



PROGRESS ON AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PARK P14



YAGEP AMBASSADORS P16

OKOWA Plus

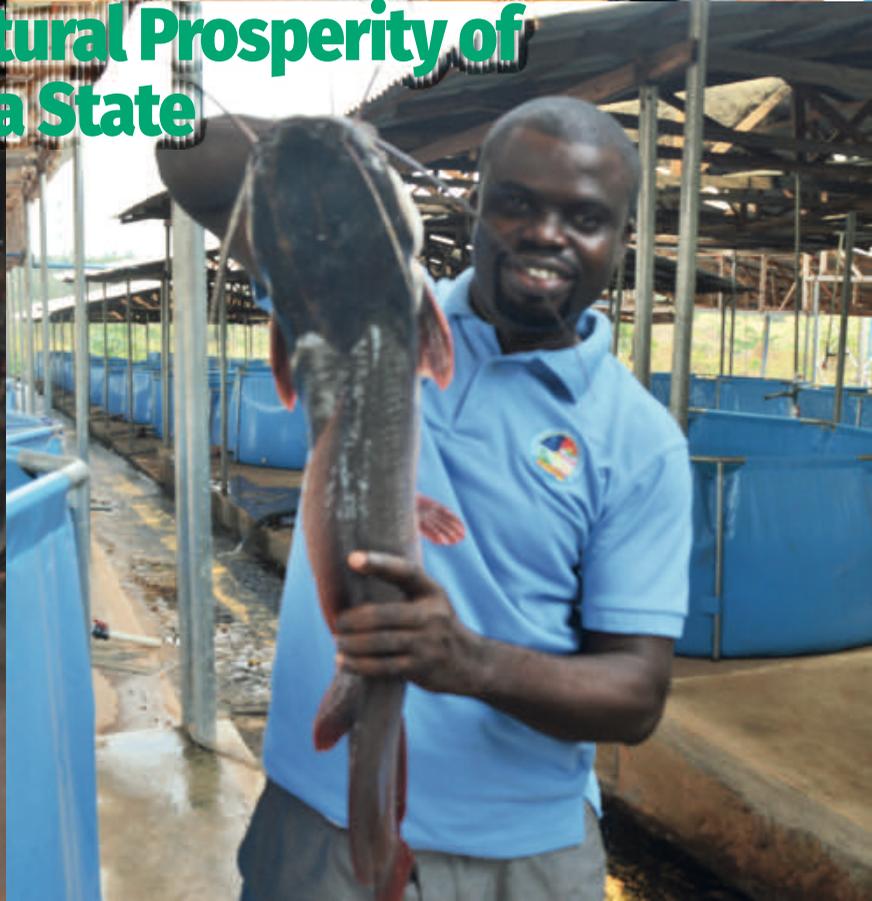
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OKOWANOMICS:

Driving Agricultural Prosperity of Delta State



Agricultural Face of *Okowanomics*

Under the leadership and administration of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, Delta State has, over the past six years, witnessed unprecedented economic growth, infrastructural development and social transformation resulting in overall improvement of human welfare. The record-setting feats have not happened by chance. Rather, they are direct results of Governor Okowa's critical thinking, clear foresight, sound planning, effective execution, good coordination, political mastery and executive intelligence. In fact, Delta State is reaping from the Governor's character virtues and leadership qualities particularly integrity, humility, self-discipline, empathy, people skills and mission orientation.

Considering the landmark status of these achievements within the context of Governor Okowa's auspicious political ideology of participatory governance and accountable leadership, the present-day governance and developmental chapter in the state can be aptly branded as the era of *Okowanomics*. The concept of *Okowanomics* is the totality of Governor Okowa's developmental, political and economic ideology that resonates in responsive governance, people-oriented policies and programmes, responsible management of public resources, economic inclusion and social equity.

Evidence of the impacts of *Okowanomics* abounds across the economic and social sectors as substantiated by development statistics regarding human capital development, poverty reduction, inclusive economic growth and better business environment. In particular, the sectoral footprints of *Okowanomics* include job creation and youth entrepreneurship development, road and transport infrastructure, growth and development of educational institutions, contributory health insurance system, and development of tourism and sports. Others are prudent fiscal and economic management, development of the agricultural value chain, conducive investment and business environment, enhancement of micro and small enterprises through microcredit, gender mainstreaming and creation of social safety-net mechanisms.

Today, the agricultural landscape is dotted with landmarks of Governor Okowa's developmental economic ideology and innovative policies and programmes. Within the framework of the S.M.A.R.T, now Stronger Delta, Agenda and the Delta State Medium-Term Development Plan 2016-2020, the agricultural sector has since 2015 been targeted with policies, strategies and programmes aimed at transforming and uplifting the agricultural value chain. The

by Prof. Eric Eboh
Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer



agricultural face of *Okowanomics* is the agricultural development strategy, which is centred on the holistic development of the agricultural value chain for job and wealth creation and inclusive economic growth.

The programmes include those implemented by Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR) and under Public-Private Partnership arrangements. Specifically, since 2015, the Job and Wealth Creation Bureau has been implementing Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), Production and Processing Support Programme (PPSP), Delta State Agro-Industrial Park (DSAIP) at Aboh Ogwashi-Uku and Delta State Foods Export Initiative (DSFEI). These agricultural programmes and projects are collectively

transforming the agricultural value chain, improving agricultural productivity and promoting wealth creation.

With more than 1,500 youths already trained and established or supported as agricultural entrepreneurs, YAGEP has demonstrated that with the right design and faithful execution, agriculture and agribusiness can attract the youth and tackle youth unemployment. Similarly, PPSP has shown how accurate targeting of smallholder farmers can be achieved through participatory design of inputs support, rigorous vetting of beneficiaries and impeccable delivery of inputs.

The Agro-Industrial Park, under construction at Aboh Ogwashi-Uku, will be a game-changer and growth pole for the agricultural economy. The envisaged impacts include creating markets and wealth for smallholder farmers, industrializing agriculture, stimulating efficient farm technologies and creating tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs along the agricultural value chain.

In the same vein, Delta State Foods Export Initiative has demonstrated market-oriented development of the agricultural value chain. Specifically, the pilot cassava processing and garri packaging-for-export project has proved how market stimulus can induce improvements in farm productivity and output.

