SAA
Sasakawa
Africa
Association

Walking with the farmer

# Annual Report 2023

Measuring progress, mapping the journey ahead

# Contents



# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **AFAAS** | African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services |
| **AFSTA** | African Seed Trade Association |
| **AGRA** | Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa |
| **AGRF** | Africa Green Revolution Forum |
| **CA** | Conservation Agriculture |
| **CAT** | Community Association Trainer/Trader |
| **CB** | Capacity Building |
| **CBSM** | Community-based Seed Multiplication |
| **CDP** | Community Demonstration Plots |
| **CSIA** | Community Savings for Investment in Agribusiness |
| **DAEAS** | Digital Agriculture Extension and Advisory Services |
| **EA** | Extension Agent |
| **FCS** | Food Consumption Score |
| **FTC** | Farmer Training Center |
| **FLP** | Farmer Learning Platform |
| **GAP** | Good Agronomic Practice |
| **GHG** | Greenhouse Gas |
| **HDDS** | Household Dietary Diversity Score |
| **ICRISAT** | International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics |
| **IFDC** | International Fertilizer Development Center |
| **IFPRI** | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| **IITA** | International Institute of Tropical Agriculture |
| **IPM** | Integrated Pest Management |
| **IsDB** | Islamic Development Bank |
| **ISFM** | Integrated Soil Fertility Management |
| **JICA** | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| **JIRCAS** | Japan Research Center for Agricultural Sciences |
| **KSADP** | Kano State Agropastoral Development Project |
| **MOA** | Market-Oriented Agriculture |
| **MoFA** | Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| **NSA** | Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture |
| **OSCA** | One-Stop Center Association |
| **PHTC** | Production, Postharvest and Trade Center |
| **PREMAP** | Pro-Environment Market-oriented Agriculture Promotion Project |
| **PwD** | People with Disabilities |
| **RA** | Regenerative Agriculture |
| **SAFE** | Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education |
| **SHEP** | Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion |
| **SNNP** | Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region |
| **TB** | Talking Book |
| **TNF** | The Nippon Foundation |
| **UN** | United Nation |
| **USG** | Urea Super Granules |
| **WFP** | World Food Programme |

# Chair's message

**Dr. Amit Roy,**
Board Chair,
Sasakawa Africa Association

Dear friends and partners,

It is an honor to be the Board Chair for the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), a role I assumed on July 1, 2023. I want to express my deepest gratitude to my predecessor, Hon. Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, whose leadership has been instrumental in driving SAA's mission forward. Her contributions over the past 13 years have laid a solid foundation for our future efforts, and I am proud to build upon her legacy.

Having known Dr. Norman Borlaug and his monumental efforts in founding SAA, I feel a profound responsibility and excitement about advancing our vision of resilient and sustainable food systems in Africa. As we face ongoing challenges like climate change and rising input costs, empowering smallholder farmers and enhancing agricultural extension services is more critical than ever.

SAA's potential as a pioneer in Regenerative Agriculture across Africa is immense. The progress we've made is just the beginning, and I'm confident we can further transform agricultural practices on the continent. From my base at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA in Washington DC, I look forward to fostering new partnerships and advocating for sustainable agriculture in Africa.

Thank you for your continued support.

# President's message

**Makoto Kitanaka,**
President,
Sasakawa Africa Association

Throughout 2023, SAA has continued its mission to foster sustainable food systems in Africa, despite global challenges like rising agricultural input costs and climate change. Our commitment to Regenerative Agriculture, which restores soil health and reduces smallholder farmers' reliance on inorganic fertilizers, remains central to our efforts.

This year, we welcomed Dr. Amit Roy as our new Board Chair. His leadership marks an exciting new chapter for SAA, and I am eager to see how his vision will help us further our mission. At the same time, we extend heartfelt thanks to Hon. Prof. Ruth Oniang'o for her years of exemplary service. Her leadership guided SAA through significant milestones, and we are deeply appreciative of her continued support in her new advisory role.

In 2023, we conducted a mid-term evaluation of our five-year strategy (2021-2025), highlighting progress in promoting Regenerative, Nutrition-Sensitive, and Market-Oriented Agriculture. Additionally, we signed an MOU with JIRCAS to disseminate validated agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers. These initiatives will guide our future efforts.

Looking ahead, SAA remains committed to scaling innovative solutions and strengthening agricultural extension systems to support farmers in building resilient food systems in Africa.

# About SAA

Founded in 1986, SAA supports smallholder farmers along agricultural value chains in Africa, with a core focus on Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda. SAA aims to increase farmers' food, nutrition and income security by promoting Regenerative, Nutrition-Sensitive and Market-Oriented Agriculture, and by building the capacity of extension workers and farmers.

To achieve its goals, SAA collaborates with national and international agricultural research and extension service organizations, the private sector, farmer organizations, and universities and agricultural colleges across Africa.

## Vision

To support Africa to fulfill its aspirations in building sustainable and resilient food systems

## Mission

Catalyzing knowledge sharing with African farmers and enabling food, nutrition and income security in their communities

## Approach

We aim to fulfill our vision, mission and organizational objectives through:

- **Knowledge Creation:** Co-create technologies and methodologies that advance business-orientated agriculture
- **Knowledge Packaging:** Introduce flexible technology packages based on community needs
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Exchange information between farmers and other stakeholders

## Operating Countries

### Focus countries with a country office

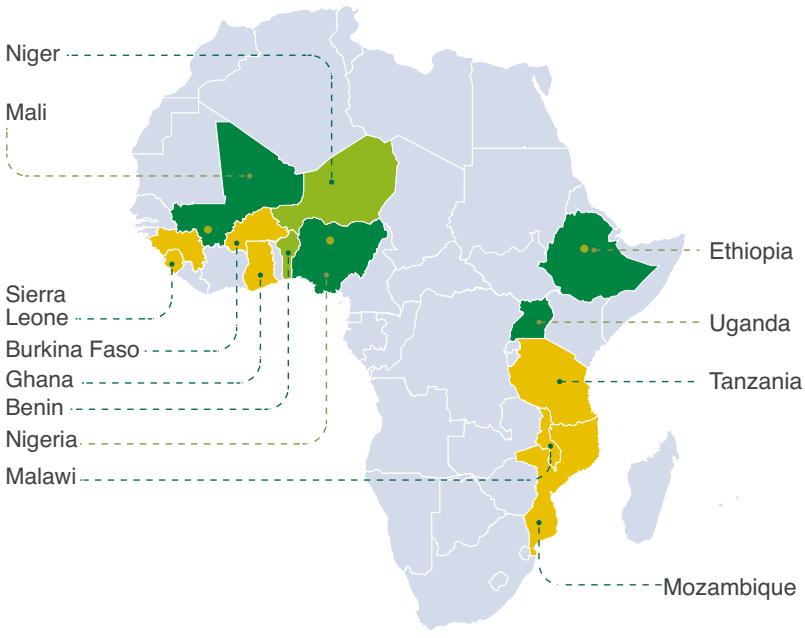
- Ethiopia
- Mali
- Nigeria
- Uganda

### Countries with a project office

- Niger
- Benin

### Countries with Capacity Building program only

- Burkina Faso
- Ghana
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Sierra Leone
- Tanzania



