



Africa Lead Newsletter



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Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Programs



Nigeria youth at the Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Boot camp

According to the 2017 World Food Prize laureate, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, *“the future of African youth lies in agriculture. This future can be realized through making agriculture both profitable and “cool” for young people.”* Adesina also argues for the need to move the perception of agriculture from a way of life for millions of rural people to a business. Driven by USAID and government partners’ shared goals of transforming agriculture into a strong generator of income, employment and wealth creation, Africa Lead focused on developing the capacity of youth and women in agribusiness and entrepreneurship.

In FY17, Africa Lead designed and launched the Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Boot Camp course. The course seeks to empower aspiring and existing agribusiness entrepreneurs with the knowledge, and skills to establish profitable and sustainable agribusinesses that will enhance agricultural productivity, create jobs, and increase food and nutrition security.

Using real life practical examples, case studies, and role plays young entrepreneurs learn how to write an agri-business plan including how to identify challenges and opportunities in various agriculture value chains, how to develop an agribusiness idea, carry out market research,

develop a marketing and production plan, manage cash flow and risk, and about financing strategies.

Africa Lead’s Agribusiness Leadership Internship Program (A-LEAP) placed 23 interns within local SMEs to address strategic growth needs. The interns benefited from work readiness orientation, on-the-job training, and specialized skill transfers that are helping Ghanaian agribusinesses and organizations to improve their viability and productivity. Interns have been involved in other parts of the value chain providing support in areas such as Monitoring & Evaluation, Strategy & Marketing Analyst, Agricultural Engineering Intern and Program Management.

Africa Lead has facilitated the establishment of a number of strong and well-functioning NSA networks and awarded small grants to those networks, which demonstrated potential to steer agricultural transformation initiatives in Ghana. In March 2017, the African Youth Network for Agricultural Transformation (AYNAT), an Africa Lead grantee, officially launched the Growing Sustainable Horticulture (GrowS-Hort) Incubator Center, which seeks to create an enabling environment for agribusiness ideas, startups and SMEs to be nurtured into sustainable ventures. AYNAT provides capacity-building and business advisory services and creates market linkages for incubatees through strategic partnerships. The first cohort of thirty (30) youth agripreneurs graduated from the GrowS-Hort Training Program. GrowS-Hort has nurtured agribusiness ideation with coaching aimed at helping incubatees fully understand entrepreneurship principles and practices, and identify and define business opportunities across the value chain. The vision of AYNAT is “to build a network of youth in agriculture who are empowered to lead change towards achieving food security, sustained economic growth and agricultural transformation in Africa.”



Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Boot Camps in Nigeria, Ghana, and DRC



From left to right: Victor Addom, Deputy Regional Director, Africa Lead, Jenna Tajchman-Trofim, Agriculture Team Leader, USAID Ghana, Mike Nyinaku - CEO of the Beige Group and Carla Denizard, Regional Director, Africa Lead

In 2017, Africa Lead delivered five Agribusiness & Entrepreneurship boot camps to 190 entrepreneurs in DRC, Ghana and Nigeria. The Boot Camp course targets existing and aspiring agripreneurs especially youth and women. To facilitate the recruitment of the best and brightest entrepreneurs, and to leverage resources, Africa Lead partnered with the Beige Foundation, the Tony Elumelu Foundation, LEAP Africa, Fresh and Young Brains Development Initiative (FBIN), African Harvesters, the Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association (NIWAAFA) and the National Association of Nigeria Traders (NANTs).

Hassana Garba, one of the participants said: “money cannot buy the training I attended. The program helped me understand how quality is key in business. I have learned that for my business to grow, I need to improve the quality of my products and services and go beyond

what others are doing.” Another participant also said, “I have attended many training programs but this one remains unique and special. In my business, I went through many failures without knowing the reason why. For the first time, a training program has helped me understand that my failures come from the fact that I was not differentiating business enterprises from private ones. The time has come for me to do so”

In the DRC, the course gave participants the chance to discuss the opportunities and constraints associated with entrepreneurship in the DRC’s agriculture sector and to apply course content in redefining or improving their business models. As one DRC participant eloquently summed it up; “The agribusiness and entrepreneurship course helped me realize that without understanding basic entrepreneurship start up concepts such as managing cash flow and digital marketing, I





Nigerian youth presenting agribusiness plans at the boot camp course

was setting myself up for failure. Thanks to the training, I am now selling my fruits and vegetables through an e-commerce platform and I can barely keep up with the increase demand for my produce." Africa Lead also organized two boot camps for youth enterprises in the Northern and Southern regions of Ghana.

In addition to the topics covered during the training programs, participants examined business case studies from existing enterprises across West Africa to enhance learning and practical application.

