

# Cassava Matters

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## Cracking the cassava agronomy: ACAI commences establishment trials in Nigeria and Tanzania

The African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) Project has established 137 limiting nutrient trials, and 70 intercrop trials in a bid to crack the agronomy of cassava, according to a 5-month progress report of the project.

A breakdown of the work done so far indicates that 20 limiting nutrient trials have been established in Nigeria and 117 in Tanzania. For the intercrop trials, 29 cassava/maize trials have been established in Nigeria, and 41 cassava/sweet potato trials in Tanzania.

Dr Abdulai Jalloh, Project Leader for ACAI said the trials would help researchers answer key questions relating to cassava agronomy.

“Understanding the agronomy of cassava is a crucial step towards maximizing the genetic gain of the root crop,” Dr Jalloh said.

The ACAI project plans 667 trials in both Nigeria and Tanzania across the four use cases directly associated with field experimentation. These are as follows: fertilizer recommendation (295); best planting practices (150); intercropping (202), and staggered planting (20).



Researchers and farmers in a field trial

The trials so far established represent about 44% of the targeted total number of trials.

The progress report shows that across countries, establishment of trials has been higher in Tanzania (82%) compared to Nigeria (26%). This is mainly due to the varying rainy season and farming systems in the two countries. The rains for the first planting during which most of the planting has been done in Tanzania are relatively earlier (March/April), while the main

planting season for cassava in Nigeria is April/May. The remaining trials will be planted by the end of May/June in Nigeria while the rest of the planting in Tanzania has been shifted to the second planting in October/November. In general, the trials will be established within the window of planting by the farmers in both countries.

Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, IITA Director for Central Africa said, “We hope that more trials will be set up as we enter June when rains would have steadied in Nigeria.”

## Finally, ACAI and IITA-CWMP adopt Cassava Matters as common platform for communication

The African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) and the IITA Cassava Weed Management Project (IITA-CWMP) have

adopted a new name (Cassava Matters) for information dissemination as part of efforts to have a unified communication front. Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, who first mooted the idea, believes that the coming together of the two projects would engender efficiency and better use of resources.

Drs Alfred Dixon and Abdulai Jalloh who are leading IITA-CWMP and ACAI respectively endorsed the plan as a step in the right direction.

The common platform will also provide

communication support to the newly launched Cassava Seed Systems project also known as Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated Seed System for Cassava in Nigeria (BASICS).

Hemant Nitturkar, Project Coordinator of BASICS, notes that “unless all pieces of the whole cassava value chain jigsaw puzzle fall in place at the same time, none of the individual parts like seed systems, or weed management, or agronomy or processing would sustainably succeed.”



# IITA-CWMP gets approval for 58 on-farm trials ...Targets 11000 farmers across Nigeria

The Steering Committee of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture-managed Cassava Weed Management Project (IITA-CWMP) has approved the establishment of 58 on-farm trials across Nigeria for the 2016 season.

The plan is to reach, through the on-farm trials, at least 11 000 farmers with a basket of weed control options, and offer farmers the opportunity to by themselves choose weed control methods that best suit their locality and address their needs.

This decision was part of the resolutions and recommendations from the 2016 Steering Committee meeting held in IITA, Ibadan, 28-29 April 2016.

Prof John Ayode, a Deputy Vice Chancellor from the University of

Agriculture Makurdi, who chaired the meeting on behalf of the Executive Director of the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Dr Julius Okonkwo, said the on-farm trials would validate the two-year results obtained from research stations.

The on-farm trials will involve farmers from Benue, Abia, Oyo and Ogun states on different aspects of weed control including the use of motorized mechanical weeders, best-bet agronomic practices including correct spacing, improved variety, cassava/maize intercrop, use of fertilizers and tillage practices, and the use of environmentally friendly herbicides. Each on-farm trial is about one and half acres and will be researcher-managed.

Project Leader, IITA-CWMP, Dr Alfred Dixon said the on-farm trials would provide opportunity for both researchers and farmers to work together on the path of discovery in a participatory manner.

“Our research approach is inclusive and farmers are important stakeholders in this equation,” he said.

Though Nigeria is a global leader in cassava production, the average yield on farmers’ fields is about 14 tons per hectare, representing half of those obtained on research stations. One of the limiting factors to increased



Farmers are being mobilized as on-farm trials kick-off

productivity is poor weed control, and the IITA-CWMP is working with partners within and outside Nigeria to provide solutions to weed damage to crops.