# Strategic direction

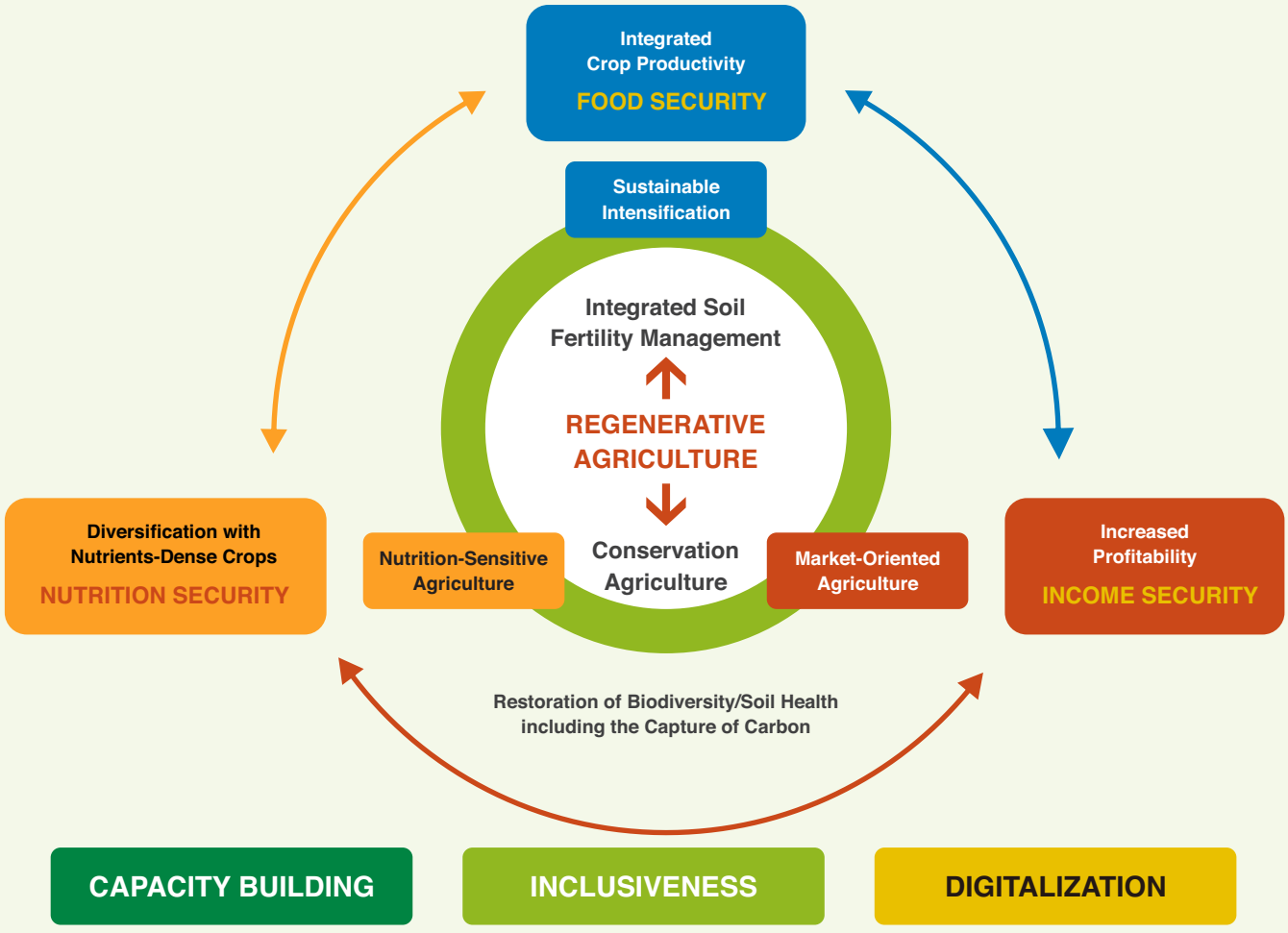
SAA focuses on improving agricultural practices and livelihoods for smallholder farmers across sub-Saharan Africa. Our 2021-2025 strategic plan addresses global challenges such as climate change, soil degradation and nutrition, food and income security.

We promote Regenerative Agriculture through conservation techniques and Integrated Soil Fertility Management to enhance climate resilience and soil health. Additionally, SAA supports diversified cropping systems and the production and consumption of nutrient-dense, biofortified crops to improve the nutritional status of rural communities.

We emphasize farming as a business, helping farmers develop entrepreneurial skills and access markets. Our private service provision model fosters rural commercial enterprises, ensuring sustainable incomes and livelihoods. Investing in institutional and human resource development, with a focus on farmer organizations, universities and agricultural extension services, is central to our approach. And we empower marginalized groups – women, youth and people with disabilities – to actively participate in agricultural development.

Digital Transformation (e-extension) is another key component of our strategy, through which we bridge information gaps and provide access to markets and inputs. SAA also supports the introduction and scaling of sustainable technologies at national and regional levels, aligning with national policies, Regional and Continental declarations, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including ending poverty (Goal 1), achieving food security (Goal 2), promoting gender equality (Goal 5), and combatting climate change (Goal 13).

Through these strategic efforts, SAA aims to build a resilient agricultural sector that meets farmers' immediate needs and contributes to long-term sustainable agricultural development in Africa.



# Regenerative Agriculture (RA)

Regenerative Agriculture (RA) is a sustainable farming approach that focuses on soil health, biodiversity and natural resource utilization to mitigate the adverse effects of human activities on the environment. This approach is crucial for food security in regions like northern Nigeria, where rice, a significant food crop, is grown under irrigated or rain-fed conditions. Resource-poor farmers often use traditional organic materials like farmyard manure, and RA has proven to be a game-changer in ensuring a steady and sustainable food supply.

RA offers economic advantages through multiple cropping systems with high-value intercrops. For example, in Nigeria an 80-member all-women group has successfully produced high-income upland rice and groundnut using strip cropping. Smallholder farmers in Ethiopia have also seen substantial increases in income and improved livelihoods through strip cropping, crop rotation, permagardening and the application of Rhizobia in faba bean cultivation.

