farmers and processor groups are able to take advantage of links with small and medium enterprises as well as financial institutions, guided by organisations like SG2000 and NAMDA. The financing can be channeled through various points of aggregation in the value chain, such as producer organizations, warehouses, procurement networks and input providers.

Halidu Mohammed, a field officer from Techniseed and company coordinator in Minna, spoke about the levelling up of the projects with lead farmers like the Agbollo Acha-Jebwa community, describing the future plans to increase the networks and involve the community members in management roles.

"We are trying to setup an out-grower scheme; as this is included in the grant from AGRA as part of the milestones to achieve, so apart from the technical support, trainings and workshops that we carry out to enlighten the farmers more, we also selected some of the lead farmers to serve as the out-growers for us in the Local Government Area. This scheme is essentially a contractual agreement with the lead farmers, where they provide the labour and the land required, while we provide the resources such as seeds, fertilizers and technical support."

The efforts of Techniseed and other partners in this initiative fall under AGRA's production seed production initiative. As a whole, they are responsible for the production of certified seeds of all crop varieties, Premier Brand certified seeds anchored on highly organized Out-growers' Schemes, of about 3,000 farmers (out-growers) located in three Zones, A, B and C, and a separate out-growers scheme for rice production known as the Rice Special Program (RSP).

Out growers receive training and support with high-grade fertilizer at cost and on credit. The company has also established an Internal Quality Control Laboratory and field quality control monitoring to verify and ascertain that quality work is being done in the field.

As Halidu Mohammed notes, "the AGRA scheme in partnership with PIATA and other partners was set to help with a sort of backward integration within the LGAs, where we don't have to process our seeds from Kano, we now produce them here, which in turn means more people are hired to work with us in the processing chain and re-bagging, also the cost of labour would be cheaper and the cost of the seeds be cheaper as compared to producing from Kano and transporting to Minna."

He concluded by adding that members under the Partnership for Inclusive Agriculture Transformation in Africa (PIATA), some of which include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are helping to change the narrative for many smallholder farmers in Niger state.

Going forward, Ismaila is one of many farmers embracing the new infrastructure, which will allow them to become agro-dealers in their own right, and maintain an organised system with access to competitive markets across the country and the world.



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Story 4:

COLLABORATING FOR AN EVEN BIGGER HARVEST: THE LEMU WOMEN RICE PROCESSORS GROUP



Women's Rice Processors Group Training.

With great harvest comes progress in Africa's agricultural transformation agenda. This is why the founding principles that guide the activities of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) in the agricultural communities across Niger state and the country; the dedication to eliminate the need for food importation stands paramount. While the country faces a demand gap of over two million metric tons of rice, the national policy seeks to close this gap through the actions of strategic value chain actors.

In Gbako LGA of Niger state, the seeds of micro economy and self-actualization have taken strong root in the community. New Agro-input dealers are emerging from the implementation of the training from Tecni Seed, Da-All Green and other AGRA partners, and linkages to sources of finance thanks to agreements brokered by SG 2000 and NAMDA.

Progressing from meetings with VC actors earlier in the year, capacity building for youths and women business entrepreneurs on agro-input and output market distribution has continued to yield positive results. All of which has helped to show the way forward for trailblazers like the Lemu Women Rice Processors Group.

Taking notes from their session with Da All Green seeds, the group sought to ease the process of acquiring their loan through aggregation, securing N200, 000.00 at N40, 000.00 per head from the Lemu Microfinance Bank with the support of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) project.

Farmers in many areas are routinely plagued with inadequate aggregation centres, price instability and are challenged with high-interest rates when seeking loan facilities from microfinance banks.

Addressing most of these problems is a good first

step towards attaining the target of rice self-sufficiency. Hitting the ground running, the Lemu Women Rice Processors group have already begun to recycle the rice through processing and marketing, realizing up to N400 profit per bag, with projections only climbing.

As one of the women noted, “The benefits of AGRA teaching us how to properly process rice without stones and chaff has increased profitability of how much we sell a mudu of rice; previously unprocessed rice sold for three hundred to three hundred and fifty naira only (N300-350), in contrast, processed rice sells for between four hundred and fifty and five hundred naira (N450-500).”

AGRA's initiatives are designed to increase the capacities of youth and women, with more lessons built around entrepreneurship on rice products/diversification including bio-fortification.