The Steering Committee, which plays an oversight role on the project, is headed by the Executive Director of NRCRI, Dr Julius Okonkwo and other 11 members drawn from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria Cassava Growers Association (NCGA), CropLife, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), University of Agriculture Makurdi (UAM), Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), a private consulting firm, IITA, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



Land preparation begins for 2016 on-farm trials

## AATF and IITA-CWMP discuss partnership

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the IITA Cassava Weed Management Project (IITA-CWMP) are exploring areas of possible collaboration in cassava mechanization. The AATF is currently implementing the Cassava Mechanization and Agro processing Project (CAMAP) in Nigeria, and Project team under CAMAP discovers that one of the key challenges facing smallholder farmers is weeding. CAMAP feels that collaborating with the IITA CWMP would help both projects to capitalize on key research findings and tackle weeds in cassava systems. To this end, AATF team comprising George Marechera and Abu Umaru on 4 May were in IITA-Ibadan to discuss with the Project Coordinating Unit of the IITA-CWMP.

The Principal Investigator of the IITA-CWMP, Prof. Friday Ekeleme gave a general overview of IITA-CWMP, aspects of the project implemented so far under Herbicide, Agronomy and Mechanical trials. He also highlighted that the Project

would be going on-farm this year.

This meeting discussed some linkages and complementarities between the two projects and the possibility for collaboration. Both teams agreed to share information on their activities.

The AATF team also visited one of the IITA-CWMP mechanical experimental field where the IITA Youth Agripreneurs

were using the motorized Mantis weeders to control weeds.

Excited by the youth activities and in particular the mechanical weed control option, both teams agreed in principle to involve the youths in their activities either as service providers or to help the youngsters by offering services to them at scale.



AATF, IITA-CWMP and IITA Youth Agripreneurs

# BASICS Project kicks off in Nigeria with the vision to improve cassava seed quality

A four-year project (2015 – 2019) to develop a commercially sustainable cassava seed value chain in Nigeria, was officially launched Monday 18 April at a public event at the headquarters of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Titled 'Building a Sustainable, Integrated Seed System for Cassava in Nigeria' (BASICS), the \$USD11.6 million project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and led by the CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB).

Despite being the largest cassava producer in Africa, Nigeria's average yields of 14 tons per hectare are less than half of what may be realistically attainable.

The project aims to help Nigerian producers reach this potential through developing a commercially sustainable cassava seed value chain based on the purchase of quality seed by farmers provided by vibrant and profitable village seed entrepreneurs and basic seed production linked to cassava processors.

These seed businesses will provide healthy seed of more productive cassava varieties leading to the adoption of new varieties to improve productivity and food security, increase incomes of cassava growers, and village seed entrepreneurs and enhance gender equity.

Kicking off the public launch, Dr. Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, explained that the key to industrializing cassava is to increase productivity, and this means addressing the problem of weeds, improving agronomy and providing quality seed.

Dr. Graham Thiele, RTB Program Director, gave the project overview: "Our vision is that by 2019 smallholder cassava growers



*From the archives: Women farmers get improved cassava stems during an IITA organized field*

are buying high quality stems of their preferred varieties and planting them with improved agronomic practices. As a result yields have jumped by at least 40% and farmers have more secure markets for expanded production... Novel rapid multiplication technologies have lowered the cost of producing seed and accelerated the introduction of new varieties. Vibrant new businesses have been created all along the cassava seed value chain creating employment especially for women and youth."

Mrs. Doyin Awe, Representative of Nigeria's Minister, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development noted that exciting new opportunities were opening for cassava, but planting materials for cassava present special challenges as they are bulky and perishable. She committed the full support of the Ministry to the new project and thanked the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for providing the funding.

Dr. Julius Okonkwo, Executive Director, National Root Crops and Research Institute (NRCRI), noted that Nigeria's cassava seed system was informal, and

that NRCRI was very pleased to form part of the project in developing a modern seed system for cassava.

Dr. Yemi Akinbami, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) said: "I am excited to get back to BASICS so that we could move forward for a food secure Nigeria." He underscored the need to work on the entire innovation to impact pathway, and stressed that today history is being made, and that he was very proud to see such a great initiative unveiled.