In Mali, in 2023 SAA promoted the 'minimum cut' technique, which involves harvesting rice at an increased height to cover the soil with residue, protecting it from the sun and conserving moisture. We also promoted multiple cropping systems, which enhance incomes through increased crop productivity, net return per unit area, land use efficiency, nutrient recycling and weed and pest control, while reducing fertilizer use. During the year, farmers in Mali practiced crop residue return to reduce nutrient mining and increase soil organic matter.

In Uganda, SAA showcased regenerative strategies that balance agricultural productivity and biodiversity enhancement, aiming to rehabilitate degraded farmland and improve soil health. Farmers were taught how to use technologies for controlling soil erosion. They also adopted novel cultivars with high nutrient utilization efficiency and drought tolerance to boost climate resilience.

**87%**
Wheat yield increase in Ethiopia

**69%**
Rice yield increase in Nigeria

**86%**
of farmers practiced judicious use of chemical pesticides in Nigeria

**91%**
Maize yield increase in Mali

**92%**
Soybean yield increase in Uganda

Adoption of intercropping by a host farmer in Raya Boda Kebele, Ana Sora District, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. (Photo: Binyam Tesfaye)

# Two birds with one stone – using compost to tame fertilizer price hikes and increase yields sustainably

Above-ground improved compost prepared by a host farmer in Turge Kebele, Negele Arsi District, Oromia region, Ethiopia. (Photo: Binyam Tesfaye)

Farmers in the Amhara and SNNP regions of Ethiopia have halved their fertilizer expenses after receiving training on compost preparation and use. Compost improves soil structure, provides a wide range of nutrients, adds beneficial microbes and increases crop yields. However, many farmers struggle to produce high-quality compost due to a lack of organic materials and inadequate knowledge of the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio. They are also discouraged by the unpleasant odors released during the composting process.

To address these issues, SAA-Ethiopia provides hands-on training for farmers and extension agents (EAs) in the Angacha and Meket districts on improving compost preparation using Effective Microorganisms (EMs). EMs are a blend of naturally occurring beneficial organisms, primarily lactic acid bacteria, photosynthetic bacteria and yeasts. These organisms boost microbial volume and diversity in the soil ecosystem, enabling sustainable crop production. Compost preparation with EMs accelerates the decomposition of organic materials by five-to-six times and helps to reduce the odors emitted.

Since 2021, SAA has trained 46 EAs (12 female) and 244 smallholder farmers (67 female) in the Amhara and SNNP regions on compost preparation using EMs. The farmers report sustained yields, even after replacing half of their inorganic fertilizer with compost. These results align with studies in Ethiopia showing that organic fertilizers can replace up to 50% of inorganic fertilizers. For optimum yields, the trained farmers apply 4 MT of compost per hectare alongside half of the recommended inorganic fertilizer rate (50 Kg NPS and 50 Kg urea per hectare).

The compost produced by the trained farmers has replaced approximately 3.5 MT of inorganic fertilizers, valued at USD 2,403 based on the current price of USD 68.66 per 0.1 MT. Using compost in combination with mineral fertilizers is an Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) technique promoted by SAA to increase soil fertility and adapt to climate change and improve resilience. This makes composting a crucial component of Regenerative Agriculture, helping farmers reduce reliance on inorganic fertilizers.

# Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (NSA)

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) is an approach to agricultural development that aims to improve health outcomes through the cultivation of nutritious target crops and food fortification. SAA's NSA efforts focus on three key strands: (1) Improving the cultivation, dissemination and consumption of Nutritious crops through crop diversification, including the promotion of nutrient-dense and bio-fortified crops. (2) Improving postharvest management for improved food quality, safety and loss reduction, as well as private service provision in harvesting/threshing. (3) Providing nutrition education, including the promotion of nutritious recipes and complementary diets for infants and lactating women.

In 2023, SAA made significant strides in improving food and nutrition security. We focused on advocating for postharvest management practices, addressing aflatoxin concerns, promoting advanced agro-processing technologies, encouraging the consumption of nutrient-dense crops, and establishing Nutrition Model Villages. In addition, we provided training and demonstrations on postharvest management, agro-processing and value addition, enhancing the capacity of extension workers who cascaded this training down to the rural community.

In 2023, SAA also participated in the 4th All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (4th AAPHCE) under the theme 'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security.' The event highlighted the crucial role of postharvest management in sustainable food systems, intra-African trade and food security. As a partner organization, SAA held a side event in collaboration with the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia, sharing best practices from its programs across Africa.

Targeted households registered a high Household Dietary Diversity score (HDDS) (>6):

**56%** Ethiopia

**67%** Mali

**69%** Nigeria

**82%** Uganda

Targeted households registered an acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS) (>35):

**73%** Ethiopia

**61%** Mali

**98.5%** Nigeria

Farmers In Nigeria:

**9,180** Grew provitamin A maize

**8,840** Grew Sosat and Super Sosat millet as bio-nutrient and bio fortified crops.

**54%** Used hermetic storage

Maize threshing at the Monzomblena Postharvest and Trading Center (PHTC), Dioila Region, Mali. (Photo: Mahamadou Dembele)

## Iron-rich beans – the key to Ugandan farmer's success


Joy Kansiime, proudly presenting her iron-rich beans, Uganda (Photo: Priscilla Naisanga)

"I'm glad I persevered with growing iron-rich beans (IRB). They're highly sought after in local markets for their nutritional benefits, particularly for children and pregnant women." These are the words of Joy Kansiime, a 48-year-old Ugandan farmer who has specialized in IRB for years, but who found greater success after receiving training from SAA. In early 2022, she harvested 500kg of IRB, all of which sold in her village and neighboring communities at UGX 5,000 (USD 1.34) per kilogram.

"My beans are in high demand because of their quality and nutritional richness," she remarked.

During her second harvest in 2023, she produced 700kg, selling 600kg through the Kitura Abamwe Group, which she joined in 2018. Her increased income has enabled her to clear outstanding debts, support her children's education and provide nourishing meals for her household. Indeed, Ms. Kansiime's initiative has been transformative for her community, bringing nutrient-rich beans closer to her people and promoting healthier lives and a brighter future for all.

## From struggling fields to thriving operations in Uganda- Caroline Adong's agricultural triumph

Caroline Adong, 42, of Awili Village, Okweredot Subcounty, in Uganda's Kole District, faced multiple challenges as a farmer. As a result of traditional, outdated techniques and poor soil management, she experienced unpredictable yields and financial difficulties, impacting her family's wellbeing and her children's education.