Corresponding to these impacts, this edition of *OkowaPlus* features Governor Okowa's agricultural prosperity landmarks in the past six years as a major testimonial of *Okowanomics*. I am optimistic that this edition will enlighten and encourage agricultural sector policymakers, agricultural programme planners and implementors, agriculturists, agribusiness people and all stakeholders of agricultural development in Delta State and Nigeria.



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PUBLISHER
Delta State Job and Wealth
Creation Bureau

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Eric Eboh

EDITOR
Gertrude Onyekachukwu-
Uteh

CONTRIBUTORS
Nobert Chiazor
Sam Ndikanwu
Charles Chiejine
Jude Mordi
Edoja Dono Okeh
Godwin Ubogu

EDITORIAL ADVISER
Jackson Ekwugum
PHOTOGRAPHY
Joy Bolokor
Ese Laura Oghene

All correspondence to be
addressed to Communications
Unit, Office of The Chief Job
Creation Officer, Anwai Road,
Asaba. Telephones: 0903 861
0329; 0815 112 3322; 0812 627
7167.

Website: www.deltastatejobcreation.ng
Email: info@deltastatejobcreation.ng



DYKES RAISED BY TWO LAYERS AT UGBOKODO-OKPE FISH FARM CLUSTER

Government Refurbishes YAGEP Fish Farm Clusters

The Delta State Government has commenced the refurbishment of YAGEP Fish Farm Clusters in Ugbokodo-Okpe and Egbokodo-Itsekiri recently affected by floods.

Speaking with newsmen, Mr. Ari-Smart Awhinawhi, the Supervisor engaged by the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau to oversee the operations at the clusters, explained that the bureau was carrying out the repairs to enable the beneficiaries and their clients to have easy and diverse access to the ponds.

At Ugbokodo-Okpe, Mr. Awhinawhi stated that an elevated wooden walkway was being constructed there as part of the maintenance work to protect the dykes around the fish ponds from collapsing as a result of heavy traffic on them.

“The farmers sometimes use wheel barrows which has long damaging effects on them. The job creation bureau

in its wisdom decided to create a walkway to protect the dykes. This is to ease the pressure on the dykes with the hope that more will be provided in the future.

“Apart from damaging the dykes, the heavy traffic caused compression of the dykes which caused heavy flooding. What the bureau has done was to raise the dykes above flooding levels last year. This year, the bureau approved the construction of walkways.”

Similarly, a 2,500 feet wooden walkway was approved for construction while 50 vulnerable ponds were marked for refurbishing in order to correct the damage caused by compression on the dykes at Egbokodo Itsekiri Farm Cluster.

“Two operations are taking place in this cluster, the construction of elevated walkways and the raising of dyke and internal refurbishment of 50 vulnerable ponds,” Awhinawhi pointed out.

The Ugbokodo-Okpe and Egbokodo-

Itsekiri YAGEP Fish Farm Clusters located in Okpe and Warri-South Local Government Areas respectively were established in the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 YAGEP Cycles for over 200 beneficiaries of the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) who were trained and established in Fish Production.

One of the beneficiaries at Egbokodo-Itsekiri, Simon Ayorumume Ogiye, appreciated the government for carrying out the repairs and providing the walkways, while appealing for more support packages. “We are happy and the market women are happy about the walkways too,” an elated Ogiye told newsmen. “They call it expressway. We are hopeful that the raising of dykes will curb flooding and loss of fish during the raining season. We can now sleep peacefully without running helter-skelter. I call for regular follow-up and mentorship to sustain our passion for the business.”



CROSS SECTION OF EVENTS AT ORIENTATION AND FARM ENTERPRISE TRAINING FOR 2ND BATCH YAGEPRENEURS

Apiculture Comes on Stream

The Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme has a new product – Apiculture (bee farming). To benefit from this product are 24 livestock farmers who were part of the 128 Brown YAGEpreneurs that converged for a one-day Orientation and Farm Enterprise Training (OFET) on September 23, 2021 at the Old Government House, Asaba.

Addressing the beneficiaries, Prof Eric Eboh, stated: “Except those who turned the other way round, no beneficiary was

trained and remained the same. The wish of the Governor is that your story will never remain the same. You will agree with me that the process has been transparent. We confirmed your farms and documentations during the physical verification exercise.

“That is the wish of the Governor; that we select only those who are already in agriculture and help them to grow and survive rather than chasing after people who do not have interest in agriculture. By virtue of your invitation to this

workshop, you are admitted into this programme.”

While applauding them for meeting the criteria for admission into the programme, Prof Eboh disclosed that 1,174 youths were trained and established in crop production, fish production, poultry and

piggery in the first five cycles of Brown YAGEP. He stated that a total of 286 persons have been enrolled into the programme in the sixth cycle, explaining that those established in the first batch were 158 beneficiaries in crop production, while the second batch were 128 beneficiaries in livestock enterprises.

The participants were taken through lectures on, “Record Keeping” and “Best Practices in Farm Enterprise Management” by the resources persons - Miss Emmanuella Clinton (poultry), Mr. Chiweike Nwankwo (fish production), Mr. John Okafor (piggery) and Comrade Sunday Ojenima (bee keeping).

The facilitator for Bee Keeping, Comrade Ojenima, said the introduction of the enterprise is a welcome development that will boost the economic fortunes of Delta youths, adding that bee keeping is a cost-effective and lucrative business requiring minimal initial capital to set up.

Responding on behalf of the beneficiaries, Sunday Evelyn (bee keeping) and Shedrack Osakwe (fish production) expressed gratitude to the State Government for the Brown YAGEP initiative. They pledged to apply the knowledge acquired to improve their farming techniques.



RESOURCE PERSON AND YAGEP BENEFICIARY, CHIWEIKE NWANKWO, TEACHING FISH FARMERS IN A TECHNICAL SESSION

Job Creation Bureau Charges Staff on Higher Responsibilities



DR. BEN ARIKPO DELIVERING HIS LECTURE

Staff of the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau have been charged to tap into the wealth of experience gained in the bureau for higher responsibilities in the public and private sectors.