Mr. Louw Burger of Thai Farms, a cassava flour processing company, explained that better roots were easier to harvest and that its extremely important to start with the right seed.

Following the launch the project partners including National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC), the National Root Crops and Research Institute (NRCRI), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Context Network, and FERA (UK) took part in a participatory workshop to finalize work plans and move ahead with the project.

## IITA-CWMP and IITA-PAO organized training for FUNAAB and UAM Partners

IITA-CWMP in conjunction with the IITA Project Administration Office (PAO) conducted a training on Project Administration and Financial Management for the project staff of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) and University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM). The training, which was facilitated by Kayode Awobajo (Project Resource Manager) and Adeniyi Obilade (IITA-CWMP Accountant), was held 11–12 January 2016 and 14 – 15

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*IITA and UAM staff in Makurdi, Benue State*

# Helping African researchers gain new knowledge on weed science and making Darwin proud

The Cassava Weed Management Project which is managed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is assisting African researchers to gain new knowledge on advances in weed science by drawing the expertise of United States researchers and their Nigerian counterparts thereby putting alive the legacies of Charles Darwin and making him proud.

Launched in 2014, the IITA-Cassava Weed Management Project, as part of its sustainability program, is building bridges across researchers from developed and developing countries with a view to narrowing the knowledge gap, by raising the capacity of weed scientists through training and knowledge sharing.

The aim is to help Africa maximize the benefit of genetic gain which has been hitherto stymied over the years because of poor crop management among which poor weed control is a major factor.

This situation is exacerbated by low capacity and a lack of the critical human resource to tackle weed problems, according to Prof Friday Ekeleme, Principal Investigator for IITA CWMP, who also doubles as the President of the Nigeria Weed Science Society of Nigeria, during the recently organized 3-day workshop on "Herbicide Action on Weeds and Crops."

The training, which provided the opportunity for the participants to access latest information in weed science, covered wide range of areas that explained the nature of herbicide, how it works, how it should be used and the effect on weeds and crops.

Prof Stephen Weller, from the Purdue University, United States of America (USA) while facilitating the session on "Herbicide Site of Action", stressed the effect of the environment on the use of herbicides while adding that it was good to thoroughly read labels and understand the content of herbicides before use.



*Participants and facilitators at the training program*

On "Herbicide Absorption," Prof Michael Owen, from the Iowa State University, took time to analyse the area of herbicides' absorption from the soil and the factors affecting soil uptake such as relative humidity, temperature, and light. He spoke on, "Adjuvants/Safeners and Herbicide Metabolism in Plants", and explained how safeners work. He also listed the various classification and categories of adjuvants. Other areas he proffered insights included herbicides resistance in weed management and best possible options African researchers could take to avoid the occurrence of weed resistance.

Prof Segun Lagoke, of the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria, emphasized the need for weed identification as an important step to any weed management control.

"Weed identification gives insight into the anatomy, morphology, ontogeny, physiology and ecological distribution of weeds," he added.

The 3-day workshop, which ended 3 March 2016, enabled participants to understand the requirements for effective herbicide application in weed

management and touched on a wide variety of areas in weed management ranging from, plant anatomy and physiology, molecular biology, cell biology, herbicide chemistry, plant membranes and herbicide translocation, and soil principles.

During his opening remarks, Project Leader of the IITA Cassava Weed Management Project, Dr Alfred Dixon said the training was particularly designed to offer weed scientists access to globally current information in the field of weed management.

He encouraged participants to apply lessons learnt to their research work in universities, research institutes, the Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs) and also to disseminate the information to farmers on the field. "This will ensure sustainability and applicability of the knowledge acquired," he said.

At the end of the 3 days, participants expressed good feedback on the quality of delivery by the resource persons as well as the quality of training module contents used during the workshop.

## IITA-CWMP and IITA-PAO organized training for FUNAAB and UAM Partners

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January 2016 for the two partner institutions. This training covered specific areas such as; Situation Analysis, Grants Management, Internal Control, and Financial Risks and Proposal Budget Development.

The main objective of the training was to offer hands-on training on Project Administration and Financial Management to FUNAAB and UAM project teams. The training was also

aimed at giving the facilitators the opportunity to access how far previous trainings have impacted on the jobs of the project staff especially on financial reporting, with a view to enhancing better understanding and improvement.