“They are many groups of people involved in the processes, we believe an estimate of more than a hundred people are involved. The rice is taken to as far as Zungeru, Bida and Minna. Some are taken by off-takers, while some board vehicles to these various locations to sell their products. The market is better as the rice is been bought as a result of how clean the rice is, owing to new processing methods. This Faro 44 variety of rice is cleaner and clearer than the older varieties of

rice grown before. This has created more options of either the Faro 44 and 52.”

The Nigerian Rice Consortium, through the help of PIATA members such as USAID continue to build the capacity of youth and women for employment with rice as the entry point. The rice value chain presents a lot of business and enterprise development opportunities from input marketing through production and processing to marketing of finished rice.

The different enterprises that could potentially engage the youth and contribute to reducing rural-urban drift range from production and commercialization and include the following: seed out-grower, paddy production enterprises, equipment operations and service provision enterprises, rice products diversification, rice processing enterprises, rice milling enterprises, rice equipment welding and fabrication enterprises, rural agro-inputs kiosk enterprises, rice threshing enterprises, and rice/paddy distribution enterprises.

The training provided by AGRA has not only helped the Lemu processors to set up fully equipped community resource centres, they now have the opportunity to expand their trade.

Story 5: EFFORT TO TACKLE COUNTERFEIT SEEDS IN NIGERIA RECEIVES RENEWED BOOST THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF NASC SEEDCODEX WITH SUPPORT OF THE PIATA.

NEWS

NASC Unveils Seedcodex Solution, Set To Deploy Enhanced Certification Tags

Published 16 hours ago on July 22, 2019 By JULIANA AGBO



NASC SEEDCODEX

A turnkey electronic seed authentication tag to enhance tracking, traceability and provide quality assurance to farmers who pick seeds from the shelf of agro dealers.

Seed is the most important input in crop production. Reliable, quality seeds are vital to agriculture and the food supply chain. High-quality seeds enable farmers to boost crop productivity, improve livelihoods, and feed a growing population.

In recent years in Nigeria, there has been an increase in complains from farmers on illegal seed practices, including counterfeit seeds, fake seeds, fraudulent labelling, regulatory offences and many others. In some cases during recent growing seasons, more than 50% of crop seed sold to farmers was illegal or counterfeit. The continued use of illegal seeds can ruin the reputation and economic prospects of the entire country and will further undermines investment by breeders and seed producers to develop, produce and deliver better quality seeds.

In a bid to nib this challenge at the bud, Council with support of AGRA is introducing the NASC SEEDCODEX a turnkey electronic seed authentication tag to enhance tracking, traceability and provide quality assurance to farmers who pick seeds from the shelf of agro dealers. The new tag will complement the existing statutory tags of the Council and will be stocked on the pack of every class of seeds to be marketed in Nigeria.

The introduction of the innovation has been well received by Nigerian small holder farmers who currently loose hundreds of millions of naira annually to the purchase of sub-standard quality or fake seeds. According to the President of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Arc Kabiru Ibrahim at the event where the SEEDCODEX was recently unveiled to the general public the SEEDCODEX will promote farmer access to better seed bred to help farmers withstand harsher droughts, extreme heat or worsening flooding associated with climate change and all these will help his members substantially boost harvests and generate more income to take care of their needs. Going forward seed packs will have the statutory tags inside the bags and the SEEDCODEX tag that contain a scratch-off code attached outside on the seed pack. Farmers can then send the hidden code via SMS message and get an instant response as to whether the code - and the seed - is valid. Nigerian farmers can now go ahead and plant with confidence and assurance that the seeds planted by them are of good quality and certified by NASC.

Nigerian farmers are now waiting for the commencement of the 2020 season when they can have access to the verified seeds for planting.

The system made possible by the grant provided by AGRA surely will help bring in a good harvest going forward for Nigerian farmers and farmers are earnestly looking forward to this as they can now say goodbye to their crop failure due to the use of fake seeds.