Prof Eric Eboh, the state's Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer gave the charge at the series of workshops organized by the bureau for Senior Special Assistants to the Governor on Job and Wealth Creation as well as senior management staff of the bureau. The workshops began on April 27 and ended on May 11, 2021. Key topics/issues covered in the workshops included Strategic Planning and Project Management Culture; Customer Service and Service Delivery; Leadership and Teamwork, and Performance Measurement.

According to Eboh, "the workshop will build the right block for the future for the sustainability of the bureau. The capacity building workshop series would enhance DS-JWCB organizational approaches, strengthen workshop milieu and improve the capabilities of staff for greater organizational performance and impact."

Stating that the job creation programmes have lived up to stakeholders' expectations since 2015, he asserted that the relevance, quality and

integrity of the programme implementation process elicited stakeholders' interest by institutionalizing the job creation office through a legal framework backed by the State House Assembly.

"It was reasoned that the way to ensure continuity was to institutionalize the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer by means of a legal framework duly enacted by the Delta State House of Assembly," he said. "After due consideration, the Executive Bill was passed into law on August 22, 2019 and was assented to by the Governor on September 5, 2019. In line with statutory requirement, the Gazette of the Law was published as Law No 11 of 2019 on September 12, 2019 as Gazette Vol. 29 No 37, 2019. The job creation project is a living case study of project management, which was conceptualized in June, 2015. I was appointed as the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer."

He listed some of the functions of the bureau to include - design, plan and execute job and wealth creation programmes; facilitate, organize and provide capacity building and specialist services for job and wealth creation; and ensure that job creation and employment opportunities are fairly distributed in accordance with state quota/character among others. He

explained that putting strategic plan in motion would leave a legacy for him and the organization even after the end of the present administration.

"It will not be complimentary for this organization as an establishment to exist in the next two years without a strategic plan. For me, as the head of the organization, that is one important legacy, having had the law passed, signed and gazetted. We need a strategic plan which will incorporate all whether it is resource mobilization, performance or institutional, giving the roadmap which is the compass for this organization," he said.

"I am trying to set our minds that this is just the beginning for this whole process. We are in for a legacy journey. I will be very happy when I leave as the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer. I will be at peace and highly fulfilled as a professional handing over this legacy document for the organization to whoever takes over from me."

Dr Ben Arikpo, one of the resource persons, spoke on "Overview of Strategic Planning" and "Overview of Project Cycle Management." A Product Application Specialist, Dr Arikpo tasked the participants to see themselves as a new crop of public officers who would influence the service positively, urging them to willingly render service without cutting corners. He enjoined them to imbibe the virtues of professionalism and personal responsibility.

In her paper on Customer Service, Folashade Aliu, a certified Systems Engineer with specialization in enterprise data analysis management and business development processes for corporate organizations in public and private sectors, tasked the participants to always work as a team in order to achieve results and meet customers' expectations.

Delivering a lecture on "Leadership and Team Work" Dr Friday Ohuche, a Development Economist and

Management Consultant, admonished participants to exhibit the qualities of good leadership. He listed the qualities of a good team player as strong communication skills, good management of conflict, and problem-solving abilities.

Participants at the workshop were quite enthusiastic about the lessons learned. Prince Charles Abutoh, an SSA to the Governor, said the capacity building workshop has challenged him to improve on his approach to work.

He said: "It is a good thing that the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer thought of the idea of bringing up this capacity building workshop. It shows he is a man who loves to invest in human resources development. No knowledge is lost because what I have learnt so far are what I will be applying in my business and my day-to-day activity. I consider the

workshop very useful. "Job creation programme is a concept that involves a cycle; it is more or less a project management process. Everything we learnt today is about what we are doing here."

Mr Onyeisi Nkenchor, the STEP coordinator in the bureau, explained that part of the problems in the civil service is lack of adequate training particularly for officers, stressing that university graduates usually lack knowledge to function well in their duties or positions after employment. He emphasized that every officer from grade level 8 and above and every political appointee should be exposed to capacity building workshop on strategic planning to

help them understand and interpret the policies and programmes of the administration more effectively.

According to Nkenchor, "they have to understand their role and position in that particular regard. So many people carry out projects without knowing what project cycle is all about. To me, this training is very important. For us in job creation bureau, we all should know our roles, what we are supposed to do, how we are supposed to do it and why we are supposed to do it."



CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT DAY ONE OF CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

Agribusiness Workshop for Brown YAGEP Beneficiaries for Better Performance

In furtherance of the Delta State Government's commitment to sustain the agricultural enterprises of YAGEPpreneurs, beneficiaries have been charged to register their farms and to keep records of their farm activities.

The Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer in the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau, Prof Eric Eboh, gave the charge during a one-day Agribusiness Workshop for Brown YAGEP beneficiaries enrolled in the 2020/2021 Cycle of the Youth Agricultural and Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP).

Prof Eboh listed the three necessities of every enterprise as registering of business name, keeping of farm records and accounts and writing a business plan; describing them as key elements that can trigger a turnaround of any farm business.

"The Agribusiness Workshop is a capacity building activity designed to

improve the agribusiness management efficiency of youth agricultural

entrepreneurs in the areas of business planning, farm records and accounts, and business name registration," he stated.

He tasked them to sustain their businesses through the ingredient of integrity, which he said would make their clients, financiers and stakeholders to



RESOURCE PERSON, MISS EMMANUELLA CLINTON INTERACTING WITH A YAGEPRENEUR DURING THE TECHNICAL SESSION OF THE AGRIBUSINESS WORKSHOP

trust them, maintaining that the state government's job creation STEP/YAGEP is widely acknowledged for its integrity.

The 158 participants at the workshop were enrolled and earlier given farm inputs for cassava, maize, vegetable and plantain farming.

Two beneficiaries, Nkemdilim Nwali in cassava production (Ika North East) and Stephen Onwudike in Plantain Production (Oshimili North) expressed their gratitude to the State Government for making them entrepreneurs. They pledged to use the knowledge acquired from the workshop to write their

business plan, register their businesses and to keep farm records and accounts.

The highpoint of the training/workshop was the technical session coordinated by the resource persons, Miss Emmanuella Clinton and Mr. Fidelis Bienose.