At the end of the 2-day training at each of the institutions, the Project Coordinators, that is, Prof. S.T.O. Lagoke (FUNAAB), and Dr. Hughes

Usman (UAM) thanked the IITA CWMP team, led by Dr. Alfred Dixon and the IITA-PAO for the insightful training and also commended them for sustaining such capacity building efforts since the commencement of the project. They expressed optimism that the knowledge and experience gained would be put to use towards the successful implementation of the project.

# Who is who in ACAI Project

*ACAI is a 5-year Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded project in 5 countries in Africa (Nigeria, Tanzania, DRC, Ghana and Uganda). The Project aims to increase the availability of appropriate and affordable technologies to sustainably improve short- and long-term agricultural productivity in cassava in the target countries. The actors driving this initiative are below:*

**Dr Abdulai Jalloh** is the Project Coordinator of ACAI. He has more than 25 years of diverse agricultural research for development experience in Africa. Dr Jalloh started his professional



career as an agronomist at the Sierra Leone Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) in 1987 after obtaining his M.Sc. degree in crop science at the University of Alexandria in Egypt. Under the mentorship of the late Professor Mohamed Tejan Dahniya, an IITA alumnus, Dr Jalloh led cassava agronomy research at IAR and rose through the ranks to become Director of IAR from 1999 – 2008 and then Deputy Director General of the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute from 2008–2009. He was a key member of the IAR team that won together with IITA the first CGIAR Chairman's Excellence in Science award in 1996 for outstanding scientific partnership for improving Roots and Tubers in West Africa. Dr Jalloh earned his PhD degree in crop science at the University of Sierra Leone in 1996. Before joining the ACAI Project in March 2016, Dr Jalloh led the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) with headquarters in Dakar, Senegal from 2009– 2016. He coordinated research and development teams with diverse multidisciplinary membership dealing with a range of NRM issues like soil fertility, water and biodiversity management against the challenges of climate change across 22 countries in West and Central Africa. Dr Jalloh is married with three children. Dr Jalloh can be reached on [a.jalloh@cgiar.org](mailto:a.jalloh@cgiar.org)

**Dr Bernard Vanlauwe** provides backstopping to the overall leadership of the ACAI project. Dr Vanlauwe joined IITA in Kenya in March 2012 to lead the Central Africa hub and the Natural Resource Management research area. In this capacity, he is also having an oversight role in the Humidtropics, the Water, Land, and Ecosystems, and the CCAFS CGIAR Research Programs. Prior to this recent appointment, he was the leader of the Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) program of the

Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility research area of CIAT (TSBF-CIAT). He joined CIAT-TSBF in 2001 and led the development, adaptation, and dissemination of best ISFM options in various agro-ecological zones in sub-Saharan Africa. In September 2010, he obtained a Visiting Professor position at the Swedish Agricultural University in Uppsala in the Soils and Environment Department. Before now, he worked at IITA in Nigeria (1991 – 2000) and the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium (1989-1991), focusing on unraveling the mechanisms underlying nutrient and soil organic matter dynamics in tropical agro-ecosystems. In that context, he obtained his PhD in Applied Biological Sciences. He has published over 150 papers in scientific journals and over 160 in other forms and has (co-) supervised over 40 PhD and over 60 MSc students. He can be reached on [b.vanlauwe@cgiar.org](mailto:b.vanlauwe@cgiar.org)



**Dr Pieter Pypers** is Senior Agronomist and Leader for ACAI activities in East Africa. He has specialty in integrated soil fertility management. Dr Pypers is skilled in fundamental research techniques to study soil processes, mechanisms and underlying nutrient availability, as well as applied research methodologies, including adaptive and multi-locational testing of soil and crop management technologies with smallholder farmers, and has advanced knowledge of experimental design and statistical data analysis. Pypers has worked in several collaborative research projects at TSBF-CIAT (2006-2011) on nutrient management in cassava, maize- and legume-based cropping systems, CIALCA (Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa) and COMPRO (a BMGF-funded project on testing and promoting commercial agricultural products). He led a team of statisticians at the BASF Plant Science (2012-2015) in charge of field trial data analysis and in-field testing strategies for gene



traits, and joined IITA in 2016 as Senior Agronomist on the African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI), based at the Central Africa Hub station in Nairobi, Kenya. Pypers obtained his PhD in Bio-Engineering Sciences from K.U. Leuven, Belgium in 2006, and conducted his PhD research at IITA-Ibadan on Phosphorus availability and acquisition in legume-cereal systems using isotopic dilution techniques. He can be contacted on: [p.pypers@cgiar.org](mailto:p.pypers@cgiar.org)