Story 6:

GIANT STRIDES IN SEED SYSTEM

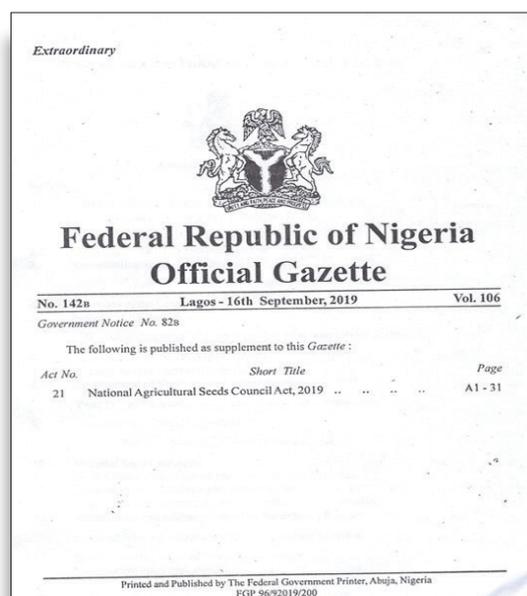
(National Agricultural Seeds Council Act 2019 – Success Story)

Nigeria has one of the lowest yields in agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa with yield as low as 0.5 to 2.5 tons per ha in major crops like soya bean, cowpea, sorghum, millet, maize and rice. The low productivity is recognized to be amongst many others resulting from the dominance of the public sector in research. One big factor responsible is the lack of a robust law that encourage innovation, promote private sector investment and having penalties stiff enough to deter unscrupulous elements from engaging in defrauding farmers through the sale and supply of counterfeit, adulterated and sub-standard seeds to farmers.

In the past 10 years, several efforts to repeal and re-enact the National Agricultural Seeds Act No. 72 of 1992 and for other related matters were not successful. This situation is however different today, as the Bill of the National Agricultural Seeds Council ACT 2019 received presidential Assent in June 2019. A major contributor to this achievement is the intervention of AGRA through the grant “Delivery of High performance to farmers in Nigeria through the development and enactment of plant Variety Protection (PVP) law” to the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC). The many collaborations, partnerships and exposures to new approaches to conducting activities in many ways contributed in no small measures to Mr. Presidents assent to this ACT. Upon implementation of this grant, NASC was able to develop strong partnership and collaboration with sister agencies of government, Federal Ministry of Justice, NGOs, Members of the Nigerian Parliament, Bureaucratic staffs of the Nigerian National Assembly, and international Agencies, all playing significant roles in this success.

Today, Nigeria does not only have a new seed Act, but the seed sector has made other giant strides that were near impossible many years ago. Success recorded with the coming of the new seed Act include but not limited to the following:

1. **Modification of Penalty for infringements:** Under the new Seed Act penalties for offences committed under this act has been made more stringent to ensure it serves as a deterrent. This has led to:
 - a. Increase in the number of entities filling for registration as seed entrepreneurs.
 - b. Reduction in the amount of counterfeit and adulterated seeds in circulation.



2. **More options for quality assurance:** Under the new seed Act, the NASC has been empowered to outsource its seed certification processes. This has paved the way for the introduction of the Third-Party Seed certification scheme. At the moment, this is being piloted in Benue state with Cassava seed certification. In addition to employment generation from third-party seed certification agents/companies, this would increase the efficiency in the quality assurance processes of the NASC.
3. **Introduction of a legislation for the Protection of new plant Varieties (PVP):** The Seed Act under part VIII Section 38 to 40, mention was made on the critical issues of protection of Breeders right (PBR/PVP) creating the window and mandate for the NASC the Approach the National Assembly for the Passage of a separate Plant Variety Legislation to support plant variety development and provide the necessary encouragement for breeders.

A separate legislation “ A Bill for an Act to provide for the protection of plant varieties, establish a plant variety protection office for the promotion of increased staple crop productivity for small holder farmers in Nigeria and for other re-

lated matters has been submitted to the Nigerian National Assemblé and this bill has gone through the First and Second readings at the House of representatives. Success recorded as a result of this process include but not limited to:

- i. Nigeria is now an observer member of UPOV and under consideration for membership.
- ii. Implementing the PVP project has opened the NASC windows of new strategic partnership with relevant international seed organizations (viz-a-viz, UPOV, ISF, ISTA, GNIS, OECD, etc.) and benefits from this partnership.
 1. Currently, Nigeria is now a member of the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and efforts are ongoing to become a member of OECD.
 2. Through these collaborations, the NASC is partnering with the embassy of the kingdom of Netherlands to develop a National Seed sector road map.