In 2022, Adong joined the Obang-en-mar farmer group, specializing in maize and soybean production. The group received comprehensive training from SAA, covering line-planting, improved seed usage, effective crop spraying, postharvest management and optimal drying methods.

SAA's guidance also included marketing strategies, empowering farmers to negotiate prices and find profitable markets.

"Sasakawa's teachings have transformed my life," said Adong. In the first harvest of the year, Adong earned over USD 250 from maize and an additional USD 270 from rice sales. She invested her earnings in a second-hand milling machine to add value to her produce and expanded her cultivation to 10 acres. Her success has extended beyond her fields; she is now a quality seed multiplier for Nerica Rice, which is renowned for its superior quality and yields and delivers wide-ranging benefits to the community.

Adong actively shares her knowledge through training sessions on planting, harvesting and post-harvest handling. Her efforts have created a ripple effect, with fellow farmers witnessing improved yields and adopting better agricultural practices. Beyond farming, Adong has opened a store in Arua, selling a variety of produce, including groundnuts, rice, cassava flour, posho and millet. Her journey is not only transforming Awili Village, but also serves as evidence of how empowering farmers can lead to widespread prosperity.

Caroline Adong in one of her rice fields, Kole District, Uganda (Photo: Priscilla Naisanga)

# Market-Oriented Agriculture (MOA)

SAA's Market-Oriented Agriculture (MOA) efforts focus on empowering smallholder farmers and extension agents with agribusiness skills, enhancing financial resilience, and contributing to the revitalization and digitalization of agricultural cooperatives.

Our MOA interventions achieve these goals through the following key activities:

- Supporting agro-entrepreneurship, business development and service provision among value chain actors.
- Strengthening farmer cooperatives through collective marketing and access to improved technologies and finance.
- Promoting 'farming as a business enterprise' across the value chain, including through the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) approach developed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- Promoting Community-based Seed Multiplication (CBSM) to ensure smallholder access to quality seed.
- Facilitating access to finance through the Community Savings for Investment in Agribusiness (CSIA) model.

These activities are designed to foster sustainable economic growth and resilience among rural communities in Africa.

In 2023, key activities in Mali included enhancing producers' access to profitable markets, agricultural inputs and credit facilities. SAA also implemented initiatives such as constructing offices, meeting rooms and toilets, and provided training on the Market Information System (MIS).

**686**
Farmers in Mali connected with market actors, agro-dealers and microfinance institutions

**2,340**
Farmers in Nigeria gained access to harvesters

**5,760**
Accessed threshing services

**54%**
Of farmers in Nigeria are conducting cost-benefit analysis of their farming activities, in line with MOA approaches

## Empowering communities – SAA transforms rural cooperative

Two years after SAA delivered a sheller to the Nieta Cooperative in Kamalé Kakélé Village, Western Mali, evidence of empowerment and progress is clear. The sheller was acquired through matching funds from SAA, with the cooperative contributing 20% of the cost. Today, the Samanko Post Harvest and Trading Center (PHTC), where the cooperative operates, buzzes with energy and purpose as Nieta members work tirelessly to enhance the quality of maize, millet, sorghum, dates and shea products. The production is managed under SAA's Private Extension Service Provision (PESP) model, which aims to provide postharvest services to neighboring communities.

Buoyed by early business success, in 2023 the Nieta Cooperative expanded its services by acquiring a mill, marking a new chapter in their business and a turning point for the entire community.

"The cooperative's relentless efforts are yielding monthly profits ranging from USD 83 to USD 108, showcasing our boundless potential," said Modibo Keita, manager of the Nieta Cooperative. Beyond financial gains, the cooperative has also brought immeasurable relief to community members who no longer need to travel long distances for milling services. Overall, the Nieta transformation is testament to the benefits of PESP, through which SAA promotes its MOA strategy while minimizing postharvest losses in rural areas. The PESP model also enables SAA to facilitate access to postharvest and agro-processing machinery, such as grain hullers and flour mills, empowering communities to offer value-added services.

A beneficiary of the KSADP Input stockist support in Dabino community, Bagwai local government, Kano State, Nigeria (Photo: Moses Nongoatse)

# Capacity Building (CB)

SAA's long-term Capacity Building program, formerly known as the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE), provides training to mid-career extension staff and high school graduates in partnership with universities and agricultural colleges. Currently, the program offers diploma and degree-level training, short-term schemes to address emerging issues, and needs-based capacity building workshops and seminars.

In 2023, Bahir Dar, Wollo and Gondar universities in Ethiopia developed and validated 22 modules for new curricula. Bahir Dar University enrolled 160 students (80 female) across four new curricula. And as part of an effort to build short-term capacity, 97 development agents (DAs) and extension agents (EAs) were trained in entrepreneurship.

During the year, SAA-Mali provided material support to the Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée (IPR-IFRA) in Katibougou, helping to transform a technology village into an incubation center for young business promoters. Additional activities included: supporting alumni of the Chris Dowswell Scholarship from the SAFE program in Mali; organizing Supervised Enterprise Project (SEP) workshops for mid-career students; supporting SEP students during field activities; conducting Training of Trainers (TOT) for alumni associations on database management and SAA models; and supporting doctoral research on SAA-promoted programs.

In Nigeria, meanwhile, the Capacity Building team, in partnership with universities, enhanced the skills of several beneficiaries working in therapeutic diets and low-emission paddy production. Twenty EAs and five farmers participated in the training.

**32**
Partner universities in 11 countries

**160**
Students (50% female) enrolled at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia

**45**
Extension agents and agro-dealers, including 20 females, received entrepreneurship training in Ethiopia

| Country | Partner Universities/Colleges |
|---|---|
| Ethiopia | Arba Minch University |
| | Bahir Dar University |
| | Haramaya University |
| | Hawassa University |
| | Jigjiga University |
| | Jimma University |
| | Lilongwe University |
| | Mekelle University |
| | Samara University |
| Malawi | Catholic University |
| Mozambique | Sokoine University |
| Tanzania | Ahmadu Bello University |
| Nigeria | Adamawa State University |
| | Ahmadu Bello University |
| | Akperan Orshi Polytechnic |
| | Bayero University |
| | College of Agriculture, Science and Technology |
| | Bowen University |
| | Federal University of Dutsin-Ma |
| | Illorin University |
| | Michael Okpara University |
| | Obafemi Awolowo University |
| | Usmanu Danfodiyo University |
| Ghana | Kwadaso Agricultural College |
| | University of Cape Coast |
| Sierra Leone | Njala University |
| Uganda | Makerere University |
| Mali | M`pessoba Agricultural College |
| | Rural Polytechnic Institute for Training and Applied Research (IPR/IFRA) |
| | Samanko Agricultural College |
| | University of Segou |
| Benin | University of Abomey-Calavi |
| Burkina Faso | Nazi Boni University |

# Samanko's garden – a center of discovery for students

Students learning-by-doing at the SAA supported Enterprise Center, Samanko Agricultural College, Mali. (Photo: Mahamadou Dembele)

The sun-drenched fields of the Samanko Agricultural College Center teem with vibrant greenery. The source of this verdure is an inspiring vegetable garden that boasts a range of vegetables, including okra, potatoes, onions and carrots. The garden lies at the heart of the newly established Enterprise Center (EC), a visionary project made possible by SAA-Mali's unwavering commitment to fostering innovation, education and entrepreneurship.