**Ezinne Ibe** is the Project Administrator on both the Africa Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI, West Africa) and the Sustainable Weed Management Technologies for Cassava Systems in Nigeria Project. She holds a Bachelors in Geology from the University of Calabar, and a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She worked with Scib Nigeria & Co. Limited for ten years before joining IITA as the Project Administrator of the Sustainable Weed Management Technologies for Cassava Systems in Nigeria Project. She works from Ibadan and can be reached on [e.ibe@cgiar.org](mailto:e.ibe@cgiar.org).



**Annah Oruta** is a Program Administrator based at the IITA Central Africa Hub coordination office in Nairobi. She provides program support to the Central Africa Hub/Natural Resource Management Director as well project administrative support to several projects within the office. Within ACAI, she is giving overall support to the Project on budgetary issues as well as providing support to the Project's East Africa team on partner sub-granting. Prior to joining IITA, Annah worked for the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) as Project Officer giving oversight to the project administration unit at CIAT's Africa regional office. Her budgetary skills were honed from her previous experience working as Project Support Officer at Barclays Bank, Kenya. Annah holds an MBA



(Strategic Management) from USIU-Africa (Kenya) and a BSc (Applied Statistics) from Maseno University (Kenya). Annah has also undertaken various training courses in project management, grants management and finance. She can be reached on a.oruta@cgjar.org

**Dr Veronica N.E. Uzokwe** is a System Agronomist with IITA based in Dar es Salaam, Eastern African (EA) Hub. Dr Uzokwe is currently the Country Project Coordinator for the Support to Agriculture for Research & Development of Strategic Crops in Africa (SARD-SC), and an agronomist to the ACAI project. Prior to this Dr Uzokwe was a Plant Breeder/Agronomist at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Los Banos, Philippines, (2011-2013); Post-doctoral



Research Fellow, Crop Production/Breeding, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (CAAS), (2008-2011); United Nations Food & Agricultural Organization (FAO) volunteer, China,

(2011) and Principal Research Officer and Lecturer, Forestry Research Institute (FRIN), Federal College of Forestry, Nigeria, (2001-2008). Dr Uzokwe holds a PhD, (2008) in Plant Breeding/Genetics, and a MSc. in Agronomy (1998), University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She can be reached on v.uzokwe@cgjar.org

**Dr Stefan Hauser** is a Senior Agronomist with the ACAI project with 25 years of research experience in West and Central Africa. His background is in soil science and soil biology in the humid forest zones of Nigeria and Cameroon. Now based in IITA-Nigeria, he recently returned from DR Congo after formally establishing IITA-DR Congo and conducting an academic training program for the Congolese national agricultural research system. He currently works on cassava and yam agronomy and plant nutrition in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and DR Congo. He can be reached on S.Hauser@cgjar.org



**Mr Michael Haertel** is the GIS and Database Expert. Mr Haertel provides GIS backstopping to the ACAI team. He obtained his Diploma (Master's) in Geography from Georg August University, Gottingen, Germany in 2002. Mr Haertel worked as Development Leader for Geo - Spatial Applications at

the System House of the Authority of the Rhineland in 2007. He was a Web Developer at the Federal State Data Processing Centre in Hessen, Germany in 2005 and a Junior Application Engineer at Integragh Germany GmbH in 2004. He can be reached on: M.Haertel@cgjar.org



**Dr Christine Kreye** is an agronomist (West Africa) with the ACAI project. A natural resource management expert by profession, Dr Kreye obtained a PhD from Kiel University, Germany in 2004 and an MSc in Agricultural Studies from Georg August University, Gottingen, Germany in 1999. She worked as Scientific Assistant/Assistant Professor at the Department of Plant Nutrition in the (sub) tropics, Institute of Crop Science and Resource Conservation, University of Bonn, Germany from 2008 to 2014. Dr Kreye was an International Research Fellow at IRRI from 2005 to 2008 and a Research Associate at the



Institute of Plant Nutrition and Soil Science, Kiel University Germany from 2000 to 2004. She can be reached on C.Kreye@cgjar.org