To foster networking and knowledge sharing, participants had the opportunity to share their

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In partnership with the 2017 National Food & Agriculture Show (FAGRO) themed, "Creating Jobs in Agriculture: Northern Region in Focus", the course was delivered to youth leaders in Tamale, Ghana. In the southern part of the country, Africa Lead jointly organized the course for youth leaders of Beige Foundation's youth programs including the Youth Excellence League.

experiences and perspectives on agribusiness opportunities, technologies, successes and lessons learned. The participants established WhatsApp group platforms to foster continued networking, exchange and information sharing after the course.



Launch of the Nigeria Agribusiness Investor Resource Center



Nigeria Agribusiness Resource Center (NARC) Library

The Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) launched, with technical assistance and support from Africa Lead, the Nigeria Agribusiness Resource Center (NARC) on October 26, 2017 in Abuja.

This center, and is physically located at the FMARD Agribusiness unit office in Abuja, and includes an online platform. It serves as a one-stop information and advisory hub to help streamline the investment process for prospective and current agribusiness investors. The idea for the center arose out of the government's aim to crowd in private investment and develop effective institutional frameworks to better facilitate and coordinate the delivery of agribusiness investment services.

The center works to increase access and dissemination of key information, products and services that will ease new investor entry and increase local agribusiness investment. Tools and support will also be provided to facilitate the registration, start up, and expansion of agribusinesses throughout the country. A one-stop referral system links prospective and existing investors to other government agencies and

private sector providers based on investor needs. The center will also improve coordination between critical investment support agencies and various government stakeholders including FMARD and other ministries, departments, and agencies at the federal and state level.

Africa Lead, in collaboration with MDF West Africa, a global training and consulting firm designed the on line platform and set up the physical office space. The team will continue to develop FMARD staff's capacity as well as gather and upload essential products and tools that meet agricultural investor needs such as updated

data and information on market opportunities, value chain fact sheets, investor prospectus and company profiles and will develop a database of Nigerian companies and investors for targeted outreach and support.

Celebrants and special guests of the center launch included the Permanent Secretary of FMARD, President of the National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTs), and the team Leader of USAID/ Nigeria Economic Growth office as well as other donors and implementing partners.

The website for the online resource center is www.agribusinessnigeria.com

This new agribusiness investor resource center at the Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) has both online platform and physical center housed at the Ministry, and it will serve as a one-stop information and advisory hub to help streamline the investment process for prospective and current agribusiness investors.



Ghana Agribusiness Internship Program



A-LEAP Interns at the orientation program

Africa Lead re-launched the Agribusiness Internship Program (A-LEAP Internships) as part of its youth workforce development strategy to shape and prepare Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs, thinkers and innovators in agribusiness.

Africa Lead successfully recruited and on-boarded 28 interns in the first cohort of the 2017 A-LEAP internships in Ghana. Through the program, Africa Lead has placed recent university graduates in agribusinesses across Ghana for 3 to 12 months to meet critical organizational needs in areas such as program management, product improvement and agricultural engineering.

The interns gain on-the-job experience, learn specialized and work-readiness skills, and get networking opportunities. Host organizations for the 2017 A-LEAP program include small and medium-sized agribusinesses or organizations involved in commercial production, processing, distribution, input and machinery suppliers and trade associations.

Africa Lead collaborated with Ashesi University, University for Development Studies (UDS), University of Ghana-Legon, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST) and Lancaster University to recruit university graduates from a variety of disciplines including business administration, agricultural sciences, and engineering.

Host companies and organizations include the Federation of Association of Ghanaian Exporters, Growth Mosaic, Eden Tree, iDE Ghana and the West Africa Resilience Innovation Lab.

Africa Lead successfully recruited and on-boarded 28 interns in the first cohort of the 2017 A-LEAP internships in Ghana. Through the program, Africa Lead has placed recent university graduates in agribusinesses across Ghana for 3 to 12 months to meet critical organizational needs in areas such as program management, product improvement and agricultural engineering.

Regional Program

ECOWAS Joint Workshop to Develop a Regional Plant Pest and Disease Prevention, Surveillance and Mitigation Framework

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The spread of trans-boundary plant diseases has been on the rise in recent years because of climate change, trade, globalization and reduced resilience in production systems. In early 2017, a Fall Army Worm infestation destroyed crops in southern Africa and several ECOWAS member states.