At the EC, students embrace a hands-on, learning-by-doing approach, digging into the soil and reaping the rewards of their efforts. With irrigation equipment provided by SAA-Mali, they cultivate crops, demonstrating the transformative power of agricultural technology.

The EC has also become a source of inspiration for surrounding communities, introducing locals to the MOA principles championed by JICA's SHEP initiatives and SAA's visionary 'Grow to Sell' strategies. These initiatives aim to enhance farmers' entrepreneurial skills, break the cycle of poverty, and improve household nutrition at the community level.

Seydou Coulibaly, supervisor at the Agricultural Learning Center (CAA) in Samanko, praises the EC as a crucial platform bridging theoretical learning and practical application. "The EC has become a launchpad for numerous graduates, igniting their passion for agricultural entrepreneurship," he remarked. "These driven individuals return to their communities not just as job seekers but as agents of change, creating employment opportunities for youth where none existed before."

# Inclusiveness

SAA is deeply committed to promoting gender and disability inclusivity in agriculture, recognizing the immense benefits of equal participation across all gender categories and abilities. In 2023, we focused on raising awareness among farmers of the importance of inclusivity throughout the agricultural value chain, from farm planning and crop production to postharvest handling and marketing processes.

By emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives and contributions, we strive to create an agricultural sector that is more equitable, resilient and sustainable. Indeed, through targeted education and advocacy efforts, SAA aims to empower all farmers, regardless of gender or ability, to fully participate and thrive in the agricultural sector.

In 2023, SAA interventions in Ethiopia directly benefited 4,570 women, 4,837 youth (including 1,668 females), and 17 People with Disabilities (PwDs), two of whom were women. We also promoted entrepreneurship and innovation in Uganda via youth mentorship schemes, which we coordinated with business clinics and business registration support programs.

SAA interventions in Ethiopia reached

**4,570** Women

**4,837** Youth

**17** PwDs

**63** Youths in Nigeria trained in agrochemical spray techniques, safety and enterprise management

**31** Youth group members

**22** PwDs

Received training in enterprise management in Nigeria

## Empowering People with Disabilities

In Nigeria and several other African countries, many People with Disabilities (PwDs) face resource constraints, with some resorting to begging on the streets. In 2018, SAA-Nigeria initiated a program to empower PwDs in the Tudun Wada community of Kano State, in the northwest of the country.

Members of the Tudun Wada PwDs Association underwent training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), group dynamics management, enterprise management, agribusiness and collective market access. SAA provided support with quality farm inputs, enabling participants to establish demonstration plots and engage in individual farming activities. In 2019, after the first year of training, the group cultivated 0.25 hectares and harvested 12 bags of maize, equivalent to 1.2 MT. They successfully sold all their produce and expanded their group farm to 0.5 hectares, and then to 1 hectare in subsequent farming seasons.

Muhammadu Yaro Tudunwada, a retired SAA Community Association Trainer/Trader (CAT), explained how the intervention has transformed the lives of group members, lifting some from street begging and helping them to become well-trained farmers capable of serving as Community Based Facilitators (CBFs).

“The group’s success is evident in the establishment of secondary groups in Tudun Wada and Doguwa,” said Tudunwada. “Since Sasakawa began working with them in 2018, they have consistently increased their farm sizes each season, using proceeds to start small businesses and support their families. None of our members or their families beg anymore; they are all experienced and prosperous farmers. I am thrilled to have witnessed this transformation.”

Khalid Muhammed Tudunwada, the group’s chairman, added: “We have stopped begging on the streets of Tudun Wada. Our members are now successful farmers and small traders engaged in group farming and the storage of agricultural produce. We use the proceeds to provide low-interest loans to our members. Surprisingly, even non-disabled community members now seek loans from us. We no longer beg; we have enough to feed and support our families and send our children to school.” SAA taught us the importance of unity and restored our self-confidence. We no longer feel like outsiders in society.”

# Digitalization

In 2023, SAA made significant progress in advancing agricultural extension services through e-extension, leveraging digital technologies to provide valuable resources to farmers. These initiatives have facilitated real-time communication between extension agents and farmers, offering timely, context-relevant support and guidance to help optimize productivity.

In Ethiopia, we continued to utilize various digital tools, including: video-mediated learning; a crop-based extension and advisory service mobile app (Ma'ed); an audio-enabled talking book; and digital radio and TV spot messaging services.

In Ethiopia, 618 farmers benefited from the Amplio Talking Book, receiving messages across the agricultural value chain. Of the participants, 34% were female and 29% were youth. In Nigeria, 40 extension agents (eight females) received training in the use of digital tools for extension services. In Uganda, SAA promoted digital applications such as Agroponto, M-Omulimisa, EzyAgric and Akaboxi, facilitating access to agronomic advice, market information, finance and agricultural inputs. Additionally, 354 farmers were trained in ICT tools to enhance access to agricultural advisory services.

**618**

Farmers in Ethiopia benefited from the Amplio Talking Book

**40**

Extension agents in Nigeria were trained to use digital tools for extension services

**354**

Farmers in Uganda were trained in utilizing ICT

## Boosting farmer advisory services – SAA's App

Ever since he started using Ma'ed Farm Suite (MFS), Eyob Mengesha, a 32-year-old frontline extension agent, has significantly enhanced his ability to deliver agricultural advisory services. MFS is an android mobile app platform, developed in 2022 by SAA, that provides extension agents with access to crop-based agricultural information and digitized content, even in remote areas without internet access. The app complements SAA's other digital extension technologies, such as the Amplio Talking Book and the Digital Classroom System (DCS).

Mengesha, who holds a master's degree, was among the first extension agents trained on MFS through SAA's Digital Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (DAEAS) program. He has successfully advised 150 smallholder farmers (25 female) supported by MFS, underscoring the pivotal role of digital innovations in enhancing the quality, timeliness and inclusiveness of services provided to smallholders.