**Dr Hildelitha Berthold Msita** is leading ACAI Project activities in the Eastern Zone of Tanzania. She has a PhD in Bioscience Engineering from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium (2008-2013) after graduating at SUA, Tanzania where she obtained an MSc in Soil Science and Land Management (2000-2003) and a BSc in Agronomy (1995-1999). She has been involved in SARD-SC and Sugarcane Agronomy research activities. Dr Msita is also leading a Sugarcane Research Program, coordinating sugarcane research activities in Tanzania, based at the Sugarcane Research Institute, Kibaha in the Department of Research and Development, under the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries since June 2013. Before now, she worked at Ilonga Agricultural Research Institute (2009-2013), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)



(1999-2007) in different projects of agronomy and soil conservation. She is an author of two publications and a co-author of four publications and she had presented 9 papers at 9 international conferences. She is also an AWARD-Fellow of 2015.

**Mr Godwin Atser** is backstopping ACAI communication activities. He is currently the Communication and Knowledge Exchange Expert for the Cassava Weed Management Project. Prior to his appointment, Godwin was the Communication Officer for West and Central Africa, and once served as a Senior Reporter with the Punch (Nigeria's most widely read newspaper). He has also freelanced for several international media including the BBC World Service Trust, and Spore. Mr Atser has a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics and Extension (University of Agriculture Makurdi), a Master's in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (University of Ibadan), and a Postgraduate Diploma in Print Journalism (Nigeria Institute of Journalism) together with a doctoral degree in progress. He has 16 years of subject matter expertise in strategic communication, public affairs/media relations, and teaching in both the public and private sectors. He is a member of the advisory board of Scidev.net, and also a member of the advisory board of Nigerian Association of Science Journalists. He can be reached on G.Atser@cgjar.org.



**Professor Felix Kolawole Salako** is leading ACAI component in parts of South Western Nigeria. He started working in 1987 as a Consulting Soil Scientist in a private firm at Bodija, Ibadan, Nigeria. He was a Research Associate in the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture between 1989 and 2000. He joined the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) in 2000 as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Soil Science and Land Management (then called Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Mechanization). Apart from teaching and supervising both undergraduate (more than 40 projects) and postgraduate (more than 20 dissertations and theses) students, he held the following positions and became the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development). Prof Salako has served

on more than 45 Committees of the University including Appointment Committees for staff, and also in the University Governing Council and Senate. He won grants from the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), and Training and Research in Italian



Laboratories (TRIL) of the Abdul Salaam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP). He was a Regular Associate of ICTP between 2005 and 2009, Prof Salako is a member of local and international professional societies. He has been an Associate Editor of Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, Iowa, USA since 2009. He is a reviewer for many International and Nigeria-based journals.

**Dr Adeyemi Olujide Olojede**, a Systems Agronomist/Biometrician, is leading ACAI component in Eastern and Middle belt zones of Nigeria. He has a B.Sc and M.Sc degrees in Agronomy (Crop Science) from University of Ibadan, Ibadan and a Ph.D in Crop Production (Cropping Systems) from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Dr Olojede started his career with the National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike in 1991 as Research Officer I from where he rose to the position of an Assistant Director in 2009. He has headed several departments in the Institute including being pioneer Coordinator of the Minor Root crops Improvement program. He is a scientist of international repute with several publications to his credit both in the national and international journals, proceedings, technical reports and chapters in books. He is a Consultant Agronomist/Crop Database Manager to both national and international organizations such as NNPC (Cassava Ethanol Project), Accenture, CIAT- Columbia, Generation Challenge Program (GCP, Mexico), NEXTGEN Cassava Breeding Project (Cornell University), and IITA, Ibadan (RRPMC, RUSEP, EPHTA and CEDP). He is a member of many professional bodies such as Agricultural Society of Nigeria, International Biometrics Society (GNi) and International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC) to mention a few. Dr Olojede is well travelled and happily married. He is currently the Coordinator



in Charge of Cassava Research Program at National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike, Nigeria.