In response to this threat, Africa Lead collaborated with ECOWAS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to organize a gathering of key experts in the region to validate a regional prevention framework and action plan. The framework intends to help reduce the impact of a potential region-wide invasion of the Fall Army Worm, Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease, Cassava Mosaic and a Tomato Moth incursion in the West Africa sub-region. Africa Lead liaised with key media houses and urged them to disseminate information on food safety and food security

to make informed decisions and to facilitate behavioral change. The collaborative effort enabled participants to develop a comprehensive action plan and coordination mechanism on plant pest and disease prevention, surveillance, and mitigation.

The program, hosted by the Ministry of Food Agriculture of Ghana, took place in Accra from June 5-8, 2017 with 51 participants in attendance. Other partners that supported this effort include the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) Commission, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), CAB-International, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD).



People Management and Supervisory Skills and Report Writing for Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS)



CILSS Management Training Series Program in Burkina Faso

Africa Lead collaborated with CILSS to develop and finalize the 2017 Executive Management Training Series to develop capacity in critical organizational areas. The course topics identified were Results-Based Management, Program Design, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, People Management and Supervisory Skills.

To address key human resources management gaps, Africa Lead organized an in-person coaching session with the Human Resource team of CILSS to develop a formal training and development plan for organizational staff.

Africa Lead also developed a training plan with courses that will impart skills and knowledge that the staff need and can use on a day-to-day basis to improve their work. The People Management and Supervisory Skills training enabled participants to discover their strengths and weaknesses in leading others. Participants also discussed various leadership concepts, practiced essential management, communication and coaching skills.

The training allowed the participants to discuss and understand the roles and competences of a manager and how to apply supervisory skills to influence the performance of subordinates.

Report Writing

To improve the quality of reporting, Africa Lead identified a bilingual report-writing expert to assist the CILSS M&E, Communications and Program staff. Over a ten-month period, the expert strengthened the staff's capacity to develop quarterly and annual reports, success stories and other communications products like newsletters and bulletins.

Africa Lead's support to CILSS has contributed to building the staff's capacity to produce results-focused reports and success stories that conform to donor requirements.

The expert coached the CILSS staff to ensure that their reports and communication outputs reflect a well-developed and functioning knowledge management and communications system. The technical assistance culminated in a 3-day report-writing workshop with fourteen of the key M&E staff across L'Institut du Sahel (INSAH), AGRYHMET and the Executive Secretariat.

Africa Lead's support to CILSS has contributed to building the staff's capacity to produce results-focused reports and success stories that conform to donor requirements.



Ghana Program

Ghana Grantees Achieve Milestones

Africa Lead has facilitated the establishment of a number of strong and well-functioning NSA networks. In FY2016, Africa Lead awarded small grants to three institutions and the youth Champions for Change (C4C) Network, which demonstrated potential to steer agricultural transformation initiatives in Ghana.

Africa Lead awarded the grants to strengthen the organizational capacity of NSAs to design, manage and scale up agribusiness initiatives, to lead policy advocacy programs and to reinforce a results-oriented and learning culture within C4C networks that has enabled them leverage opportunities and expand the scope and outreach of Africa Lead strategic objectives. In September 2017, the grantees successfully completed their final milestones. Below are detailed descriptions of the results and accomplishments of each grantee:

African Youth Network for Agricultural Transformation (AYNAT)

The African Youth Network for Agricultural Transformation (AYNAT) officially launched the Growing Sustainable Horticulture (GrowS-Hort) Incubator Center, which creates an enabling environment to nurture agribusiness ideas, startups, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) into sustainable ventures.

AYNAT delivers capacity-building and business advisory services and creates market linkages for incubatees through strategic partnerships. The first cohort of thirty youth agripreneurs recently graduated from the GrowS-Hort program after completing an intense training program, which included experiential learning field trips and a Vegetable & Fruits Enterprise and Management short course. The program helps start-up entrepreneurs develop stronger business models, systems and structures that fit the horticultural context. They learned how to apply simplified strategic planning and execution tools in the management of complex financial, production, quality management, pest management and weather challenges associated with vegetable and fruit production, postharvest and marketing.

In June, GrowS-Hort trainers delivered the Africa Lead Agribusiness & Entrepreneurship Development boot camp course to its incubatees. The incubatees also carried out a study tour of a commercial farm,

a greenhouse facility, and a fruit processing company. The initiative has helped the incubatees to improve upon their knowledge, skills and abilities to improve and sustain their agribusinesses. Through participating in this program, sixteen (16) incubatees have successfully registered their agribusiness start-ups and are now managing businesses ranging from aggregating out growers, producing fruit juice, packaging and branding, and open field farming. Six of the incubatees are scaling up and the others are re-conceptualizing their business models and proof of concepts.

AYNAT is now working to leverage partnerships to help these young entrepreneurs improve their business models as they endeavor to scale up their agribusiness ventures. While recent graduates will continue to benefit from GowS-Hort coaching services, the network is also in the process of recruiting a new cohort of incubatees.