"The MFS training and access to agricultural information have empowered me to utilize offline resources on topics such as Regenerative Agriculture and post-harvest technologies. This access has significantly improved my ability to provide farmers with up-to-date extension and advisory services," Mengesha revealed.

Mengesha also noted a growing interest among young farmers in learning about the MFS app, recognizing its potential to enhance their farming businesses. "To maximize the app's effectiveness," he suggested, "SAA should provide additional resources and tools, covering areas like crop-livestock integration, horticulture, permaculture, nutrition and animal production."

The introduction of MFS aligns with the Ethiopian government's Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, which aims to deliver inclusive prosperity to the agricultural sector. It also supports the Ministry of Agriculture's DAEAS Roadmap 2030 and the Digital Agriculture Roadmap (DAR).

# Country highlights

## Ethiopia

**Dr Fentahun Mengistu,**
Country Director, Ethiopia

In 2023, SAA-Ethiopia focused its outreach on eight districts and 14 local communities across Oromia, Amhara, Sidama and Central Ethiopia, while branching out to Addis Ababa and the Jimma zone of Oromia. The Capacity Building program extended to universities in Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania and Mozambique. Consequently, the SAA interventions in 2023 directly benefited over 36,000 individuals (12,000 females) youth, and 17 PwDs (2 females).

During the year, SAA achieved significant progress across all three strategic pillars. In RA, the majority of Community Demonstration Plot (CDP) host farmers effectively retained crop residues and taller stubbles on their farmlands. Over 45% of the farmers applied ISFM and Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices. Free animal grazing, particularly in Raya Boda kebele, started to decline. Grain yields of wheat, food barley and faba bean in the CDPs exceeded those in community practices, with average yield differences of 1.3 t/ha, 1.6 t/ha and 0.7 t/ha, respectively. Additionally, 131 farmers (27 females) engaged in integrated crop-livestock farming by growing fodder crops along their farm edges and in their backyards.

In NSA, two nutrition model villages were established in Oromia and Central Ethiopia. Meanwhile, under the MOA pillar we created seven new agribusiness enterprises and cooperatives.

In Lemi Kura Sub-City, Addis Ababa, SAA's urban agriculture initiative introduced farmers to vegetable cultivation and poultry farming, enhancing access to biogas slurry and water through water harvesting techniques. As part of our Capacity Building program, Bahir Dar University admitted 160 students (80 females) for the 2023/24 academic year under a new curriculum. SAA also provided entrepreneurship training to 45 extension agents and agro-dealers, including 20 females. And through the Pro-Environment Market-Oriented Agriculture Promotion Project (PREMAP), funded by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we equipped two Farmer Training Centers (FTCs) in Oromia and Sidama regions with training rooms, fences and water wells.

**16,909**
Smallholder farmers (7,436 female) trained in RA, NSA and MOA

**966**
Extension agents (224 female) trained in RA, NSA and MOA

**1,167**
Agri-entrepreneurs (585 female) trained in agribusiness

**45%**
of the target beneficiaries applied one or more components of RA (ISFM and CA)

**66%**
of the target beneficiaries increased their crop diversity

Productivity of maize increased by
**33%**
compared to 2021

Household income increased by
**83%**
from the 2021 baseline

## Country highlights

# Mali

**Dr. Hamado Tapsoba,**
Country Director, Mali

In 2023, Mali continued to grapple with insecurity and challenges around fertilizer accessibility due to the war in Ukraine. Despite these obstacles, SAA-Mali effectively executed its initiatives across nine Production Harvesting and Trading Centers (PHTCs) in eight administrative regions. Funding from The Nippon Foundation, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Niger, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan supported these efforts.

SAA promoted CA and ISFM strategies alongside climate-smart, nutrient-rich and high-yielding crop varieties. As a result, pearl millet yields increased from 872 kg/ha in 2022 to 1,077 kg/ha, while sorghum yields rose from 665 kg/ha in 2022 to 977 kg/ha. Additionally, we intensified efforts to raise nutrition awareness, promote healthy diets and train farmers in postharvest management techniques. As a result, 67% of targeted households achieved a Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) above the acceptable threshold, marking a 12% increase from 2022. Moreover, the household Food Consumption Score (FCS) improved from 51% in 2022 to 61%.

Through MOA initiatives, we enhanced the capacity of farmers and cooperatives in cooperative management, contract farming, business plan development, bookkeeping and SHEP approaches. As these efforts demonstrate, the shift towards viewing 'agriculture as a business' is steadily gaining momentum and delivering promising outcomes.

**5,991**
Farmers (2,785 female) trained in CA and ISFM practices and approaches

**3,953**
Farmers (2,134 female) trained in nutrition and post harvest management

**2,236**
Farmers (1,207 female) trained in cooperative management, bookkeeping and entrepreneurship

Pearl millet yields increased from
**872** kg/ha → **1,077** kg/ha

Sorghum yields increased from
**665** kg/ha → **977** kg/ha

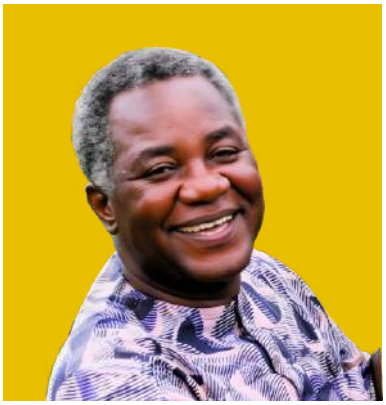
Yield losses due to floods decreased from
**56%** → **4%**

Yield losses due to erosion decreased from
**62%** → **11%**

Yield losses due to early drought decreased from
**83%** → **56%**

## Country highlights

# Nigeria



**Dr Godwin Atser,**
Country Director, Nigeria

During 2023, food security concerns persist, exacerbated by high food prices that drove headline inflation to 28.92% as of December 2023.

To tackle these challenges, SAA-Nigeria collaborated with a range of partners, including Agricultural Development Programs, reaching over 615,000 farmers. Our interventions, including the promotion of compost manure and livestock manure, successfully contributed to the mitigation of climate change and ecological risk, reducing their impact by 19% compared to the 2021 baseline. These risks include soil erosion, flooding, dry spells, early rain cessation, drought, pest outbreaks and disease incidents, which typically lead to yield losses.

In terms of nutrition, 69.4% of households among our beneficiaries achieved Household Dietary Diversity Score (>6), while 95.8% attained an acceptable Food Consumption Score (>35).

Recognizing the critical role of clonal crops like cassava in Nigeria's food security, SAA signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. The aim of the MoU is to establish a sustainable cassava seed system using the Building an Economically Sustainable and Integrated Cassava Seed System (BASICS) Model. This initiative resulted in the establishment of 55 hectares of certified stems, bridging the seed gap.