**Mr Jeremiah Joe Kabissa** is a Research Associate with the African Cassava Agronomy Initiatives (ACAI) Project in the Lake zone, Eastern zone, Southern zone in main land and the Zanzibar Island. Prior to this, Mr Kabissa was a Research Associate with IITA, Assistant Cotton Inspector (Agronomist) at Kwimba (2008-2009), Shy & Kishapu (2010-2012), and Senior Cotton Inspector (Agronomist) at Misungwi and Meaetu districts (2013-2015). He has a BSc degree (2007) in General Agriculture from Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania, and an M.Sc (2015) in Crop Science from the same University.

**Dr Hajji Saleh** is a Plant Breeder/ Agronomist with the Zanzibar Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI). He is leading the Zanzibar Island component of ACAI project. Dr Saleh received his Masters of Science degree (M Sc) in Agronomy in 1995 from the Moscow Agricultural University in Russia. He is currently working with the Zanzibar' Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries as a Director at the Zanzibar Agricultural Research Institute at Kizimbani. But prior to this post, he served as the Team Leader for the Root and Tuber Research Program in Zanzibar for over 15 years, where in collaboration with several national and international research institutions including the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) he played a significant role in the improvement of production and productivity of root and tuber crops (especially cassava and sweet potato) in Zanzibar and Tanzania at large. He has extensive experience in root and tuber research and worked with a number of local and donor funded projects. Dr Saleh also worked with the then Commission of Research and Extension of Zanzibar as the Head of Adaptive Research Division (2002 -2005), where he took an active role in



enhancing adaptive research activities for food crops. He also participated in a number of consultancy services including the formulation of the Zanzibar Agricultural Marketing Policy Zanzibar, Tanzania (2009) where he was a Team Leader. He also worked as a National Consultant - Food Security and Nutrition Policy Formulation under FAO support (2006-2007).



**Dr Deusedit Peter Mlay** is an Agronomist working as a Principal Agricultural Research Officer with the Lake zone Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Mwanza, Tanzania since 2003. He is leading ACAI Project activities in the Lake Zone. In collaboration with other researchers and international institutes, Dr Mlay has accomplished various research tasks like: Improving the livelihood of African smaller farmers by scaling up the production of cassava planting material through the adaptation of low-cost biotechnology techniques developed by International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in 2007; Cassava Tropical Whitefly Project in Tanzania (2005 to 2008), funded by the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA); SARD-SC project on Investigating the Role of Cassava on the Livelihoods of the Small-scale farmers in Sagcot area, Tanzania, funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) through IITA (2014 to date). He has been involved in various consultancy works with international organizations like Plan International South Sudan as a Consultant in "Assessing Agricultural and Livestock Potentials in Central Equatorial and Jonglei States in South Sudan" (January 2013); and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Tanzania in Assessing the Consequences of Post-Harvest Losses to Vegetable Farmers in Tanzania: A case of the Singida region (March to April 2014).

**Dr Geoffrey Mkamilo** is the National Coordinator for Root and Tuber Crops, Agricultural Research Institute, Naliendele, Tanzania. Under ACAI, he is leading the Southern zone component of the project. In 1991 he was awarded a BSc degree in Agricultural General at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania. In 1998, he bagged an M.Sc in Crop Science at the Wageningen University and Research Centre in The Netherlands. In 2004, he had his PhD in Production Ecology



working with the Zanzibar' Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries as a Director at the Zanzibar Agricultural Research Institute at Kizimbani. But prior to this post, he served as the Team Leader for the Root and Tuber Research Program in Zanzibar for over 15 years, where in collaboration with several national and international research institutions including the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) he played a significant role in the improvement of production and productivity of root and tuber crops (especially cassava and sweet potato) in Zanzibar and Tanzania at large. He has extensive experience in root and tuber research and worked with a number of local and donor funded projects. Dr Saleh also worked with the then Commission of Research and Extension of Zanzibar as the Head of Adaptive Research Division (2002 -2005), where he took an active role in

enhancing adaptive research activities for food crops. He also participated in a number of consultancy services including the formulation of the Zanzibar Agricultural Marketing Policy Zanzibar, Tanzania (2009) where he was a Team Leader. He also worked as a National Consultant - Food Security and Nutrition Policy Formulation under FAO support (2006-2007).

and Resource Conservation from the Wageningen University and Research Centre. Dr Mkamilo worked with Farming Systems Research/ Socio-Economics team at NARI as a Participatory Systems Agronomist for six years from 1992-2008. In 2004, Dr Mkamilo joined the National Roots and Tuber Crops Research sub-program at NARI as an Agronomist. In 2005, he was appointed as National Coordinator for the Roots and Tuber Crops Research Program. Dr Mkamilo has extensive experience with internationally funded projects and worked as Principal Investigator/ Coordinator for NARS from Tanzania for several projects and worked in collaboration with international institutions such as IITA, CIAT and NRI. He also contributed to the official release of sixteen cassava varieties and six sweet potato varieties in Tanzania between 2009 and 2015.