Jeremy Agyemang (right), Head of Agribusiness Unit of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture presenting a certificate to a GrowS-Hort incubatee



Savanna Integrated Rural Development Aid (SIRDA)



VSLA 'Share-out' program at Kaligu - Ghana

Led by an active member of the C4C Women in Agribusiness Network Ghana (WIANG), SIRDA successfully implemented its Village Saving Loans Associations (VSLA) micro-finance savings model in four districts in the Northern region of Ghana. The program established VSLAs in 88 different communities, far exceeding the original target of reaching women in 40 communities. In total, SIRDA trained 2,611 women living in these communities on integrated farm management and value-chain development (IFMVD).

The course seeks to improve the attitudes, skills and knowledge of women groups in farm planning, budgeting and record keeping so that they can be more efficient and generate their own sources of financing to access new markets and grow their agribusinesses beyond the subsistence level. Out of this pool of beneficiaries, SIRDA trained three hundred and ninety (390) elected VSLA leaders in leadership, group management and conflict resolution skills in order to lead these associations in a successful manner.

One group leader, Mma Fati notes, "Group members have started paying fines for going contrary to the constitution and this is bringing discipline to the groups and contributing to shape some

communities positively". These leadership-training courses have shown to be critical in the sustainability of well-functioning VSLAs. SIRDA also trained 208 women leaders from the project communities on how to advocate for policy, influence policy decision-making, and contribute to policy implementation.

The objective of the training was to equip the community leaders

to initiate and implement advocacy action within their administrative jurisdiction. After the training, community leaders established a seven-member regional advocacy working group and developed an action plan to kick start community and district-level advocacy campaigns. Due to increased empowerment, access to savings and financial literacy, the groups now engage with service providers directly and negotiate the right prices for required services to improve their agribusiness in ways that are "conscious of value for money".

The women agripreneurs manage their groups knowing from personal experience how each cedi saved with loan provided can reap larger dividends for them, their businesses and communities.



Members of SIRDA VSLA (Africa Lead Grantees)

Business and Development Consultancy Centre (BADECC)



Agriculture Advisory Services Network Advocacy Training Program

BADECC has delivered coaching services to equip trainers of the Agricultural Advisory Services Network-Ghana (AASN) with the requisite knowledge, skills and experience needed to develop and carry out advocacy campaigns on key policy issues.

BADECC also facilitated two advocacy training workshops in the Northern and Upper East Regions of Ghana in which AASN members reviewed strengths, gaps and implementation challenges of government policies, including the Government of Ghana's new Planting for Food and Jobs Program. Participants then

Through the support of BADECC, network leaders will support the implementation of the advocacy action plan through periodic monitoring and help campaign teams join strong and vibrant local networks that will champion agricultural improvements in Ghana.

Based on evidence gathered and published in its research paper on "The Impact Assessment of Government Policies on Agricultural Extension Services in Ghana", BADECC organized policy learning and sharing events for over three hundred(300) participants in the Northern and Upper Eastern Regions of Ghana. BADECC invited Government officials, farmer-based organizations and development partners to take advantage of these dialogue platforms.

developed action plans to guide advocacy campaign activities for the next year. Through the support of BADECC, network leaders will support the implementation of the advocacy action plan through periodic monitoring and help campaign teams join strong and vibrant local networks that will champion agricultural improvements in Ghana.



Nigeria Program

Champions for Change Participate in the 12th Annual Youth Chief Executive Officers' Forum and Managing Growth Workshop



The Leadership Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa is a non-profit organization that was established in 2002 with the mandate to help raise dynamic, innovative and principled African leaders. As one of Africa Lead's partner organizations working to build the capacities of youth in Nigeria, AL collaborated with LEAP to conduct this year's forum themed "Managing Growth for Profitability".

The program offered a platform for interaction, knowledge sharing and partnerships between Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and leading private and public sector organizations that offer cutting-edge solutions, support and services to improve the growth, development and sustainability of businesses in Nigeria.

The program also equipped participants with knowledge on the different stages of the business life cycle and the strategies needed for managing growth in business initiatives through understanding the market. Other topics discussed included strategic planning for growth, carrying out innovation and brand

projection using appropriate marketing tools, and good financial management practices.

About 1000 youth entrepreneurs and small business owners participated in the event, which influenced the SME owners by showcasing practical insights and strategies for attracting financing to grow their businesses.

Africa Lead sponsored five champions from the Champions for Change (C4C) leadership course in Abuja with logistics that occurred to participate in the event to learn best practices that will be helpful to them in their respective agribusinesses.