All these wouldn't have been possible without Mr. president's assent on the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) Act 2019.



Story 7:

HOW THE UP SCALING OF SAFE PESTICIDE APPLICATION IN KADUNA STATE IS EMPOWERING YOUTH



Demonstration of using safe pesticide

In Makarfi local government, Kaduna state, a new league of spraying enterprises has taken the community by storm. As a result of an intervention from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), three cooperative groups, totaling about 50 individuals acquired training from SG2000 and AGRA. These youth received training on how they can better handle pesticides; spray effectively, alongside personal protective equipment to protect themselves from poisonous chemicals.

“... After the selection we had to interview them to confirm they are into the spraying business, before we train them. We selected them from different cooperative groups to participate in the training and af-

ter the training they were given some equipment. Mustapha Shuaibu, who is a community-based facilitator, explains.

Before now, a lot of the youth in this line of business would wear their clothes without hand gloves and other personal protective equipment to spray farmlands. They were also unaware that the chemical was harmful to us. “We didn’t really fully know type of pesticides ...whether it is herbicides, selective or non-selective. We couldn’t really differentiate.”

It also meant that they were taking expensive risks. “Farmers lost crops and we would lose too as a result. We didn’t make much profit with it.”

Smallholder farmers largely dominate Nigeria’s agricultural sector, thus creating a very profitable market for sprayers. With the high rate of unemployment, the up scaling of spraying activities in Gimi community is empowering youth and changing the narrative for numerous households.

Working in groups that range from 2 to 5 people each, these sprayers are contracted by farmers to spray their farms and tend to their crops. “Some provide us with pesticides, but some give us the money to go and get by ourselves. We are treated like specialists. We are even confident now to suggest the best practices.”

With the help of AGRA, one of the sprayers explained that in addition to training in different capacities, he has also been able to fund his studies at a tertiary institution with hopes of enrolling for the next academic session at the Kaduna State University.

“I used the money we get from these jobs to write Jamb examinations and luckily I scored 250. I want to study medicine in Kaduna state university, and right now I’m just waiting for the admission. This is a good improvement for me. I can’t say the limit of what of what I gained from it; we thank God.”

With more youth acquiring such skill sets and gaining strength, all that’s left is greater collaboration between government, business and labor in keeping up with the rapidly evolving demand within the agricultural sector.

Investing in Africa’s youth will ensure that we solve some of today’s challenges; including food security, to create a more secure future for our continent.

Story 8: Kaduna Milling House

DEVELOPING ENTERPRISE AND SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT



Rice Milling Center in Giwa.

During a visit to Giwa Iganchi Commercial Maize F.C.S Rice Mill Enterprise in Kaduna state, I had to make my way through a rather impatient queue of clients waiting to pick up their processed rice and maize crops. A reality that documents the efforts of the AGRA-Kaduna state Consortium project in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Giwa, a small rice producing local government in Kaduna state, have been cultivating and milling their own crop for years. Using traditional farming methods and local varieties of the crop, farmers in Giwa averaged about 1.8-2.0MT of rice per hectare. This yield represented several arduous hours of labour.

Rice parboiling which is the major processing activity embarked on by women in the community involves soaking the paddy in water for about 8 to 10 hours to soften the Kernel, it was washed again, steamed before sun drying. The rice is milled, winnowed and sold at community market.

The available milling machines, older and unable to adequately remove stones and polish the grain, caused the rice to have a poorer quality than the foreign competitors in the market, which meant it would also be sold for far less. As such, Giwa community's rice process represented a classic case for AGRA intervention, and was fortunately identified by SG 2000 and the Kaduna Agricultural Development Agency (KADA) to be brought under the project.

Trainings and the facilitation of partnerships between the local communities and reputable rural agro-industrialists were conducted regarding the choice of seed and how to plant them correctly. AGRA's mandate to formalize the production and milling process has also seen improvements since the intervention. The introduction of high yielding rice varieties and modern milling machine to this community has paved a way for rice parboiling and milling enterprise development

“The milling machine has a lot of benefits; as a result, they can employ more people thanks to the profits of the business, thereby reducing their dependency on politics as the only source of making a living. They even have night shifts that run from 8pm – 4am,” Mr Abubakar explains.