**Ms Mary Damian Ndomba**, a Tanzanian, is a PhD Research Fellow with the ACAI. She has an M.Sc, in Crop Science (Agronomy) from Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania. She also holds BSc in Agricultural Education & Extension (2010) from the same University. Ms Ndomba also holds a Diploma in

Agriculture (crops and livestock) from the Uyole Agricultural Training Institute in Tanzania which was awarded in 2006. Since September 2006, she has been working with the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock & Fisheries (MALF-Tanzania) under the Department of Research & Development as an Agricultural Research Officer at Tumbi-Agricultural Research Institute, Tabora. Currently, Ms Ndomba works with (MALF-Tanzania) as an Agricultural Research Officer at the Sugar Research Institute (SRI), Kibaha, where her duties and responsibilities include: Carrying out research towards improving the nutritional quality of root and tubers crops (cassava and sweet potato); conducting and managing experimental trials in the green house, and conducting and managing field trials.



**Mr Habai Rafael Masunga** is a PhD Research Fellow on the ACAI project. He is a Senior Agricultural Research Officer with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Mr Masunga owns a Bsc in Agronomy from Sokoine University



of Agriculture (SUA), and an Msc Physical Land Resources from GHENT. He has 9 years work experience in agricultural research as an agronomist.

**Ms Theresa Agyeiwaa Ampadu-Boakye**, is a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Expert based at the IITA Central Africa Hub Office in Nairobi. Ms Ampadu-Boakye coordinates and leads all project monitoring and evaluation activities across the eleven implementing countries of N2Africa project. In ACAI, she provides support on M&E through the coordination of selected M&E consultants. She also represents ACAI on M&E related issues at IITA level. She holds a Master of Science degree in Development Planning and Management (SPRING Programme), a joint postgraduate programme between the University of Dortmund and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). She also holds certificates in Value Chain Development, Open Space Technology, and Appreciative Inquiry. Prior to joining IITA, she was the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for 2SCALE Project of the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), and Senior Technical Advisor with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) funded Market Oriented Agriculture Program (MOAP).



## KOLPING and JDPM join forces with IITA CWMP to establish on-farm trials

The IITA Cassava Weed Management Project (IITA-CWMP) is collaborating with the Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM) in Oyo and Ogun states for the implementation of 2016 on-farm trials. The JDPM is a non-governmental arm of the Catholic Church that is involved in rural development, social justice, and good governance. At the moment, the JDPM has more than 450 farmers in different local governments of Oyo state. Following the kick-off of the Cassava Weed Management Project in 2014, the JDPM approached the Project Leader, Dr Alfred Dixon for partnership in the area of extension. Dr Dixon promised the JDPM of possible collaboration once on-farm trials of the project commence in 2016. The meeting between Godwin Atser, Communication & Knowledge Exchange Expert, and the JDPM on 7 March 2016 was in fulfilment of that promise and to specifically develop partnership with the JDPM with regards

to the establishment of on-farm trials. Both parties agreed to work together and tackle weeds in cassava farms. At the meeting with the JDPM team in Oyo were: Awoyinka Kolawole, Fakorede John, Nathaniel Ajayi, Awowole Agnes, Sola Oyekan and John Oladokun. Meanwhile, in Ogun State, the JDPM will also play a role actively supporting the IITA-Cassava

Weed Management team at FUNAAB with extension services. In Abia, the IITA CWMP established collaboration with KOLPING—another arm of the Catholic Church that is also involved in rural development. The organization linked the project team with their farmers. KOLPING has more than 600 farmers working under its programs in Abia state.



IITA-CWMP and JDPM in Oyo town

This newsletter is produced by the Cassava Weed Management Project in collaboration with the ACAI and the BASICS projects. **Advisers:** Drs Bernard Vanlauwe, Alfred Dixon, Abdulai Jalloh, Hemant Nitturkar, and Friday Ekeleme.

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