"We recognize that raising leaders is critical to nation building and wealth creation. Over the years, LEAP has inspired and equipped youth, business owners and social entrepreneurs to lead ethically while implementing initiatives that transform their communities and organizations for better sustaining livelihood and contributing to national development." – **Aramide Akisanya, Executive Director, LEAP.**



Joint Sector Review in Nigeria



Stakeholders at the JSR Meeting in Abuja

Africa Lead collaborated with the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems (RESAKSS) and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to conduct the first Joint Sector Review (JSR) in Nigeria. The JSR steering committee, chaired by the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and a Vice-Chairman from the Non-State Actors group convened the JSR.

Both the steering committee and JSR secretariat are comprised of six key stakeholder groups in the sector – the government, non-state actors, farmer organizations, agriculture researchers, formal private sector and development partners. The 2-day workshop hosted in Abuja, brought together over 150 participants across the nation.

Specifically, the JSR offered FMARD the opportunity to critically assess its work as well as the performance of the agricultural sector over the year. The program also enabled stakeholders to deliberate on issues such as budgetary allocations, the National Agriculture Investment Plan and

the Economic Recovery and Growth Program (ERGP). During the JSR meeting, participants reviewed and validated the annual agricultural performance report of the FMARD. The Ministry also devised strategies to disseminate information in local languages at the state, local government and community levels to create awareness, participation and mutual accountability around agriculture policy.

Development partners, regional and civil society organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Action Aid participated in the event.



African leaders discussing agricultural policy issues at the JSR

The DRC Program

Parliamentarians and high level Government officials participate in Champions for Change Leadership Short course



Senior Government leaders in DRC at the Champions for Change leadership short course

Africa Lead has trained over 140 Champions from the public and private sectors and civil society organizations in leadership principles to advance agriculture transformation in the DRC.

To fulfill targets for agricultural growth under Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), several policy revisions and new policies need to be drafted, passed and implemented.

To deliver strategic support to these government stakeholders, Africa Lead conducted a three-day Champions for Change (C4C) leadership short course (C4C) for members of the DRC Parliament and senior-level government officials from May 30 to June 2. The training brought together 28 persons, including 13 parliamentarians from the commissions of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Tourism.

Also in attendance were 15 senior government officials from ministries involved in CAADP

implementation at the national level, namely the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Budget, Finance, and Planning. The C4C short course exposed the participants to international and continental food security frameworks, including CAADP, the Malabo Declaration, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It also emphasized leadership and management concepts required to lead change and influence agriculture transformation policies such as change management, building effective teams, stakeholder engagement, and rapid-results action planning.

The C4C Leadership short course enhanced the understanding of Congolese Parliamentarians and State Senior Officers on key government duties and responsibilities necessary for agricultural transformation and increased food security in the DRC.



Africa Lead Closes DRC Program with a Lessons Learned Workshop



Team building game at the DRC lessons learned event

On October 6, 2017, Africa Lead carried out its final DRC program activity: a lessons learned event to take stock of the last two years of collaboration, partnerships, progress, and impact of the DRC programs. The workshop took place in the Africa Lead office. Twenty-five participants attended the event, including the USAID Mission Agriculture Team Leader for the Economic Growth Office and the Honorable Alain Lubamba Wa Lubamba, National Deputy External Relation Commission President, C4C Champions, and young agribusiness entrepreneurs.

The objective of this event was to hear from beneficiaries about their perceptions of the program and the impact it had on them. This event also served as a platform to recognize successes and provide a networking opportunity for participants. The event occurred in two sessions and featured twenty-five participants. The first session adopted a focus group style and gave participants the opportunity to learn more about the inception phase of Africa Lead and its ambitions to support the drive for agricultural transformation and food security across the continent.

Discussions centered around Champions for Change leadership training and its role in opening doors for more prolonged and nuanced support. Many said that the leadership course gave them skills to affect change within the organization

by applying Kotter's 8-step change management model. The second session was an interactive activity where beneficiaries took the time to reflect and share their written thoughts on how to foster greater impact from program initiatives. In the spirit of Africa Lead's signature participatory approach to capacity building, the Africa Lead team facilitated team building exercises and encouraged exchange and discussions in smaller breakout groups.

At the end of the project lessons learned event, Champions were able to learn from the successes and challenges of others and to meet, exchange ideas, and expand their networks as Champions. When asked what lessons they learned or what would be the best ways to create a business-enabling environment for agriculture in the DRC, many recognized the importance of sound government policies and that Private-Public partnerships are necessary to create a better enabling environment. In addition, respondents felt that access to financing, focusing on youth, and continued capacity building are critical for agribusinesses to grow and flourish in DRC.

