



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1 Issue 1 | Apr-June 2024



Walking with the Farmer...

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Country Director	p.3
90 Extension Agents trained to establish FLPS in States	p.4
SAA Nigeria, Stakeholders, champion Decarbonization of cropping systems at Zaria Workshop	p.5
SAA President, Kitanaka, Hails Decarbonisation, Climate-smart Efforts	p.6

POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT GRANT (PHRDG 2) PROJECT

SAA installs AI powered E-Kakashi devices To assist Farmers in Nigeria, Benin Republic	p.8
--	-----

KANO STATE AGROPASTORAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (KSADP)

KSADP distributes farm inputs to Farmers	p.10
KSADP empowers Kano farmers with advanced power tillers	p.11

SAA-AGRA NIGER CONSORTIUM PROJECT

SAA-AGRA empowers female Rice processors in Niger state	p.12
How SAA/AGRA took me from Low yield to abundance - farmer	p.13

PROTECTION, EMPOWERMENT AND RESILIENCE BUILDING (PERB)

PERB Project uplifts women in Yobe State, Nigeria	p.14
---	------

BUILDING AN ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE CASSAVA SEED SYSTEM, PHASE 2 (BASICS-II)

SAA-Nigeria establishes New Tribe of Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs	p.15
Cassava Farmers in Benue, Nasarawa, Embrace TME 419 Variety	p.17
SAA-Nigeria appoints new State Coordinators	p.18



From the Country Director

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) Nigeria quarterly newsletter is finally here! The publication is dedicated to highlighting the activities of the country office in Kano, Jigawa, Gombe, Nasarawa, Benue, Kwara and other states where we make important agricultural interventions.

In pursuit of our objectives to assisting Nigeria in creating robust and self-sustaining food systems, we collaborate with the federal and state Ministries of Agriculture through the Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs) to enhance agricultural extension service delivery. We conduct fundamental activities that align with our strategic objectives: Regenerative Agriculture, Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture, and Market Oriented Agriculture.

It is my hope that readers of this newsletter will get quarterly updates and clear insights into our current projects in our target states, with spotlights on partnerships such as the Kano State Agropastoral Development Project (KSADP); the AGRA-Niger consortium project in Niger state, and the IITA BASICS-II project in Benue and Nasarawa states. We also have important initiatives like the UN Women Project in Yobe State and the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) project in Nasarawa State.

I am glad that in this issue, readers will understand the huge impact we make in the lives of farmers and farming communities. For instance, farming groups in Nasarawa are thriving as biochar producers and our beneficiaries in Niger state under the AGRA-Niger consortium project have beautiful and inspiring stories to tell. Stories like this inspire us on the mission of catalyzing knowledge sharing with farmers and enabling food, nutrition, and income security in our farming communities.

- Dr Godwin Atser

Country Director, SAA Nigeria



Dr Godwin Atser
Country Director, SAA Nigeria

90 EXTENSION AGENTS TRAINED TO ESTABLISH FLPS IN STATES

In a collaborative effort to strengthen food security across Nigeria, the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) has conducted its 2024 pre-season training program for extension agents. This initiative equipped 90 frontline agents from Kano, Jigawa, Gombe, Nasarawa, Benue, and Kwara states with the necessary expertise to empower local farmers during the upcoming planting season.

The training emphasized improved agronomic practices and establishing 360-

farmer learning platforms to promote sustainable farming methods and knowledge-sharing among farmers. Following the training, these agents are expected to work directly with their respective states Agricultural Development Program (ADPs) to cascade the acquired knowledge and skills to farmers within their designated clusters to ensure a wider project reach, ultimately empowering more farmers and contributing to a more sustainable food system for Nigeria.



SAA NIGERIA, STAKEHOLDERS, CHAMPION DECARBONIZATION OF CROPPING SYSTEMS AT ZARIA WORKSHOP

At its 2024 annual stakeholders workshop held in Zaria, Kaduna state, earlier this year, the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) in Nigeria highlighted its renewed commitment to climate-smart farming through decarbonisation of cropping systems.

The workshop, themed "Decarbonization of Cropping Systems", was attended by various stakeholders in the agricultural sector who held valuable discussions on how climate-smart agriculture will help to achieve food security and tackle immediate environmental challenges.