Agro-Industrial Park as One-Stop-Shop for Agro-Processing Factories

In line with its plans to develop the agricultural value chain in the state, the Delta State Government has reiterated its commitment to create a one-stop-shop for agro-processing industries through the establishment of an agro-industrial park in the state.

The Chairman of the Project Implementation Committee for Delta State Agro-Industrial Park and the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer of the State, Prof Eric Eboh, made the assertion when he led other members of the Committee, top government functionaries and journalists on an on-the-spot assessment of the site located in Aboh-Ogwashi in Aniocha South Local Government Area.

"In relation to the overall plan of this project," Eboh said, "agro industrial park project is one of the major programmes of his Excellency, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, and this project is supposed to serve as a game changer in the agro industrialization of Delta State. What the governor is trying to do is to create in the site a one-stop shop for agro processing industries in Delta State. It is called an infrastructural safe operating space where agro industries can co-locate and then process agricultural commodities to different types of products for domestic consumption and export. That is the summary of the whole concept. This project started in October and is an 18 months project."

He disclosed that the park has dedicated infrastructure to take care of agro-industrial services and that the sustainability of the project is ensured as



DAIP IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE ON AN INSPECTION VISIT TO THE SITE

it is a public private partnership. The project is a partnership of the Delta State government (40% equity), MIRAI Agro Resources (30%) and Northworthy Limited (30%).

"This is a project that its continuity is assured; it is confirmed to be self-sustaining, economically viable and it has been validated by foreign banks. When fully established, the agricultural value chain in Delta State will be greatly enhanced," Eboh declared. He charged the contracting firm handling the project to redouble its efforts in the exercise to ensure that the project is delivered on schedule.

The Honourable Commissioner for Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, pointed out that the Agro-Industrial Park

Project is in line with the agricultural reforms and economic diversification policy of the Okowa administration. He stated that the establishment of the Agro-Industrial Park is an indication of the state government's determination to take advantage of the agricultural potentials of Deltans to reduce the negative effects of the sharp fall in oil prices in the global economy and the dwindling revenue accruing to the state from the federation account. He advised Deltans to go into commercial farming with the view of processing their farm produce at the park when fully operational, thereby developing the agricultural value chain, prevent food wastages and bring prosperity to the doorstep of all Deltans.

Earlier, the Project Consultant to the

state government on the Agro-Industrial Park, Arc. Kester Ifeadi, said the project began three years ago and had gone through thorough feasibility study before the site was confirmed suitable for the project. He assured that the project will be completed in due time, expressing confidence that the construction firm is competent and experienced to execute the project according to specification.

Furthermore, he said: "The project land mass is about 220 hectares. It will have in

it a rice plant, laboratories for quality control, warehouses, commercial plots, rice farm, sewage treatment and oxidation pool among others. The presence of the lake is a dominant factor for the choice of site. The lake will sustain the project all year round with its potentials of generating electricity. It is a one-stop-shop and a hub for all agro-processing in the state."

Members of the Implementation Committee and top government functionaries present at the Inspection

Visit were the then Commissioner for Trade and Investment, Hon Chika Ossai; Hon Commissioner for Housing, Chief Festus Ochonogor; Hon Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hon Julius Egbedi; the Chief Economic Adviser to the Governor, Dr Kingsley Emu; the Chairman of the Delta State Investment Development Agency (DIDA), Mr Paul Nmah; the Director-General of DIDA, Olorogun Lucky Oghene Omoru and the representative of Sequoia Group, Mr Amir Khashan.

2020/2021 YAGEP CYCLE Kicks Off with Orientation Workshop for Crop Farmers



The Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau has commenced its Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) with Orientation and Farm Enterprise Training for already existing youth farmers in Crop Production.

Addressing the 158 YAGEP beneficiaries in Crop Production at the Unity Hall, Old Government House, the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, pointed out that YAGEP was aimed at creating jobs and wealth by training, establishing and supporting youths to

become agricultural entrepreneurs who would become gainfully self-employed and employers of labour.

He explained that the Orientation and Farm Enterprise Training (OFET) was organized to enroll and familiarize them with the principles and methods of YAGEP with special reference to key management topics and issues such as critical success factors in farm enterprise management, farm records and accounts, managing risks and uncertainties in agricultural production and agricultural insurance by Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation.

He said the farm enterprise training workshop would be followed with provision of support packages to the beneficiaries such as fertilizer; animal feeds; crop agrochemicals; livestock vaccination; cash to pay for critical farm labour in land preparation; weeding; animal husbandry and harvesting; innovative production technologies and profitable agribusiness depending on the type of farm enterprise.

Prof Eboh asserted that "YAGEP is contributing significantly to agricultural outputs and overall growth of the agricultural sector in Delta State. Estimates show that, from 2015-2020, YAGEP beneficiaries have produced 1,689.87 metric tonnes of poultry, 61,358,690 eggs and 4,977.98 metric tonnes of fish. In addition, YAGEP outputs include 1,706.91 metric tonnes of pig, 1,109.23 metric tonnes of cassava roots, 1,339.58 metric tonnes of grains, 477.70 metric tonnes of plantain and 1,753.87 metric tonnes of vegetables namely tomatoes, watermelon and cucumber. Recent survey shows that the success rate among YAGEP beneficiaries averages about 71% across the various agricultural enterprises."

He disclosed that YAGEP has run five successful cycles with a total number of 1,174 YAGEP beneficiaries who were trained, established and supported in various agricultural enterprises including poultry, crop production, ▶

piggery, fish production, agro-processing and agribusiness, from 2015 to 2020.

“The 2020-2021 cycle is the sixth consecutive run of the programme. Specifically, it will cover a total of 400 youth agricultural entrepreneurs in the

Brown YAGEP category. The programme commences with Orientation and Farm Enterprise Training (OFET) for 2020/2021 Brown YAGEP beneficiaries (1st Batch) holding today 25th of May 2021. The enterprises covered in the 2020-2021

programme cycle are poultry, piggery, fish production and cultivation of arable crops including cassava, yam, maize, rice, tomato, okra, watermelon, pumpkin and plantain,” he recounted.



CROSS SECTION OF YAGEP BENEFICIARIES RECEIVING INPUTS

Youth Farmers Get Farm Inputs

In line with the vision of the State Government to support youth farmers to expand their agricultural enterprises and boost food security, the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau has given farm inputs to YAGEP beneficiaries in Crop Production.