As activity programs close out in DRC, Africa Lead hopes to remain engaged with DRC Champions through online networking platforms in order to sustain, the agricultural transformation momentum built in DRC and Champions can continue to lead, train and inspire others to be advocates for food security.



Guinea

Government officials finalize the First Draft of the National Agriculture Development Policy (PNDA)



Farming in Guinea

As part of the Plan National d'Investissement Agricole, de Sécurité Alimentaire et de Nutrition (PNIASAN) review process in Guinea, Africa Lead organized a retreat devoted to the development of an action plan for the PNIASAN.

The 4-day retreat was held in Kindia, and brought together about 10 participants representing the Bureaux de Strategy et de Developpement (BSD) of the Ministries in charge of agriculture sector in Guinea, Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR), National Institute of Agronomic Research (INRAG) and the National Agency for Agriculture Council Promotion (ANPCA). The PNIASAN action plan developed during the retreat covers five major components: (1) Governance; (2) Human Capital; (3) Productivity; (4) Access to Market and; (5) Resilience.

The Governance component of the action plan centers on activities related to reform of agriculture rules, the efficiency of services and mutual accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and better coordination of stakeholder interventions. The Human Capital component covers the domains of agricultural professional training and social protection, entrepreneurship, youth employment and women's empowerment. The Productivity component focuses on the

improvement of agronomic research, studies, innovation, technology and agricultural fertilizers. The Access to Market component centers on activities associated with Market Information Systems (MIS), infrastructure and communication. Lastly, the Resilience Program plans for the management of natural resources, soil and environment protection and climate change issues.

An inclusive policy development process has helped to accelerate the PNIASAN policy formulation process in Guinea by fostering multi-stakeholder and development partner coordination. It has also facilitated necessary dialogue between various government agencies and between the government, civil society and private sector groups.

Effective and efficient implementation of the developed PNIASAN plan will be critical to continuing the policy accomplishments that have been achieved so far.

Sierra Leone

Monitoring and Evaluation/ Results Based Management training for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)



Award of certificates at the Monitoring and Evaluation/Results Based Management short course in Sierra Leone

As part of efforts to build the capacity of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Africa Lead delivered a five-day short course on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Results Based Management (RBM).

Africa Lead trained ninety-one (91) management and general staff from the ministry headquarters, district offices, and the Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistics Division. The short course focused on building the capacities of selected staff to improve M&E planning and analysis and to increase the availability, applicability and

use of high-quality evidence-based data for decision-making.

Participants enhanced their knowledge in monitoring and evaluation principles and practices including how to design and operationalize an M&E system and develop a roadmap for implementation using an organizational learning approach.

The training expects to help the ministry take a collective approach to improve on M&E responsibilities, report on results, and establish a well-functioning, M&E system.

Senegal

National Sensitization Workshop on the Mango Value Chain



Dignitaries at the mango week event in Senegal

Ninety-two participants attended the event. At the end of the workshop, actors agreed on a roadmap that would allow them to effectively create and run a professional Senegal mango association.

One major achievement from Africa Lead's support to the mango sector is the establishment of a professional body of mango actors in Senegal that occurred on September 11, 2017 during the General Assembly.

Africa Lead has supported initiatives to improve the local mango value chain in Senegal since last year. As follow-up on key decisions made during the "Mango Week" in Senegal and in support of the Ministry of Trade's Local Mango Value Chain Initiative, Africa Lead conducted a study to enable stakeholders in the sector identify ways to build a structured and sustainable mango alliance in Senegal. As a result, a roadmap to establish and implement the mango professional network in Senegal has been developed.

During the year, Africa Lead also sponsored a national sensitization workshop for actors in the sector to raise awareness among stakeholders on the importance and tasks expected of them. The workshop enabled participants to have a better appreciation of a better understanding of a functioning mango value chain actor's associations, discuss strategic issues that can be handled by an association of various actors and gather views of participants on the relevance of establishing a mango value chain actor's association.

One major achievement from Africa Lead's support to the mango sector is the establishment of a professional body of mango actors in Senegal that occurred on September 11, 2017 during the General Assembly. The group has a clear governance structure in place to guide in the implementation of its activities.

The group has a clear governance structure in place to guide in the implementation of its activities. Stakeholders are enthusiastic that the mango sector will be better organized and structured with a clear governance scheme and that this professional body will lead to better performance of the mango sector in production and export.

Joint Sector Review in Senegal



From the left to the right Mr. Nadjirou Sall, Civil Society Representative; Ms. Lisa Franchett, USAID Senegal Mission Director; Mr. Papa Abdoulaye Seck, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment; Mr. Pierre Ndiaye, Private Sector Representative.

policies and to promote the value chain approach and organize actors around strategic sectors.