In a significant expansion effort, we inaugurated our Abuja Office, enhancing SAA's proximity to government and donor agencies.

The office was commissioned by H.E. Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nigeria. Emphasizing our commitment to partnerships, we also strengthened relationships within the One CGIAR global partnership, particularly with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), AGRA, GIZ, MOFA-Japan, UN Women and the African Development Bank.

During the year, these collaborations bolstered resource mobilization efforts, enabling the dissemination of agricultural technologies into new areas.

Over
**960**
extension workers (91 female) trained

Over
**615,000**
farmers (184,982 female) reached

**69%**
of beneficiary households achieved HDDS (>6)

**19%**
Reduction in climate and ecological risk impacts compared to 2021 baseline

Also in Nigeria, project communities practiced the following sustainable agricultural techniques:

**42%**
Reduced tillage

**33%**
Mulching

**91%**
Intercropping

**66%**
Crop rotation

## Country highlights

# Uganda

**Robert Anyang,**
Country Director,
Uganda

In 2023, SAA-Uganda, with funding support from the Nippon Foundation and the World Food Programme, made significant strides in advancing agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Through this partnership, we helped to deliver comprehensive RA training programs for 269 extension agents, covering soil fertility management, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and climate-smart practices, resulting in the distribution of 1,900 toolkits to 20,500 farmers.

To enhance access to information, we also trained 354 farmers in the use of ICT tools. Additionally, 7,888 farmers received training in Community Savings for Investment in Agriculture (CSIA).

Under our NSA strategy, SAA-Uganda trained 59 farmers in advanced rice parboiling techniques. We also trained 5,540 farmers in food safety and quality management, while 1,320 participants engaged in nutrition days to promote healthy diets. To empower key frontline agents, 166 individuals received training and seven nutrition model homes were established to disseminate knowledge on nutritious diets and sustainable farming practices.

In addition, we addressed postharvest loss reduction by providing technical support to 106 PSPs and training to 3,599 farmers in effective storage techniques. Efforts to support farmers' access to markets included a farmer-led market survey involving 236 participants, and training for 203 individuals in gross margin analysis and enterprise budgeting. Meanwhile, youth mentorship, delivered through business clinics and business registration support programs, promoted entrepreneurship and innovation.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, SAA-Uganda expanded Uganda's One-Stop Center Association model to further support smallholder farmers. Monitoring & Evaluation was crucial for assessing program impacts and guiding decisions. Overall, these initiatives significantly improved productivity, market access and resilience for over 20,500 smallholder farmers.

**40%**
of farmers adopted RA and pursued farming as a business

**269**
Extension agents trained in RA

**354**
Farmers trained in the use of ICT tools

**7,888**
Farmers trained in Community Savings for Investment in Agriculture (CSIA)

**5,540**
Farmers trained in food safety and quality management

**07**
Nutrition model homes established to promote nutritious diets and sustainable farming practices

Farmers sold over
**23,130**
metric tons of grain, valued at UGX 7,563,832,300 (USD 2,100,508)

# Strategic partnerships

SAA prioritizes strategic partnerships to advance agricultural development and ensure food, nutrition and income security across Africa. These objectives are achieved through the pooling of resources, expertise and technologies. With the aim of implementing coordinated and sustainable programs, in 2023 SAA collaborated closely with local governments, NGOs, private sector partners, ministries of agriculture, research institutes, universities, farmer associations and multilateral/bilateral organizations.

During the year, we partnered with the African Development Bank, through the PHRDG Funding from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), who provided support to enhance agricultural output, nutrition, postharvest management and digitalization in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Benin, including promotion of sustainable practices and enhance food security across the continent.

SAA also partnered with Kano State government to improve productivity, postharvest handling and agriculture value chains in Nigeria. Additional support was also received from the Netherlands Government to improve seed systems and productivity related technologies in Niger and Mali. Support also came from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), who facilitated the transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies across multiple African countries, while AGRA helped to boost productivity and strengthen crop value chains in Nigeria. In research and development, SAA partnered with organizations like HarvestPlus, KIT, IFDC, IITA, ICRISAT, Tanager and JIRCAS. The aim of these collaborations was to develop and disseminate improved agricultural technologies and integrate cutting-edge research into practical farming techniques.

SAA's engagements in digital tools and platforms empowered farmers with better decision-making capabilities. Our efforts also improved access to markets and inputs through initiatives such as precision farming software and mobile-based loan platforms. Throughout 2023 we continued to expand our networks and partnerships, participating in several key events including the Africa Food System Forum (AGRF), the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), and the 4th All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (4thAAPCE), among others. By pursuing networking opportunities and engagements, our aim is to strengthen efforts to enhance Africa's agriculture sector through innovative technologies and extension models. This work is crucial for improving program delivery, advancing sustainable farming practices, ensuring food security and enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.



1. Building Stronger Partnerships with the AfDB: Dr. Adesina, President of the AfDB (Left), and Dr. Kitanaka, President of SAA (Right).
2. Opening ceremony of the liaison office in Abuja, Nigeria, with the Ambassador of Japan and the Executive Director of AFAAS.



3. The SAA delegation played a pivotal role in advancing progress at AGRF through their substantial contributions.
4. Signing of MOU with JIRCAS. From left: Dr. Makoto Kitanaka, Prof. Ruth Oniang'o (former SAA Chair), and JIRCAS President Osamu Koyama.

# Our key partners in 2023

### Governments/public institutions

- Government of Japan
- Government of the Netherlands
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Kano State Government, Nigeria
- Ministries of Agriculture of Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda
- National agricultural research and extension centers
- Universities and agricultural colleges

### International and regional organizations

- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS)
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- European Union (EU)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)
- World Food Programme (WFP)

### Universities

- Bavaria Research Alliance, Germany
- Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany
- Virginia Tech, USA.

### Research centers

- AfricaRice
- HarvestPlus
- International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
- International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
- International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)
- Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)
- KIT Royal Tropical Institute, Netherlands

### Foundations/NGOs

- The Nippon Foundation
- Tanager, ACDI-VOCA

### Private sector

- Amplio
- Bayer East Africa Ltd.
- SoftBank Corp.
- Tromuso Co. Ltd.

# The Nippon Foundation

## Message from Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of TNF

As Sasakawa Africa Association reaches the midpoint of its ambitious five-year strategy, I am encouraged by the promising developments we are starting to see. SAA was established in 1986 by former US President Jimmy Carter, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Norman Borlaug and Ryoichi Sasakawa. Driven by the founding motto ‘Never Give Up’, SAA has committed to supporting smallholder farmers in Africa to increase food production. Over time, crop yields in SAA focus countries have vastly improved and our extension models have been incorporated into national agricultural extension systems. These achievements are the result of our long-established engagement with smallholder communities, which is embodied in our slogan, ‘Walking with the Farmer’.