In his address, Dr Godwin Atser, SAA Nigeria's Country Director, stressed the urgent need to tackle farmers' challenges such as low productivity and climate change shocks. He however pointed out that SAA was already moving in the right direction with initiatives like the SAA Capacity Building program; introduction of new and improved seed varieties, reduction of chemical fertilizer use, and strengthening market linkages.

A 25-point communique was issued at the end of the workshop and they focused on promoting regenerative agriculture, exploring climate-resilient solutions, and fostering knowledge sharing.



The event was held at the conference hall of the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) at

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State.



SAA PRESIDENT, KITANAKA, HAILS DECARBONISATION, CLIMATE-SMART EFFORTS

The President of the Sasakawa Africa Association, Dr Makoto Kitanaka, has commended the SAA team in Nigeria and other parts of Africa for their effective implementation of climate-smart agriculture initiatives.

Dr Kitanaka gave the commendation during the 2024 annual workshop held at the conference hall of the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State, at the beginning of the year.

According to him, advancing decarbonized cropping systems across Africa is a huge steps towards climate adaptation for farmers.

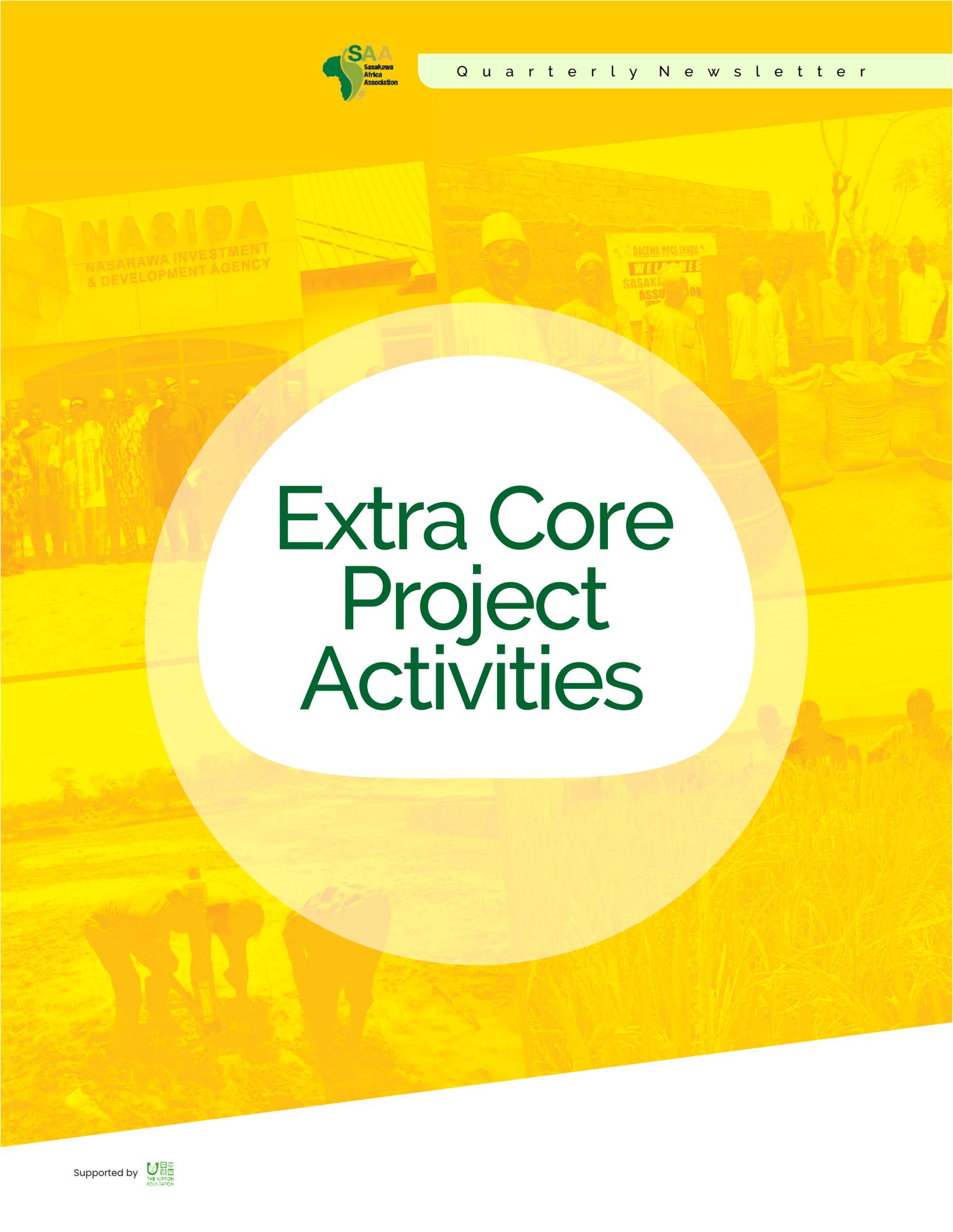
Reacting to the technical presentations

most of which addressed issues like carbon credit opportunities for farmers and regenerative agriculture practices, "Bokashi and Biochar" project, Dr Kitanaka, noted that "African agriculture is headed for a positive transformation"



Dr Matoko Kitanaka

President, Sasakawa Africa Association



Extra Core Project Activities



POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT GRANT (PHRDG 2) PROJECT

SAA INSTALLS AI POWERED E-KAKASHI DEVICES TO ASSIST FARMERS IN NIGERIA, BENIN REPUBLIC

To help farmers monitor climatic conditions and crop performance in real-time on their fields, SAA Nigeria installed 30 AI-powered devices across communities in Nasarawa state, Nigeria and Benin Republic.

The device, called e-Kakashi (Japanese word for “electronic scarecrow”) helps to monitor plant growth, collect other plant data such as appearance of disease, and analyze the conditions of soil and weather.

The devices were installed as part of measures to monitor the rice demonstration plots established in the communities where the farmers are being introduced to decarbonization in rice cultivation in irrigated paddy fields. The demonstration comes under the Japan Policy and Human Resources Development Grant (PHRDG 2) project.

