

# BUSINESS



■ A section of the trained Borno Youth Agripreneurs

## Agribusiness moves Borno youths out of unemployment

Many Borno youths benefitted from a robust agricultural entrepreneurial scheme after being dislodged and losing their farms to insurgency.

**Ibrahim Musa Giginyu,**  
Kano

**W**ith the security challenges that rendered thousands of communities homeless and also created worrisome situations in the North-East by rendering thousands jobless, it is a known fact that youths are the greatest assets of every society. Indeed, the greatest investment for development should be that which targets the youths.

It was based on these, that the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, (IITA), in collaboration with N2Africa project in Borno State that came up with a programme to effectively engage youth from the state in agricultural value chain to create opportunities and sustainable income from farming, value addition and agribusiness with an established chain of integrated, profitable, sustainable and mutually supportive agricultural enterprises, that will be wholly owned by young agripreneurs, who are focussed towards gainful self-employment.

Expatriating on the project in Kano, Borno State N2Africa project coordinator, Dr. Nkeki Kamai, stated that the project was aimed at re-orientating the youth

towards embracing agriculture and agribusiness as income generating activity. He added that the project was also aimed at training participants on best practices in agricultural value chain, particularly grain legumes such as soybean, cowpea and groundnut among others.

The coordinator also stated that the project seeks to specifically establish sustainable public-private partnership for legume intensification, by reaching to more than 40,000 farming families and increase biological nitrogen fixation and productivity of grain legumes in Borno State, coupled with contributing to enhanced soil fertility, improved household nutrition and increased cash income for smallholder farmers. Dr. Kamai revealed that the main target was to provide job opportunities for at least 2,000 Borno youths in agro-based enterprises.

According to him, out of all the eleven African countries participating in the project, only Borno State has the youth empowerment component, for obvious reasons, and particularly because of the direct visitation to the BMGF foundation in the United States by the state governor, Alhaji Kashim Shettima to request for the intervention.

He noted that there was urgent need to reconstruct the agriculture and food security infrastructure of Borno State, alongside a pragmatic youth engagement and empowerment scheme cannot be flogged at this time.

However, the coordinator recounted the project's success story, stating that 127 youths have been trained and empowered. He said this took place in ten value chains, ranging from input supply, direct crop production, crop processing, product marketing, poultry, animal fattening to fish farming; which the agripreneurs have independently chosen, out of the 20 identified business opportunities in the grain legumes value chain. According to him, all of these businesses also have the potential to further create direct and indirect job opportunities for other youth and women of Borno State origin.

It was also gathered that a total of 87 youths representing batch 3, 4 and 5 are being officially presented with a starter pack totalling to N23.4million. Each of the agripreneurs was given N450,000 disbursed in three instalments and the spray service providers were given N100,000 each in two instalments. Furthermore, all the Agripreneurs have been provided with a branded business location signposts and a Corporate Affairs Commission, (CAC), certificate of registration of the business name in their chosen value chain.