The JSR aims to promote mutual accountability through comprehensive, inclusive and technically robust review and dialogue processes, in accordance with the provisions of the African Union

For the third consecutive year, Africa Lead supported the Senegalese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment (MAER) in the organization and facilitation of the Joint Sector Review (JSR) on October 19, 2017.

This event convened key stakeholders to review achievements of the previous year, critically assess challenges encountered across the agriculture sector, and make recommendations for the upcoming year. The joint sector review, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment, called together more than 200 participants with a high-level representation of all stakeholders including a large number of private sector actors (especially women in the rice and mango sectors), donor groups, and civil society organizations.

Last year's JSR highlighted record increases in rice, onion, and potato production as well as overall rising prices of agricultural products. Remaining challenges include the need to enhance transparency and equity in the distribution of agricultural inputs and finalization of land reform throughout the country. Participants put forward key recommendations that would promote and facilitate mutual accountability in the agricultural sector through a periodic dialogue on the implementation of agricultural

Commission's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). Last year's JSR included a panel on local agricultural products and increasing local consumption. Specialists and experts addressed key themes related to enhancing local consumption of agricultural products including women's contribution to the production, processing and marketing of local products, maintaining quality across the value chain, research, and valorization of local products, increasing nutritional value of local products, and developing a contracting scheme to better market local products.

The JSR workshop enabled the Senegalese government to assess performance in different sub-sectors during 2016 to improve future decision-making. Africa Lead will continue to support the Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et des Statistiques Agricoles (DAPSA) to capitalize on the experiences of implementing mutual accountability processes to institute for stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Africa Lead will also support the organization with select technical services to enable them assess their performance by identifying good practices and areas that need improvement across the agricultural sector.



Burkina Faso

Regional Consultation workshops Organized for National Agricultural Investment Plan Development in Burkina Faso



Burkinabe agriculture stakeholders at the regional consultation workshop

that the priorities and specific needs of those living in these regions is incorporated into the PNSR II.

In collaboration with SP/CPSA, Africa Lead organized “pilot tests” of stakeholder consultation workshops in the Eastern, Northern, and Sahel regions of the country. The three-day workshops occurred simultaneously in

Effective agricultural policy development requires commitment to broadly shared goals and an inclusive process in which all stakeholders participate in policy dialogues. Africa Lead has supported this process in Burkina Faso by working with the “Secretariat Permanent pour la Coordination de Secteur Agricole” (SP/CPSA) to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement at the regional level during the formulation of the “Plan National du Secteur Rural II” (PNSR II). The PNSR II serves as Burkina Faso’s National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) under the CAADP.

Regionalization is the name of the process developed by the government of Burkina Faso to collect data and information on the priority agricultural investment opportunity needs by region from locally based stakeholders, which would inform the national plan. The government expects the regionalization process to identify high-return activities that require donor and private sector investment in the country and to ensure

Ouahigouya in the Centre-North region, Fada N’Gourma in the Sahel region, and Dori in the East region of Burkina Faso. These three regions were selected for the pilot test phase because of their strategic location and potential contribution to the agriculture sector. An average of ninety participants attended each workshop in each region including influential representatives of the private sector, trade unions, producer organizations, and youth and women groups. The lessons learned from the pilot test process guided and informed implementation of the remaining ten regional consultation workshops.

Africa Lead also delivered logistical and facilitation support for the workshops. The workshop held in Ouagadougou, brought together over 114 stakeholders involved in the Burkina Faso policy development process. This meeting allowed the SP/CPSA and the national technical committee to capture the key lessons learned from the pilot test phase. Africa Lead advised the coordinating team on the importance of



Burkinabe Agriculture Stakeholders in break out sessions at the PNSR II workshop

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clearly delineating roles and responsibilities to ensure the maximum participation of all stakeholders. Accurate targeting of stakeholders at these workshops ensured the collection of pertinent information and data for the regional investment plans.

Burkina Faso is pioneering the regionalization process in West Africa and the Government of Burkina Faso supported a significant component of the PNSR II development process through funding leveraged from multiple donor partners such as USAID, GIZ and FAO.

The support expects to ensure agriculture and rural development policies in Burkina Faso address the needs of the people.



Bridging the Digital Divide; Ecowas Agricultural Department Intern improves ICT Capacity

For over five years, Africa Lead has implemented the Young Professionals Internship Program. The program recruits and assigns interns, with in-demand technical skills, to key regional institutions to support broader, organizational-level change within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and Malabo Declaration goals.

A cohort of young professionals have worked on 12-month internships with West Africa regional partners including the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The interns have worked as Communications, Monitoring and Evaluation, Human Resources and Information Communications Technology (ICT) associates, among others.