Extension Agents and demo host farmers in the communities were trained on the use of the devices and empowered with smartphones needed to access the data generated.

When e-Kakashi collects environmental information, it analyzes it in the cloud and sends the easy-to-read results through the electronic crop navigation tool “ek-Navi.” Installed on a smartphone. The smartphones hand to the EAs were equipped with the “ek-Navi and Note applications. The EAs would additionally use the phone applications to network more farmers

The communities where the devices were installed in Benin Republic were Agoita, Bolame, Azehoukole and Tchiahomadegbe. In Nigeria, they were installed in Doma, Nasarawa Egon, and Lafia local government areas of Nasarawa state.



PHRDG DEMONSTRATION PLOTS INSPIRE FARMERS IN NASARAWA

The rice demonstration fields established under the PHRDG program in Nasarawa State have raised farmers' eagerness to learn more about decarbonization in rice cultivation and other new technologies in maize production. This revelation emerged from the recent monitoring exercise conducted by Regenerative Agriculture program officers of SAA Nigeria across 12 locations.

The monitoring exercise aimed to assess farmer perception of new technologies, identify challenges, and facilitate smooth adoption. The supervision teams engaged with over 200 farmers, including men and women.

The interaction offered opportunities to address farmers' concerns and provide more guidance for those eager to replicate the technologies on their fields.



REVITALIZATION OF RICE COOPERATIVES PROJECT

SAA NIGERIA CONSTRUCTS CLIMATE-SMART RICE AGGREGATION CENTRES IN NASARAWA

To revitalize rice cooperatives and promote climate-smart rice technologies in Nasarawa state, SAA-Nigeria constructed two digital aggregation centres in the state. The project was funded by the Japanese government.

The centres, established Assakio in Lafia LGA and Agwatashi in Obi LGA, are equipped with modern facilities to use rice husk for clean energy, reducing reliance on firewood and

emissions that contribute to global warming. The centres also train farmers on sustainable rice production practices.

Under the project, two farmer groups, Dacewa MPCs, Shabu and Apashi-Woza MPCs, are learning how to produce biochar, a soil enhancer, from rice husk and kitchen waste. Biochar has proven effective in boosting soil fertility.