During my 2022 visit to Ethiopia, I was impressed by the seamless integration and implementation of Regenerative, Nutrition-Sensitive and Market-Oriented Agriculture. The impact of our work was particularly evident in initiatives such as the cultivation of local perma-gardens. Given the intensified urgency of addressing food security in Africa due to climate change and the conflict in Ukraine, SAA’s activities and interventions are highly valued by our international stakeholders. At the same time, these efforts can be seen as fostering hope for the future. Through the ongoing efforts of all SAA staff, we will continue to provide a leading model for increasing food production and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Africa.

Supported by

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

## About

The Nippon Foundation (TNF), established in 1962 as an independent, non-profit organization, is funded by motorboat racing revenues. Operating under a legislative mandate, TNF conducts philanthropic activities to foster positive societal change.

Committed to generating innovative ideas and implementation expertise, TNF supports six key areas: maritime and ship-related projects, overseas cooperative assistance, children's welfare, disaster relief, disability support, social welfare, culture, and innovation. Under Chairman Yohei Sasakawa, TNF has supported SAA for over 36 years.

# Leadership

As of May 2024

## Founders

- Ryoichi Sasakawa, Founder, The Nippon Foundation
- Norman E. Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
- Jimmy Carter, Former US president

## Honorary Advisors

- Yohei Sasakawa
- Hon. Professor Ruth Khasaya Oniang'o

## Board of Councilors

- Jiro Aikawa
- Hiroshi Ehara
- Takeju Ogata
- Fumio Watanabe

## Board of Directors

- Amit Roy
- Makoto Kitanaka
- Oumou Camara
- Krsitin Davis
- Shirato Keiichi

## Auditor

- Akinori Sugai

## Senior staff

- Mel Oluoch, Director, Strategic Partnerships
- Stella Kabiri, Lead, Regenerative Agriculture
- Fentahun Mengistu, Country Director, Ethiopia
- Hamado Tapsoba, Country Director, Mali
- Godwin Atser, Country Director, Nigeria
- Robert Anyang, Country Director, Uganda

## New Board Members

SAA is pleased to announce the appointment of two distinguished professionals to its Board of Directors: Dr. Oumou Camara and Dr. Kristin Davis.

Dr. Kristin Davis

Dr. Oumou Camara

Dr. Oumou Camara, Vice President of Programs at the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), brings over 17 years of expertise in agricultural economics and strategic planning. Her impactful work across 15 African countries has significantly contributed to poverty reduction and food security initiatives. Dr. Camara's experience with key international organizations, including the African Union Commission and ICRISAT, has been instrumental in fostering agricultural development.

Dr. Kristin Davis, a Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), adds extensive knowledge in agricultural extension and policy research. Her leadership in the Nature-Positive Solutions under One Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has promoted gender equality and youth inclusion in agricultural initiatives. Dr. Davis has also made significant contributions to the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research and played a pivotal role in establishing the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS).

# Financial report

| | | 2021(USD) | 2022 (USD) | 2023 (USD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overview** | Total Ordinary Income | 12,673,281 | 14,986,074 | 15,552,672 |
| | Total Ordinary Expense | 11,760,655 | 13,608,146 | 14,091,319 |
| | Total Net Assets | 5,822,076 | 6,423,785 | 7,471,126 |
| | Cash balance at the end of the year | 9,172,473 | 8,255,924 | 11,654,983 |
| **Details of Expense** | **NF Core Project** | | | |
| | Operating Expenses | 4,692,284 | 3,265,853 | 4,294,623 |
| | Management Expenses | 2,277,692 | 2,290,454 | 2,383,489 |
| | **Extra Core Projects** | | | |
| | AGRA (Ethiopia) | 683,417 | 433,649 | 0 |
| | Bayer(Ethiopia) | 0 | 0 | 28,368 |
| | RMI (Ethiopia) | 3,299 | 29,978 | 0 |
| | MoFA (Ethiopia) | 0 | 449,585 | 534,526 |
| | ISSD-Sahel (Mali) | 509,778 | 1,230,077 | 951,466 |
| | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mali) | 0 | 0 | 341,426 |
| | AGRA-K (Nigeria) | 192,213 | 312 | 0 |
| | AGRA-N (Nigeria) | 172,325 | 251,362 | 276,259 |
| | KSADP (Nigeria) | 2,151,956 | 3,299,437 | 2,643,263 |
| | UN Woman (Nigeria) | 222 | 47,077 | 18,526 |
| | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nigeria) | 0 | 0 | 498,092 |
| | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Nigeria) | 0 | 0 | 85,185 |
| | IITA (Nigeria) | 0 | 0 | 20,876 |
| | Excellence in Agronomy (Nigeria) | 5,320 | 9,561 | 0 |
| | Bayer (Nigeria) | 0 | 15,414 | 0 |
| | PHRDG-AfDB (Nigeria, Ethiopia and Benin) | 0 | 0 | 9,100 |
| | WFP-Karamoja (Uganda) | 749,702 | 1,326,589 | 882,685 |
| | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Uganda) | 0 | 0 | 524,703 |
| | DINU (Uganda) | 43,742 | 155,320 | 0 |
| | IFPRI SHEP (Uganda) | 110,880 | 247,854 | 0 |
| | Others (Ethiopia/Mali/Uganda/Nigeria) | 167,824 | 42,163 | 598,733 |

# Appreciation

**Former SAA Chair,**
Prof. Ruth Oniang'o

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our former Chair, Hon. Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, for her 13 years of exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication. She was not only a remarkable leader but also a nurturing presence, serving as a motherly figure to all SAA staff. Her impact on our organization will be long remembered.

# SAA Awards

The 2023 SAA Staff Awards recognized Cheru Gelelcha, Senior Support Staff, and Christine Kyomugisha Kamubona, Program Officer, for their exceptional contributions.

Cheru, awarded MVP for the support team, developed a comprehensive matrix map for SAA's intervention areas in Ethiopia.

Christine, MVP for the program team, was recognized for her leadership, innovation, and dedication, which significantly improved the capabilities of farmers and extension agents.

Their achievements exemplify SAA's commitment to excellence and sustainable agricultural development across Africa.

**Most Valuable Player (MVP) – Program**
Christine Kyomugisha Kamubona, SAA-Uganda

**Most Valuable Player (MVP) – Support**
Cheru Gelecha, SAA-Ethiopia

# Measuring progress, mapping the journey ahead

## Annual Report 2023

Visit the SAA website at: www.saa-safe.org
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