The beneficiaries of the farm input included all youth farmers enrolled in Crop Production under the 2020/2021 Cycle of the State Government’s Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP).

Addressing the beneficiaries, the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer of the bureau, Prof Eric Eboh, said: “Yesterday, you were participants at the Orientation and Farm Enterprise Training organized for you by the bureau. Today, the farm enterprise training workshop is being followed with provision of support packages to you. Depending on the type of farm enterprise, the support package includes critical

production inputs such as fertilizer, crop agrochemicals, and cash for land preparation, seedlings, weeding and harvesting.”

He assured them that they would be exposed to and tutored in best agricultural practices in farm enterprise management, innovative production technologies and profitable agribusiness throughout the production cycle.

The YAGEP Programme Supervisor, Mr Sam Ndikanwu, advised the beneficiaries on the proper methods of application of the farm inputs such as the fertilizers and agro-chemicals. He pointed out that they were receiving the first tranche of input comprising 5 to 14 bags of fertilizers such as NPK 15:15:15; Urea; Mariate of Potash and Single Super Phosphate and Pre-Emergence and Post-Emergence Agro-chemicals each based on their agricultural enterprise.

Thirty beneficiaries in Asaba and environs collected their inputs in Asaba while other beneficiaries received theirs at other centers in Agbor, Kwale, Ughelli and Warri.

Onwudike Stephen (Oshimili North LGA) in Plantain Production expressed gratitude to the State Government for the 14 bags of fertilizers and 5 agro-chemicals he received, and cash component as his support package.

“These will help me to expand my farm enterprise, boost my production capacity and to engage more youths to work with me. I advise youths to go into agriculture because agriculture is key to food security, employment and national development” he enthused.

Also, Uwadia Stephanie (Ndokwa West LGA) in Cassava Production affirmed that the orientation and training coupled with the support package by the bureau had improved her mentality about farming, adding that she was motivated to improve her farming technique.



A BENEFICIARY, STEPHEN ONWUDIKE, IN PLANTAIN PRODUCTION AND HIS INPUTS

IMPACTS AND LESSONS FROM YAGEP

BY ERIC EBOH

This paper highlights, in an illustrative manner, the profile of YAGEPreneurs, the impacts of YAGEP and lessons from the implementation of YAGEP.

1.0 PROFILE OF YAGEP BENEFICIARIES

ENTERPRISE DISTRIBUTION OF YAGEP BENEFICIARIES 2015 - 2020

YEAR	TYPE OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE					TOTAL
	POULTRY	FISH PRODUCTION	CROP PRODUCTION	PIGGERY	AGRO-PROCESSING	
2015-2016	136	82	18	20	0	256
2016-2017	0	261	102	0	0	363
2017-2018	0	120	39	0	0	159
2018-2019	56	46	24	7	12	145
2019-2020	82	71	74	24	0	251
	20.33%	49.40%	21.89%	4.34%	1.04%	100%

PROFILE OF YAGEP BENEFICIARIES

	MALE	FEMALE	WASC	OND/NCE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE/HND
2015-2016	187	69	98	40	118
2016-2017	275	88	128	67	169
2017-2018	131	28	50	29	80
2018-2019	110	35	76	21	48
2019-2020	144	107	114	52	85
TOTAL	847	327	466	208	500
PER CENT	72%	28%	39.69%	17.72%	42.59%

2.0 YAGEP CONTRIBUTION TO GROWTH OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

YAGEP agricultural outputs are estimated based on farm enterprise data generated through a combination of data collection methods, namely physical measurement of farm

enterprise outputs and sample survey of programme beneficiaries.

Estimates show that, from 2015-2020, YAGEP beneficiaries have produced 1,689.87 metric tonnes of poultry, 61,358,690 eggs and 4,977.98 metric tonnes of fish. In addition, the outputs include 1,706.91 metric tonnes of pig, 1,109.23 metric tonnes of cassava roots, 1,339.58 metric tonnes of grains, 477.70 metric tonnes of plantain and 1,753.87 metric tonnes of vegetables namely tomatoes, watermelon and cucumber.

[[The breakdown of agricultural outputs under YAGEP is given as follows:

SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS OF YAGEP BENEFICIARIES 2015-2020

CYCLE	POULTRY		FISH PRODUCTION (MT)	PIG PRODUCTION (PORK) (MT)	CROP PRODUCTION			
	Meat (MT)	Eggs (Nos)			Cassava	Grains	Fruit (Plantain)	Vegetable
2015-2016	322.32	13,708,800	295.20	296.88	20.00	-	60.00	66.00
2016-2017	283.64	12,063,744	1,094.98	273.13	16.00	444.00	48.00	382.00
2017-2018	249.60	10,616,095	1,219.18	251.28	12.80	487.20	38.40	478.00
2018-2019	335.57	11,4589, 63	1,2276.8	275.71	170.24	206.88	75.72	419.04
2019-2020	498.73	13,511,088	1,140.94	609.91	890.19	201.50	255.58	407.23
TOTAL	1,689.87	61,358,690	4,977.98	1,706.91	1,109.23	1,339.58	477.70	1,753.87

3.0 YAGEP IMPACT ON THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Accelerated Growth of the Agricultural Sector: The Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) and other agricultural sector interventions of the state government have had significant impact on the state economy. Data generated by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and published in August 2018 show that the state's agricultural sector grew at an accelerated rate from 2015-2017, compared to the period before 2015. It grew by annual average of 8.6% from 2013-2015 but accelerated to annual average of 13.3% from 2015-2017. This is clear evidence of incremental impacts of YAGEP, PPSP and other agricultural sector interventions of Governor Okowa, since 2015.

Transformation of the Agricultural Landscape: Specifically, the development of farm enterprise clusters, owned and managed by the youths, is transforming the state's agricultural landscape and having a demonstration effect on agricultural modernization. Currently, there are a total of twenty five (25) YAGEP farm enterprise clusters with varying combinations of enterprises including poultry, piggery, fishery, rice and tomato production. The cluster model of youth agricultural employment has restored previously idle

agricultural resources to economic use and boosted agricultural productivity and wealth generation in the state.