According to the SAA Nigeria Country Director, Dr Godwin Atser, the centres will serve as a pilot as there are plans to scale the approach to other states in the country.



KANO STATE AGROPASTORAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (KSADP)

KSADP DISTRIBUTES FARM INPUTS TO FARMERS

The Kano State Agropastoral Development Project (KSADP), in partnership with Sasakawa Africa Association Nigeria (SAA), is empowering farmers in Kano State through the distribution of essential farm inputs. The inputs distributed include improved varieties of rice and maize seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and organic options.

The distribution, done under the Regenerative Agriculture component of the project, targeted farmers hosting the project's demonstration and Community Based Seed Multiplication (CBSM) plots which serve as a platform of cascading the extension model and training the larger group of farmers to increase productivity and income.

SAA has so far established 350 Farmer Learning Platforms FLPs. These interactive platforms allow farmers to gain hands-on

experience with new technologies and best practices.



The project aims to establish 955 demo plots of 0.5ha each and 206 hectares of CBSM plots across the 44 Local Government Areas of the state. Through the distribution activity, the host farmers got all the improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides necessary to maintain fields that represent the sustainable practices and productivity technologies promoted by SAA.

The KSADP project offers comprehensive technical support throughout the farming cycle, including training, on-farm guidance, and ongoing supervision from extension agents and facilitators. The five-year project funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Lives and Livelihood Funds (LLF), and the Kano State Government.



KSADP EMPOWERS KANO FARMERS WITH ADVANCED POWER TILLERS

The Kano State Agropastoral Development Project (KSADP) distributed high-powered tillers to farmers across Kano state as part of measures to address the challenge of limited agricultural mechanization in the state.

The activity, carried out under the crop intervention component implemented by SAA-Nigeria, aligned with one of the KSADP objectives to reduce drudgery in agricultural activities by 30%. Since beneficiaries would

also use the tillers to provide private services on the fields of farmers in their communities, the intervention will create more income for them.

Farmers could not hide their excitement upon receiving the equipment because they had advanced features that will reduce drudgery and increase efficiency during farm operations.



SAA-AGRA NIGER CONSORTIUM PROJECT

SAA-AGRA EMPOWERS FEMALE RICE PROCESSORS IN NIGER STATE

Women in farming communities in Niger state are giving testimonies of how the SAA-AGRA-Niger consortium project is transforming their lives and that of their households. The project has been exposing the women to profitable and productivity enhancing technologies in rice production and processing.

Recently, the project trained women groups in improved rice parboiling methods, and empowered each group with a milling

machine, a destoner, and six false-bottom parboiling pots. Operators of the rice milling machines were also trained.

Some groups in the Minna axis zone comprising Wyela, Kadna, Chanchaga, Izom, Kulogbe, Kuyi, Mialaima and Kwankwankwara communities were also empowered with irrigation pumps and rice threshing machines.

One of the happy beneficiaries is 40-year-old Lamiji Ibrahim, who heads a farmer



cooperative society. The group had been struggling to save amid limited resources to process their crops efficiently before SAA/AGRA, intervened and changed the narrative. The group received a rice milling machine which increased their processing capacity and income. It led to a geometric increase in savings which allowed them to

purchase additional processing equipment like soya beans and maize threshers.

“We no longer rely on individual processing,” the mother of three said. “We work together and this makes us more efficient and increases our profit.

HOW SAA/AGRA TOOK ME FROM LOW YIELD TO ABUNDANCE - FARMER

A 32-year-old farmer in Niger State, Isa Alhaji Ndakogi, has revealed how the SAA/AGRA project took him from poverty to prosperity. In a recent chat, Ndakogi disclosed that before encountering the SAA/AGRA project in 2019, he used to be a low-yield rice farmer.

“Everything changed when the SAA/AGRA project introduced me to modern farming methods, including transplanting techniques,” he said. “Now I get four times

the yield I used to get. I have moved from 50 bags to 200 bags per season.

Ndakogi, who currently has two wives and four children said he made enough money to build a house, buy a motorbike, and expand his farmland. He said that he married a second wife knowing that he was earning enough to take care of both of them. Ndakogi has become an ambassador of improved rice planting practices in his communities.