Fast forward to present day, Iganchi has become the one stop powerhouse owing to the presence of a new milling machine provided by AGRA. With this, they are able to mill between 30-40 bags per day, resulting in a more finished product that is comparable to the imported rice in the market, and thus opens up new avenues to compete in local markets and around the country including bustling markets in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Owerri and Aba.

Abdulrahman, who is one of the many workers at the mill, describes his experience with the AGRA project as transformative for the present and also the future, noting the new possibilities he is able to look forward thanks to a broadened scope.

“My profit has improved, constant growth and been able to help employ more hands. As you can see, there are people carrying out different roles in the processing, chaff removal, operators and so on. The number of bags processed daily determines how much each is paid, usual between N1000- N1500 daily.”

The rice mill is expected to bring about an increase in the production of high-quality finished products. While speaking to a local government representative who prefers to remain anonymous, he explained that community-based advisors have solicited the support of the Federal government to provide better access to finance among other requests. He also stated that this mill would pull several people particularly women and youths out of poverty by creating employment.



30 - 40 bags

Number of bags produced due to the new milling machine AGRA provided.

Story 9:

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE: CATALYSING AND AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN KADUNA STATE



Traning of women on rice parboiling in Kaduna State.

For both smallholder farmers and rice processors in Kaduna state, efforts launched by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other development partners has shaped the industry for the better.

In the past, Soybean farmers would buy seeds from the market or use those available in their stores, plant this with a spacing of about 40 to 50cm while applying fertilize on top of soil surfaces. At harvest time the plant would be removed manually with the root, achieving a yield of only about 0.7to 1MT/ha.

However, as a result of AGRA's intervention both soybean and maize farmers started to buy seeds from registered companies such as Premier Seed and Value Seed. Not just that, they began to plant using recommended spacing, adopted Fertilizer First application with NPK 15:15:15 while second application with SSP. They were also taught to harvest using the hoe in order to leave the plant root that would later serve as manure. These techniques saw their yield rise to between 2 and 2.5 tonnes per hectare.

Abubakar Ahmed Rufai a community-based advisor in mararabar Yakawad, Giwa LGA who is doing what he teaches others, planted TGX 1951 -3F an improved variety of soybean on 1.5 ha. The crop is impressive. He has also planted improved varieties of maize and rice in his other fields. He harvested 2.8 MT of Soybean.1.9MT/ha against 0.9MT

Lawal Sani, a maize farmer in Gimi local government recorded a yield of 5.6MT/ha having adopted these techniques. His farm which is located at Soko area has 2ha. This narrative isn't any different when it comes to rice processing within the state's local governments.

Mrs. Sadiya Kabiri, a rice processor and budding agri-industrialist has been in this line of business for almost five years. With processing methods decades old, Sadiya and her counterparts in Giwa produced a final rice product that is difficult to sell in the market, for its less desirable color and poorer quality.

This was before Sadiya joined the Giwa Idanchi group, a community-based women's processing group supported by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This group received multiple training sessions in processing, milling packaging and distribution, allowing the Giwa community to maintain a locally led distribution chain for their product. The establishment of a modern milling centre in the community further supports the growth of the rice parboiling enterprise.



The method taught to us by AGRA is different,” says Sadiya. “Firstly, the new method the rice is first washed, and some chaff at the top removed. They then parboil the rice and it is subsequently dried not necessarily under the sun and till it is a bit dry, then it is taken to the milling machine and processed. This process is usually concluded within a day as compared to the older local method where the rice is left overnight and dried for longer periods. Another difference between both methods the color of the rice, the AGRA rice looks creamy in color because of how long it is left on fire (parboiling), while the old method of processing leaves the rice whiter because it is not steamed for as long.”

Story 10:

THE AMAZONS TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RICE PROCESSORS IN NIGER STATE

Rice is one of the most consumed crops in Nigeria. As a result of this, demand has increased considerably, making it crucial to meet the demand by adopting a sustainable means to increase productivity. However, the main challenge encountered by processors is finding appropriate solutions for quality rice processing.

Not just that, small-scale rice processors are left with little or no guidance in terms of decision-making to be self-sufficient in rice production. A timely intervention from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) would make a huge difference in the lives of a group of women processors in Niger state.