Development of the Rice Value Chain: One distinctive landmark of YAGEP is the development of the rice value chain through youth agricultural entrepreneurship. The rice value chain initiative involves instructional and field-based training, farm enterprise incubation and establishment of youths through the entire process of rice production, processing, packaging, branding and marketing.

The YAGEP rice initiative started in 2017 with the cultivation of 74 hectares at Ugili-Amai, Ndokwa West Local Government Area. Subsequently in 2018, the initiative involved the cultivation of 42 hectares of rice at Deghele, Sapele Local

Government Area and 54 hectares at Mbiri, Ika North East Local Government Area. During the 2018 production year, the process involved 48 youth trainees working under close tutorials, facilitation and guidance of the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer through knowledgeable and experienced resource persons from within and outside the state.

The programme activities include soil tests and site selection, land preparation (clearing, ploughing and harrowing), seed treatment and planting, soil treatment,

weeds prevention and control, fertilizer application, prevention and control of pests and diseases and birds scaring. Other operations include harvesting (cutting and packing), threshing, drying, winnowing, washing/parboiling, milling, destoning and packaging/bagging. The cultivation, harvesting, threshing, drying, parboiling, milling, destoning and bagging operations were carried out together with hands-on training and participation of the YAGEpreneurs. All the inputs, technologies and materials used in the rice production and processing and packaging operations were provided by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer. The YAGEP project on rice resulted in paddy production and processing into YAGEP rice (10kg packs)

4.0 YAGEP SUCCESS RATES

The performance and impact of STEP & YAGEP have been assessed through tracer studies of beneficiaries. Tracer study is an Outcome Assessment Methodology which tracks programme beneficiaries in order to ascertain if they bear the results and outcomes anticipated by the programme.

Since inception in 2015, two consecutive tracer surveys have been carried out. The first was conducted by Office of the

Chief Job Creation Officer with professional facilitation by experts at Lagos Business School/Pan Atlantic University, from 9-31 August 2018. The field verification covered a total of 2,242 beneficiaries from 2015/16-2016/17 plus Brown STEP 2017/18. The second tracer survey was conducted by Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) in conjunction with Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer, from 11-21 February 2020. It covered a total of beneficiaries from 2015/16 to 2018/19.

The findings of both tracer surveys are summarized in terms of programme success rates.

TABLE 2: STEP & YAGEP SUCCESS RATES

TIME PERIOD COVERED	PROGRAMME	TOTAL NO. COVERED	SUCCESS RATE (%)
2015/16 – 2016/17 plus Brown STEP 2017/18	STEP & YAGEP	2,426	
	STEP	1,828	56%
	YAGEP	598	66%
2015/16 to 2018/19	STEP & YAGEP	4,255	
	STEP	3,332	60%
	YAGEP	923	77%

Results of the two consecutive tracer surveys, summarized in the table above, show that the success rates have generally improved over time. From 2015 to 2019, the beneficiary success rates have improved from 56% to 60% for STEP and from 66% to 77% for YAGEP. The improvement in success rate is the outcome of cumulative programme reforms including beneficiary targeting, quality control in training content and methodologies and realignment of enterprise combinations.

5.0 LESSONS FROM YAGEP

The design, implementation and performance of YAGEP have revealed the critical success factors for effective and sustainable programming of youth agricultural entrepreneurship. Around the achievements, experiences and challenges in the implementation of YAGEP are interwoven enablers and drivers (must do's) that are fundamental to the sustainable participation of youths in agricultural entrepreneurship. They are as follows:

- i. Admission of beneficiaries must be rigorously conducted to avoid wrongful selection leading to moral hazards. The selection process must be able to separate those genuinely interested from those who are pretending to be interested.
- ii. Admitted youths must be trained and established in

their preferred agricultural enterprises, not the enterprises pre-determined for them.

- iii. There must be agricultural technologies and production systems to curtail drudgery and physical effort of agricultural operations so that agriculture can be more attractive to youths.
- iv. Youth agriculturists must be subjected to adequate good-quality instructional training and hands-on practical exposure.
- v. The establishment start-up support must incorporate unfettered secure access to suitable land coupled with appropriate land development and provision of crucial production infrastructure.
- vi. The startup support must also incorporate access to adequate amounts of high-quality efficient production inputs in a timely manner.
- vii. Cluster approach to establishment of youth agricultural enterprises, that is, co-location of youth agricultural entrepreneurs, can only be effective and sustainable if the enabling conditions are in place.
- viii. Agricultural enterprises must be sufficiently profitable and viable in order to attract and retain youths in agriculture relative to other competing sectors.
- ix. Youth participants must be subjected to high standards of programme discipline through admission-point signing on to applicable codes of conduct for participants and personal guarantees of individual participants by respective community and social leaders.
- x. There must be continuous and sustained follow-through and mentoring of newly established youths in agriculture.
- xi. Youth agriculturists must be branded and promoted as entrepreneurs and business owners, in such a manner that is professionally dignifying and appealing.
- xii. Youth agricultural enterprises should have adequate insurance cover in order to mitigate peculiar agricultural risks and inspire confidence in enterprise owners and agricultural lenders.
- xiii. The design and implementation of youth agricultural entrepreneurship programmes must be underpinned by strong and unwavering political will to succeed. Real evidence of political will is to allow programme managers run the programmes in a professional manner.

Okowa and Delta Agro-Industrial Park

BY NORBERT CHIAZOR

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa came to power on May 29, 2015, with a development template codified as S.M.A.R.T Agenda, which stands for:

Strategic wealth creation projects and provision of jobs for all Deltans,

Meaningful peace building platforms aimed at political and social harmony,

Agricultural reforms and accelerated industrialization,

Relevant health and education policies and

Transformed environment through urban renewal.

The goal of the profound agenda is to enthrone a STRONGER DELTA with a people-centered vision of prosperity for all Deltans. One of the most ambitious of these broad based objectives is an Agro-Industrial Park project, designed as the hub of economic development and accelerated industrialization in Delta State. Located at Aboh-Ogwashi, a scenic suburban settlement, in Aniocha South Local Government Area, about 20 minutes drive from Asaba, the state capital, it is a perfect setting for agricultural revolution with her sprawling landscape, rooted in the richest of tropical African rainforest belt.