For two years, Giselle Mekuete Deffo worked as an ICT associate with the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), which has overall responsibility for implementing regional agricultural policy.

"I spent two unforgettable years working with ECOWAS," Giselle said. "When I joined the Agricultural Department of ECOWAS as a young professional in charge of ICT, the first thing I noticed was the lack of an online communication platform within the Department. I then realized how this could affect the processing and management of agricultural data and information in a geographical space where the population (330 million people) depends heavily

"I spent two unforgettable years working with ECOWAS. When I joined the Agricultural Department of ECOWAS as a young professional in charge of Information Communication Technology (ICT)", the first thing I noticed was the lack of an online communication platform within the Department. I then realized how this could affect the processing and management of agricultural data and information in a geographical space where the population (330 million people) depends heavily on agricultural activities and products"

Giselle Mekuete Deffo



Giselle Mekuete Deffo, a young ICT professional who was assigned to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development under Africa Lead's Young Professional Internship Program

on agricultural activities and products" Giselle said. Lack of robust ICT infrastructure, and poor internal and external communications were some of the findings of an institutional assessment of ECOWAS carried out by the USAID West Africa mission, with support from Africa Lead in 2011.

The assessment identified institutional gaps and recommended strategies to enable the mission to support ECOWAS to deliver on its mandate more effectively. Without robust ICT infrastructure in place, the department was unable to effectively interface with other ECOWAS departments, specialized agencies – including ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) and CAADP focal teams in the member countries. Following the assessment, Africa Lead supported ECOWAS to develop an interactive web-based database to facilitate easy upload, access, and filtering and sharing of data and information in 2012. The database enables access to data and information on donor funding and priorities in the region and serves as an interactive platform for staff and key stakeholders.

Through the Young Professionals Internship Program, Giselle was assigned to support DARD to better manage its ICT platform. While there, she came up with the idea to develop a website for the Department. According to Mr. Alain Sy Tagore, Director of the



Agricultural Department, "Giselle worked hard with the ECOWAS Commission, IT experts, and consultants on two agricultural information systems that we - ECOAGRIS and ECOWAP Donor Group – are proud of, and which are available and accessible to various stakeholders in the agriculture sector".

The Africa Lead Young Professional and Internship Program provided Giselle the opportunity to promote the use of ICT tools within ECOWAS and to develop her own capacity. "Once I got approval ... I created a communication platform on Facebook. In addition to helping team members to communicate and share information, the platform enabled interaction with the public and improved ECOWAS's response to questions from students, youth, women, and civil society organizations. When the use of Facebook became a success in the Department, the ECOWAS Commission extended the initiative to the whole institution" Gisele added.

After completing her assignment with ECOWAS, she was one of the youth from selected African countries that qualified to participate in the five-week Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Program at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) in Accra. The program develops the skills of youth with innovative ideas to carry out their initiatives.

Since completing the internship program, Giselle has secured a short-term IT consultancy opportunity with the Regional Agency for Food Security (RAFS), and plans to open her own IT firm in the near future. "One important thing I learned from my experience with the Young Professional Program is how to transform an idea into a project and how to lead a project up to its accomplishment," Giselle concluded.

ECOAGRIS provides data on the agricultural productivity in the 15 member-states of ECOWAS and is accessible through - <http://www.ecoagris.org>

Upcoming Activities



- ❑ A-LEAP Internship Experience Sharing Workshop
- ❑ Training of Trainers courses in Champions for Change Leadership and Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship with the Feed the Future/ Agriculture and NRM project.
- ❑ Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Boot Camp course for female National Farmers and Fishermen Award Winners.
- ❑ Africa Lead Lessons Learned Event
- ❑ Champions for Change leadership course for Lancaster University
- ❑ Institutionalization of Champions for Change course at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University for Development Studies (UDS), and Lancaster University
- ❑ People Skills short course for Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition (CLM) and Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Équipement Rural (MAER)
- ❑ National Consultative workshop on Competitiveness and Doing Business in the agriculture sector for Direction de l'Appui au Secteur Privé
- ❑ NAIP 2.0 validation meeting for the Direction de l'Analyse de la Prévision et des Statistiques Agricoles (DAPSA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment
- ❑ Sensitization workshop on "Contracting in the Cereals Sub Sector" with producers, traders and industrial members of Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels du Sénégal (UNACOIS)



Nuggets of wisdom

Food Security Quote

“With Agribusiness we can create over a thousand unique careers across the value chain that will employ millions of our people”

Sotonye Anga, Coordinator, Agribusiness & Youth Empowerment, Community of Agricultural Stakeholders of Nigeria.



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