The production of rice had traditionally been associated with difficulty; the drudgery of its agricultural cycle and the stiff competition of markets open to better processed rice. For the rice farmer, it meant a lot of labour for very little wage. In Lavun local government of Niger state, these facts were driving the young workforce to seek better prospects elsewhere or in another sector entirely.

Organizing themselves as the Awomana Women Rice Processors and Cooperative Society of Lavun local government area, they came together to organize a self-sustaining business venture with quarterly platform members cooperating with one another to increase the mechanization of production and post-harvest operations as well as finance the sale and distribution of their proudly owned and processed, stone-free rice.

With a maximum service capacity of about 600kg of parboiled rice per day per each group, this includes parboiling, milling, de-stoning and packaging; the women cooperative is providing the parboiled rice processing service successfully to the community.

With a view to enhancing the development of a structured rice market in the region, through NAIDA/ NOCAIDA under the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) projects, the Awomana Women's Rice Processors Cooperative Society is one of many designed to make the rice production a fully community-based initiative that can serve as a support to farmers through the value chain.

Speaking with Hauwa, one of the women identified as a processor, she explained how they were able to come together in different ways to succeed.

"The farmers that we work with are our male counterparts in the same group with us, we have about 3 groups here and both groups consist of men and women, but this group consists mainly of women that are into processing of rice and the men cultivate the rice. So basically, we buy the rice from the male farmers, but we do not pay for it with money immediately, we process the rice first and sell it, then we shared the profits we realize."

The farmers and processors work together with mutual trust, believing in one another to hold up their ends of the business. The district head acts as a guarantor for both parties and shareholders split the earnings among themselves. With seven bags of paddy disbursed to the processing group, at N8000 per bag, a profit on N1000 per bag, or N7000 total is accrued. Ever resourceful, the groups split just N1000 of the profit and seed N6000 for the next growing season, thereby guaranteeing some capital for each period.

Although rice production continues to increase among the community's men and women, there are still major concerns for capital, and desperate need for more equipment as Hauwa describes.

"Yes, people like this new technique more because of the quality of the products. At the moment they are very few numbers of people that sell the old local products, majority of the sellers sell the new improved rice products. They have another local machine they use to process in the area, so after they have cleaned and parboil the rice they take there for milling machines, which is an extra cost for them."

Over time, they have also begun to pass these techniques down to the youth. One of the women explained that her teenage daughter who helps her through the process has not only shown improvement but has also demonstrated a keen interest in continuing down this path of business with a new awareness of market elements and negotiating prices.

When asked to comment on some of the advantages of being in this space, the women insisted that even though they are primarily viewed as caregivers, they also thrive as rice processors and are determined to keep it that way. "We are grateful to AGRA, USAID and all other partner organizations for helping us improve in our work, and we hope to go very far."

With initiatives such as this, Nigeria will not only be processing rice to meet international standards but is also on the path to meeting a demand which has risen tremendously at about 10 percent per annum due to changing consumer preferences.

Story 11:

STEPPING UP THE PROCESS: WUSHISHI'S AGGREGATION CENTRE

In Nigeria, subsistence farming remains the main source of economic livelihood in most homes in rural areas. As part of efforts to reduce poverty and other barriers that limit agricultural development, some members of Wushishi community in Niger state participated in the rice value chain programme supported by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and partners which aims to aggregate farmers around cooperatives and private service providers, who will provide production, postharvest and marketing services.

The stars in Wushishi local government, Niger state shine brightest among the many included in the AGRA's transformative agricultural initiative. Farmers and processors in Wushishi Local Government Area have established a large aggregation center, stocked with paddy.

Taking note on the seasonal effects on market price, they worked out a system where they raise demand and off-takers from as far as Kano and Kaduna come to off-take their paddy at more appreciable market prices, having recently risen from ₦8,000 to ₦9,000/bag.

The processors in Wushishi have now reached an agreement with the farmers, they have started giving them paddy at a price plus a profit margin to be added by the farmers, the processors now secure ₦1,500/bag as net profit.

One of the critical inadequacies of the agricultural hubs in Nigeria is the lack of organization or aggregation among farmers, leading to a poor representation of the local product in well organized markets.