PROTECTION, EMPOWERMENT AND RESILIENCE BUILDING (PERB)

PERB PROJECT UPLIFTS WOMEN IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

The "Protection, Empowerment and Resilience Building (PERB)" project is transforming lives in Yobe State, Nigeria. Funded by Japan and implemented by a collaborative effort including UNWomen and the Sasakawa Africa Association, PERB empowers women through training and resources.

Over 475 women from 19 groups have benefitted in the project's second phase. The project empowered them with new skills to operate income - generating equipment like grinders, oil extractors, and irrigation systems (enabling dry – season rice cultivation). They've also learned valuable techniques for processing, packaging, and storing cereals.

Some groups also received livestock training and were empowered with small ruminants. The project aims to provide beneficiaries with sustainable sources of income and food security for their households.

One of the beneficiaries, Hadiza Bala from Damaturu, disclosed that the equipment have led to a drastic reduction in processing time for groundnut oil, The



project has also eliminated the need for a long trek to access a grinder, as beneficiaries now offer grinding services within their communities.

Project leaders commended the women's dedication and encouraged them to seek product certification and maintain connections with extension agents for continued success. The importance of unity and financial management within the groups was also emphasized.

The PERB project fosters a collaborative environment for empowering women and building stronger communities in Yobe state.



BUILDING AN ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED CASSAVA SEED SYSTEM, Phase 2 (BASICS-II)

SAA-NIGERIA ESTABLISHES NEW TRIBE OF CASSAVA SEED ENTREPRENEURS

Sasakawa Africa Association Nigeria is in partnership with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) to establish 100 cassava seed entrepreneurs

in the Nigeria's north central states of Benue and Nasarawa.

The activity, being carried out within

the framework of IITA's Building an Economically sustainable Cassava Seed system, Phase 2 (BASICS-II), kicked off in 2023. The project focuses on assisting cooperatives in setting up cassava seed fields of high- yielding and improved cassava varieties.

The Cassava seed enterprises would become sources of income for the cooperative group members and also

create access quality stems of improved varieties for farmers in and around the region. The initiative will contribute to enhancing the cassava industry in Nigeria and offer a boost to the income of local entrepreneurs.

In the first season, 10 cooperatives cultivated 50 hectares of cassava seed field. They are expanding their fields in 2024.



CASSAVA FARMERS IN BENUE, NASARAWA, EMBRACE TME 419 VARIETY

The SAA/BASICS-II project is opening new income streams in the selling of quality stems of improved varieties for farmers in Benue and Nasarawa states. The development is causing excitement among the farmers who have now embraced the TME 419 variety.

Improved cassava varieties, like TME 419, guarantee harvests exceeding 20 tonnes per hectare, as against the average nine tonnes recorded from local varieties.

SAA-Nigeria is in partnership with the Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System (BASICS- II) project, led by IITA, to establish the cassava seed entrepreneurs and link them to a national network of cassava seed entrepreneurs (CSEs) for the highly lucrative cassava seed market.

SAA-Nigeria is also ensuring that the groups follow the seed production guidelines given by the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) in order to facilitate their certification and linkage to market.

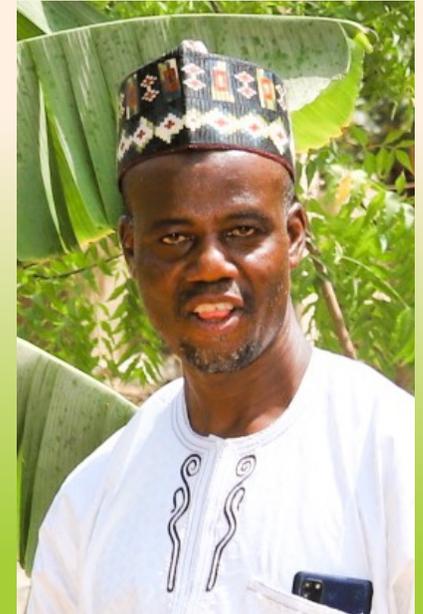


SAA-NIGERIA APPOINTS NEW STATE COORDINATORS

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) Nigeria has announced the appointment of two new State Coordinators: Hamza Umar Usman for Gombe State and Mrs. Comfort Anum for Benue State.