Embedded at the confluence of two all-season rivers – River Ubu and Iyi-Ada, both flowing as a tributary into River Niger, the agro-industrial park covers a total land area of 220 hectares. The ultimate aim is to fast track and transform the agricultural value chain towards achieving economic diversification, food sufficiency, job and wealth creation and sustainable growth for the well being of the present and future generations of Deltans.

The Aboh -Ogwashi Agro Industrial Park is beyond rhetorics. It is not a white elephant project by any imagination. The facility is viable and profitable with an impressive equity - Delta State Government 40%, MGA Agricultural Resources Ltd. 30% and Norsworthy Investments Ltd. 30%.

When fully operational, it will take about 30 agro-processing factories and agribusiness enterprises, with unprecedented socio-economic impact, creating over 4,000 direct and indirect jobs, within the park. This is in addition to tens of thousands of

jobs, envisaged to be generated as a result of the activities of the park.

Governor Okowa, sure footed in foresight, has empowered an 11- member Project Implementation Committee to develop the agro-industrial park, with the state's Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, Professor Eric Eboh as chairman.

Professor Eboh is an Agricultural Economist and Development Policy Expert with robust national and international portfolio. He is joined by a team of cabinet members from the Ministries of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Finance, Housing, Lands and Survey. Other members of the implementation team are drawn from the Ministries of Justice, Trade and Investment as well as the Chief Economic Adviser, the Director-General, Delta State Investment and Development Agency, the Managing Director, Contemporary Design Associates and the Assistant-Director, Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau who serves as secretary.

The committee a carefully selected think -tank will operate the agro-industrial park through Public Private Partnership (PPP), promoting investor confidence and business competitiveness. This will enable the park as a safe operating space to leverage the twin impact of agricultural development and industrial infrastructure, in line with global best practices.

In the words of Professor Eboh the park is “conceived as a multipurpose and multiproduct epicentre of agro-processing, agro-industrial and agribusiness activities in the state” designed to serve as “infrastructure, logistics and services haven”. Against this backdrop, the Delta State Government has been implementing measures to establish the Agro-Industrial

The ultimate aim is to fast track and transform the agricultural value chain.





DELTA STATE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PARK

Park since 2015. There was a study visit to Israel for assessment of comparative agro-industrial models and first-hand evaluation of activities of prospective technical partners.

After satisfactory checks, the state executive council gave approval for the establishment of the multi purpose park on November 14, 2017, culminating in the ratification by the Delta State House of Assembly. In the following years, national and international negotiations with investors on the PPP as well sourcing and mobilization of funds were painstakingly undertaken. This eventually paved the way for commencement of construction works by the contractor, Sequoia Solutions and Innovations Ltd beginning from October 26, 2020. It is projected to be completed in August 2022.

By design, the park will be endowed with clustered infrastructure, facilities pertaining to power, water (irrigation, industrial and domestic), security, research and training, quality assurance, sewage systems and waste management. Others are marketing and commerce, packaging, product warehousing, handling and storage, equipment maintenance, administration, conferences/meetings, residential and hospitality outlets.

The agro-industrial operators at the park include, rice mills manufacturers, cassava chips, flour, starch and garri producers, banana/plantain flour makers, palm oil -based products and wood makers. Other activities are milk processing ,slaughter houses for beef, broilers, pork and related livestock products, dried and pickled fruits and vegetables. Part of the park has

also been mapped out for irrigated high technology farming.

The diverse gains of the Agro -industrial park are unassailable. The availability of adequate, reliable and sustained infrastructure and services removes the most critical constraint to the start-up, profitability, viability and competitiveness of agroindustries in the state. Therefore, the agro-industrial park provides investor-friendly business environment suitable for the development of the agricultural value chain. Businesses in the park will benefit from dedicated common infrastructure including internal network of roads, power, water, storage, packaging utilities, waste treatment, transportation, communication, export-import services, training and management, research and security

It is a legacy project that would trigger agricultural revolution, rapid industrialization and sustainable development in Delta State.

services.

The multi-faceted amenities and services will guarantee smooth and uninterrupted operations, ease of logistics as well as protection from occupational risks and uncertainties. Moreover, co-locating agroindustries will enjoy inter-firm cooperation and collaboration, mutual learning and multilateral sharing of experiences.

Delta and, indeed, Nigeria would gain bountifully as it is a plausible elixir for poverty reduction and catalyst for economic development and wealth creation among the people. Governor Okowa deserves commendation for the enduring vision of Delta Agro-Industrial Park. It is a legacy project that would trigger agricultural revolution, rapid industrialization and sustainable development in Delta State.



RICE FACTORY



WAREHOUSE B

PERSPECTIVE

Distinguished YAGEPpreneurs

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

The success story of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's administration's efforts to revolutionize the agricultural sector of Delta State economy cannot be complete without the testimonies of the beneficiaries of the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP.) Despite the fact that their contributions to ensuring food security in the state cannot be over-emphasized, their enrolment into YAGEP has taken them off the unemployment market, made them financially independent and self-reliant. Indeed, YAGEPpreneurs are a new generation of farmers. While some of them are farmers by choice based on their courses of study in higher institutions attended, a majority of them became farmers through training and reorientation.

The circumstances in which they became farmers notwithstanding, their contributions are phenomenal. Those in Fish Production and Fish

Processing have helped to make fish affordable for the poor and middle class in society, considering the high cost of imported fish. The same applies to YAGEPpreneurs in Poultry and Piggery. The meat and eggs produced from their farms annually run into millions of tons. Those in crop production, especially in cassava farming, are contributing their quota too, making food available for homes in the state.

Some of the alumni spoken to have diversified into other areas of farming other than the farming enterprise they were trained in. In all, their testimonies are clear evidences that the State Government's entrepreneurship development programme is working. Many of them described YAGEP as laudable and excellent initiative, calling for its sustainability.

Here are their testimonies

VINCENT OSOKOGWU is the CEO of Fedvins Enterprises. He is a graduate of the Delta State University, Abraka where he obtained a B.Sc.Ed. in Biology Education. Upon graduation in 2010, he took to "okada" riding and farming till 2017 when he enrolled in Green YAGEP.