With a demand for aggregated paddy currently estimated around 2.9 million metric tons, the enhancement of farmer access to markets without compromising on the quality of the rice came in high on the agenda. AFEX and the AGRA consortium partner dedicated to aggregation and marketing, observed this in their needs assessment, and the consortium as a whole took steps to address it by targeting some key areas including access to seeds and fertilizers, access to extension



Without partnerships and training through the help of AGRA, we may not have gotten to this stage, and for that reason we are excited for what the future holds.”

and advisory services. It also covers availability and affordability of mechanization services, solving challenges with the last mile inputs distribution system, especially for seeds and fertilizers, and evolution of functional farmer groups with capacities for paddy aggregation and organized marketing.

Today, the Wushishi aggregation centre has a strong presence of women and youth engaging in the business of production, processing, marketing and management, achieving a unique synergy within the state.

Speaking with one of the processors, we were informed about how she viewed AGRAs material interventions, particularly in improving the quality of the produce coming from the farms for them to process.

“We advised the farmers during harvest, to thresh the rice on large plastic surfaces for threshing to reduce the amount of stones in the rice. This has improved the quality of the rice and also the standard of the rice; before this, a bag of rice had a lot of stones and chaff, causing a reduction in the quality which in turn affected their profits on a bag of rice.”

She also expressed gratitude for the technical advice and training carried out, noting a tremendous change on the business side of their endeavours, thanks to the new awareness they possessed at the centre.

“We package our rice now as a result of these trainings carried out by AGRA, although we do not have samples of these packaged rice available at the moment as they are sold out, but it is important to highlight this advancement. We have 3 variants of 10kg (small), 20kg (medium) and 25kg (Big).”

One of the state facilitators also commented on the great strides Wushishi LGA has made in the state, particularly with the diversity of their production systems.

“The off-take program is mostly done by the women processors, and I think there is a local arrangement that involves them since they are also members of the clusters. This sees them process and sell the products the profits are shared.

In the particular aggregation model promoted by AGRA, aggregators are required to make an aggregation plan which should be shared with the off taker; they should ensure they employ reliable transporters that will ensure safety and delivery of produce to the off taker. The aggregation plan must conform to the harvest and off taking activities or to a designated functional warehouse for adequate storage.

“Without partnerships and training through the help of AGRA, we may not have gotten to this stage, and for that reason we are excited for what the future holds.”

Wushishi LGA is also one of the LGAs in Niger state currently practicing dry season farming. This is unusual among farmers in the state as most of them are engage in rain-fed cultivation poor state of the irrigation facilities in the state. Although difficulties remain with the irrigation facilities that require fixing, the potential for this method for rice farmers is immense as they could cultivate their farms in two additional circles annually thereby doubling or even tripling the present figure of rice produced in the state.

Wushishi LGA is building a history of successes with experimental methods and new crop varieties. According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) rice hybrids were introduced from Syngenta and tested, and 18 other hybrids were also provided by AfricaRice for testing.

With the rise in community based production and processing in places like Wushishi, the future of stable crop production and cutting edge food security methods inches ever closer.

Story 11:

DOING GOOD WHILE DOING BUSINESS: YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN AGRIBUSINESS- SME DEVELOPMENT IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA



Training of Youths on Spraying as a Business

A total of two hundred and fifty (250) youths selected across six Local government areas (LGAs) of Kaduna State (Lere, Giwa, Ikara, Maikarfi, Kaura, and Kudan) constituting project site of the AGRA supported Kaduna Maize-Rice-Soybean Consortium recently undertook a training on spraying enterprise management. The objectives of the training were to prepare the youths for self-employment, support smallholder farmers to protect their crops in from disease and pest infestation without any danger to their health - an instance of doing good while doing business. The training exposed participants to appropriate kits and doses for use of chemicals, sprayer calibration for effective spraying, dangers of eating while spraying, safe disposals of containers, among others. The training offered

At the end of performance evaluation conducted for the participants, best forty-five (45) of the training participants received spraying kits and other equipment to start the spraying business alongside business connection to trained village stockists (agro dealers) that can build their knowledge of agrochemicals. Follow up visits to the trainees revealed



Participants receiving spraying kits and other equipment to start the spraying business

that training participants have translated the training into profitable spraying agents. Spurred by the development, farmer group in Kaura local government area purchased additional spraying kits to replicate the exercise.

Farmers expressed delights at the growth of business of spraying and the satisfaction that a solution to irritating problem of use of hazardous crop protection chemicals has eventually emerged.



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