

Feeding the Future

NIGERIA newsletter

June 2013

New partnership with Federal Government

Sasakawa expands operations in Nigeria

An agreement signed in Abuja in February 2013 between the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Federal Government of Nigeria was described at the signing ceremony by SAA Chairperson, Professor Ruth Oniang'o, as "SAA's most significant agricultural intervention activity in more than 25 years since starting our operations in Africa."

Signing on behalf of the Federal Government, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, said Sasakawa was "a strategic partner in our quest to transform the country...the partnership will help the country in demonstrating its extension programs and will go a long way to help create jobs for the unemployed youth."

According to the Ministry, the objective of the agreement will be to improve agricultural productivity and production, food security and

nutrition through better support to resource-poor farmers, especially women and youth. The involvement of SAA will strengthen the country's national extension system and ensure smallholder farmers have access to critical services such as training on new agricultural technologies and advice in areas such as farmer input supply, credit marketing and farm management. The agreement will help to diversify and expand the delivery of important extension services by encouraging the participation of the private sector, civil society

organizations, farmer-based organizations, universities and research institutes.

According to the agreement, an agreed program between the two parties will expand Sasakawa activities across the entire country. This will include the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) through selected universities and colleges of agriculture "in geographical zones of the country not yet covered".

Commented Professor Oniang'o: "This agreement marks a major milestone in our relationship, one that will see the expansion of joint activities in Nigeria as a demonstration of Nigeria's commitment to invest in agriculture both to spur economic growth and ensure food security for her citizens. We are proud of this milestone."

Said Dr Akinwumi Adesina, "Nigeria is undergoing rapid changes in its agricultural sector. We have stopped viewing agriculture as a development program, but now as a business that can assure food security, create wealth and generate jobs. But to achieve this we must support the agricultural backbone of Nigeria – our smallholder farmers."



The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) was founded in 1986 by Nobel Laureate, the late Dr Norman E Borlaug, Japanese philanthropist, the late Ryoichi Sasakawa, and former US President Jimmy Carter. For over two decades, SAA established Sasakawa-Global 2000 projects in 14 African countries, funded by The Nippon Foundation, working with tens of thousands of frontline extension staff and several million farmers to test higher-yielding technology for staple food crops developed by African national research organizations, in collaboration with international agricultural research centers. Today, SAA activities are focused on four African countries – Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda – with a much greater emphasis on farmers previously marginalized from extension, with a primary focus on women farmers.

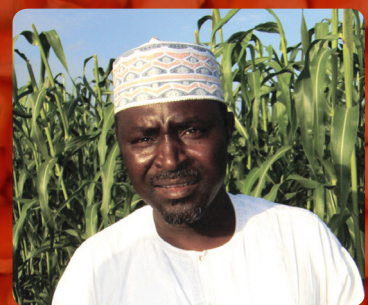
The Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) was launched at the University of Cape Coast nearly 20 years ago. Focused on building the skills of mid-career extension professionals, over 4,000 are benefitting from this program which now involves 17 universities and colleges across Africa.



Supporting resource-poor farmers – such as women and youth



Professor Ruth Oniang'o, Chairperson, Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) and Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) signs the agreement with Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Federal Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



Dr Sani Miko joined SAA in 2009 as the SG 2000-Nigeria Country Director. He obtained a PhD in Irrigation Agronomy in 1999 from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) at Zaria (Nigeria). Dr Miko began his career in the Department of Agronomy at ABU in 1988, rising to the position of Senior Lecturer in 2000, a position he held until 2004. While there, he was involved in extension and research on cereal agronomy and water management at the Institute for Agricultural Research, Samaru. He moved to Bayero University, Kano (BUK) as a Senior Lecturer in 2004 and was promoted to Reader in 2005. Before joining SAA, Dr Miko was Head of the Agronomy Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. He worked with SAA during his university career to help improve the effectiveness of selected SG 2000-Nigeria field programs.



Newsletter of the
Sasakawa Africa Association

SAA Founders:

Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa,
Dr. Norman E. Borlaug,
President Jimmy Carter

Supporting smallholder farmers

The Sasakawa-Global 2000 project was launched in Nigeria in 1992 as a "dynamic technology demonstration field program". The project initially targeted small-scale farmers in Kano and Kaduna states. The first cycle of field work was planned for 1993, concentrating on improving maize productivity.