Gombe State

Hamza Umar Usman brings a wealth of experience in agriculture and a deep commitment to rural development to his new role. A native of Gombe State, Hamza has dedicated his career to public service. With an impressive educational background in agriculture and over two decades of experience working within the Ministry of Agriculture, Hamza is ideally suited to lead SAA's efforts in empowering rural communities and fostering agricultural growth in Gombe State.



Hamza Umar Usman
SAA Coordinator, Gombe State

Benue State

Mrs. Comfort Anum brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role as the SAA State Coordinator for Benue State. Mrs. Anum is a dedicated public servant with a long and distinguished career in agriculture. Throughout her career, Mrs. Anum has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to agricultural development in Benue State. Her educational background in agricultural extension and management, along with her diverse work experience, has equipped her with a deep understanding of the agricultural sector in Benue State. Mrs. Anum's passion for agriculture and her proven leadership skills make her a valuable asset to the SAA program in Benue State.

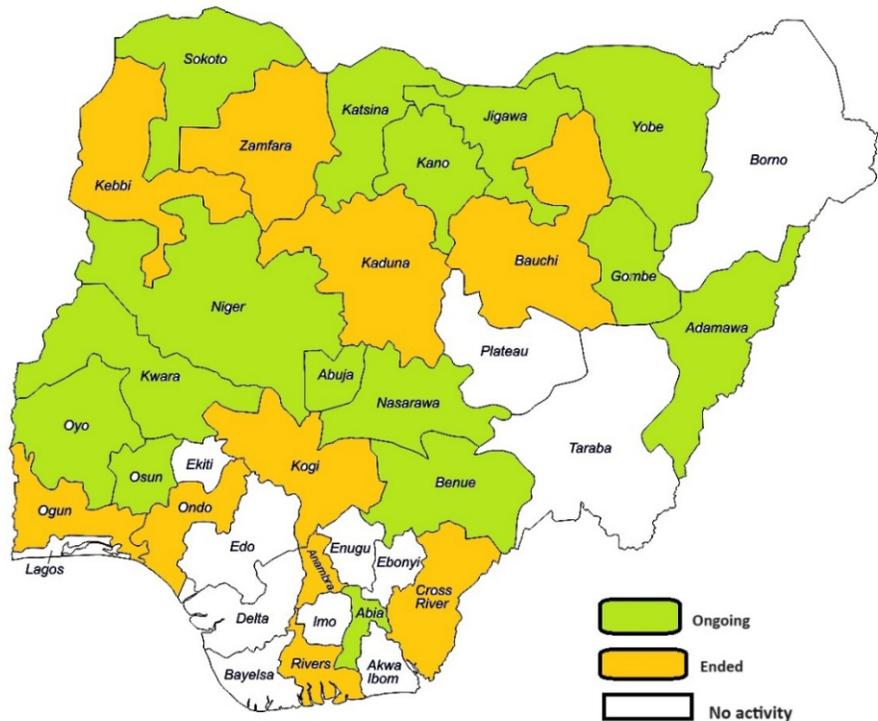


Mrs Comfort Anum
SAA Coordinator, Benue State



SAA has presence in 24 states of Nigeria plus Abuja. Abuja host one of the country offices. These states have benefitted from SAA interventions in the past 32 years. Fifteen states have active projects while nine states have had their projects closed. The interventions across these states were funded primarily by the Nippon Foundation.

Other donors included: Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), African Development Bank, Kano State-Islamic Development Bank, Jigawa State, Federal Government of Nigeria, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), GIZ, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, AGRA, UN Women, JIRCASS etc.



THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION NIGERIA (SAA NIGERIA)

Abuja office: No. 19, Ogbomoshos Street, Garki Area 8, Abuja, Nigeria
Kano office: No. 8, Kura Road, off Magajin Rumfa Road, Nasarawa GRA, P.O Box 5190, Kano, Nigeria



For more information; Contact: Moses Nongoatse (Communication Officer)
 Email: mnongoatse@saa.safe.org | All rights reserved...



www.safe-saa.org



@NigeriaSasakawa



Sasakawa_ng
[saa_safe_official](https://www.instagram.com/saa_safe_official)



Sasakawa Africa
 Association