As Nigeria's former Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo, said at the time: "If Africa is to get out of its morass, it has to be in agriculture. The technology to feed Africa is there. Packaging and delivering the inputs and building up the political will is what is needed to transfer this experiment into a sustainable development strategy."

"SG 2000's role has been to spearhead pilot small-scale farmer development efforts so that other organizations get involved. Its role is to break the ground, show what is possible, and help light the way."

Shifting focus

In the years that followed, SG 2000 expanded its activities in the Northern Guinea Savannah areas of Nigeria – principally in six states, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano and Zamfara.

In 2009, the program shifted from its previous mode of operation, with a primary focus on increasing crop productivity, "to a more holistic approach for strengthening the extension advisory services provided to farmers," according to Nigeria's Country Director, Dr Sani Miko. "Our new approach aimed to strengthen the skills and

credentials of extension workers; improve the effectiveness of public agricultural extension systems to provide smallholder farmers with a range of appropriate technology options; build more effective research, extension, farmer, and input supplier institutional linkages; and broaden and strengthen private sector extension advisory services."

Restructuring

The changes to the program coincided with the death of the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA)'s iconic President, Dr Norman Borlaug, and the far reaching organizational restructuring that followed – including the development of a five year strategic plan with its emphasis on the value chain, the creation of stronger public-private partnerships in support of extension delivery and more effective information knowledge management.

As an important part of this new strategy, the SAA has worked to diversify its funding services while continuing to rely on the constant and unswerving support of The Nippon Foundation. As a result, SAA activities in the field have



Nigerian farmer transporting pearl millet from his field to the homestead

been scaled up and a much greater impact made.

In Nigeria, SAA was able to advance the positive reaction of eight states – Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Zamfara – to a proposal for cost sharing in the implementation of SAA activities, including the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE). Following meetings between SAA and the states' governors and their representatives in Abuja in February 2010, pledges were made for N30 million (\$200,000) a year by the states to expand their SG 2000 and SAFE programs in their respective states.

Scaling-up

Jigawa and Adamawa have so far released two instalments and, in December 2012, Gombe State also released its first N30 million to SAA.

Comments Sani Miko, "These funds have helped to scale up SAA activities in these states and a much greater impact is being made in skills upgrading and adoption of new technologies in crop production and value addition."

Transforming Nigeria's agriculture

A dynamic new policy – the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) – has been introduced by the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, as part of a number of interventions and policy changes designed to tackle the recurring and endemic challenges and constraints facing agricultural productivity and growth in Nigeria.

Key points of the new policy are:

- Focusing on agriculture as a business instead of a development project;
- Utilising the transformation of the agricultural sector to create jobs, wealth and ensure food security;
- Focusing on value chains where Nigeria has comparative advantage;
- Providing a sharp focus on youth and women.

Major agricultural commodities such as rice, maize, cotton, cocoa, cassava, millet, wheat, aquaculture, palm and sorghum are targeted through Commodity Transformation Committees that design and implement wide-ranging and far-reaching measures and interventions in support of agricultural growth and development.

Primarily, the ATA program considers agriculture to be a business – and policies were formulated, and strategies developed from market-led, commercial and value-chain perspectives.

As part of ATA, the Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) – an e-wallet scheme – distributes free seeds and gives a 50% subsidy on two bags of fertilizer to farmers through a private agrodealer network using farmers' mobile phones.

This removes government officials from procuring inputs and involvement in the distribution chain which, in the past, they had abused.

In addition, a Federal Department of Extension has been created to support federally regulated and coordinated extension service delivery to the farming community.

SAFE in Nigeria

The Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) initiative has been described as SAA's most significant contribution to institutional capacity building since its launch at the University of Cape Coast nearly 20 years ago. A legally separate organization from SAA, but also funded by The Nippon Foundation, SAFE provides leadership for building human resource capacity in agricultural extension. By the end of 2012, more than 4,000 mid-career extension professionals were benefitting from the program in 17 universities and colleges across Africa.

SAFE programs are currently operating in four Nigerian universities – Ahmadu Bello, Bayero (Kano), Adamawa State and Ilorin (see chart below).

Nigeria SAFE statistics

SAFE Program Universities	Graduated			Current			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Ahmadu Bello	99	11	110	32	8	40	150
Bayero University	62	5	67	63	3	66	133
Adamawa State University				19	5	24	24
Ilorin University				10	5	15	15
Subtotal (all BSCs)	161	16	177	124	21	145	322