With intensive training, his Starter Pack of three tarpaulin fish tanks, 2,000 juveniles, 145 bags of fish feeds, 15,000 stipend for nine months and other support packages from the State Government, Vincent was ready for business. He commenced his business at YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster at the Delta Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (DARDA), Ibusa,

Three years after, he has 15 ponds and currently has 6,000 fish.

He has lost count of the number of fish cycles he has completed and has diversified into cassava and yam farming and oil palm development.

He tells his story.

"My experience so far has been good. The proceeds from my farms helped me to take care of my wife, children and mother adequately well. I have 150-palm oil stands which are already fruiting on a personal land I acquired from the proceeds from my fish farm. I have paid for another 100 palm oil seedlings from Presco PLC, which I am set to plant this month. I also have some brood stocks for hatchery.



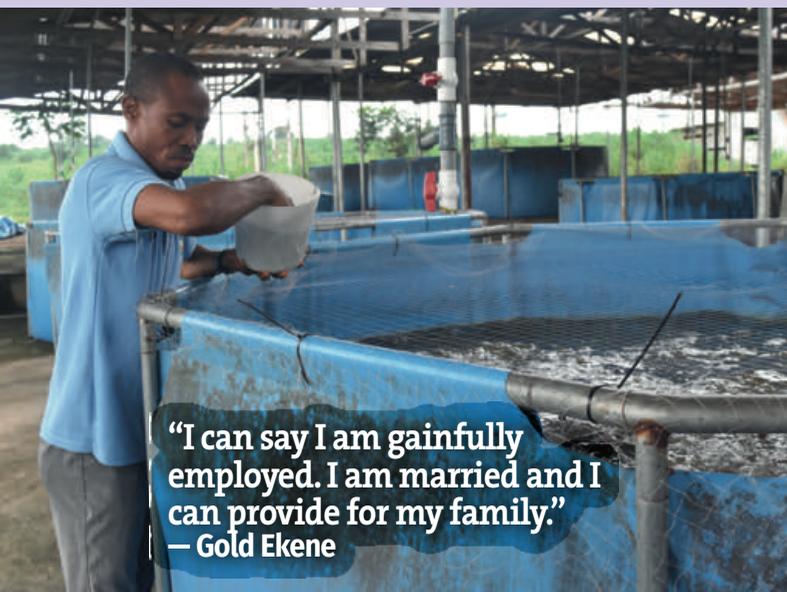
“The proceeds from my farms have helped me to care of my wife, children and mother adequately well.”
— Vincent Osokogwu

“The State Government under Senator Ifeanyi Okowa is getting it right. The start-up, the monitoring and follow-up are superb. YAGEP is 90% successful. The programme should be sustained to give opportunity to youths interested in agriculture to access it.”

GOLD EKENE hails from Ndokwa East and has an HND in Electrical Engineering from the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede. He got enrolled into YAGEP in the 2017/2018 Cycle after seven years of unemployment. From having three tarpaulin fish tanks at DARDA, he now has eight, and two earthen fish ponds along Anwai Road. Not only was he able to get married from the proceeds from fish farming, he has acquired a plot of land for his permanent site.

His story:

“Though it hasn’t been easy, yet it has been rewarding. I can say



“I can say I am gainfully employed. I am married and I can provide for my family.”
— Gold Ekene

I am gainfully employed. I am married and I can provide for my family. The knowledge I have gained in fish farming is rich. I run two farms in different locations far apart. Therefore, I have acquired a land for my permanent site so that I can have my fish farms in one location. In addition, I didn’t abandon my skill. I am an Electrical Engineer. I also practice electrical installation and maintenance.

“In my opinion, the Delta State Government is doing excellently well. YAGEP should be sustained because there are lots of youths out there looking for this opportunity. The challenge facing fish production is high cost of fish feeds. I appeal to the government to go into its production through public private partnership (PPP) to bring down the prices in the market.”

CHUKWUMA EMELUE is the CEO of Enshine Enterprises. He hails from Aniocha North Local Government Area. He has an HND in Environmental Health from the Delta State College of Health Technology, Ufuoma in 2010, after which he searched fruitlessly for a white-collar job till he got enrolled into YAGEP in the 2017/2018 Cycle. Three years after establishment, he has diversified into fish processing and has acquired a plot of land for his permanent site.



“The job creation programme is a laudable project that should be sustained by successive governments.”— Chukwuma Emelue

Hear him.

“Fish farming has been good and rewarding by the grace of God. After the first cycle, I was able to plough back the proceeds from my starter stock in spite of the challenges of inexperience. For greater profitability and to meet the demands of my clients, I diversified into fish processing to add value to my fish. I acquired an 80kg capacity fish smoking kiln to achieve this.

“At present, I have 13 tarpaulin fish ponds at DARDA and one earthen fish pond at Camp 74 Fish Farm Cluster. I have 4,000 fish in stock because I recently sold off some fish. The demand for cat fish is high. I have acquired a plot of land to be used as my

permanent site in future.

“The job creation programme is a laudable project that should be sustained by successive governments. I appeal to the State Government to make soft loans available to us to enable us grow our businesses.

STANLEY IDIETAKARE is a pioneer YAGEPreneur who graduated in poultry production from the 2015/2016 cycle. Stanley hails from Ughelli North Local Government Area and has an HND in Public Administration from Imo State Polytechnic. He is the CEO of Divine Progressive Farm located at YAGEP Farm Cluster, DARDA, Ibusa. Five years after establishment with a Starter Pack of 400 point of lay birds, 200 broilers, 150 bird feeds, well equipped poultry pens with battery cages and other technical support, he is still in business, got married and is a consultant to upcoming poultry farmers and a trainer.

He tells his story.

“Initially we started very well based on the quality start-up given to us by the State Government, but there was the challenge with water which resulted in lots of mortality. I had to reduce the number of stocks. I had 700 layers at a time. I have completed several cycles of broilers and layers and it has been rewarding. Currently, I have 400 layers which lay 7 crates of eggs daily.

“What I appreciate most in the programme is the knowledge I acquired. I know so much about poultry business that I am now a consultant to so many poultry farmers. I set up poultry farms for my clients. I have trained so many students on internship. I thank God I have been able to stabilize my business. I now brood my layers and broilers. I no longer buy from others.

“Governor Okowa has tried. The programme needs to be sustained to enable more youths to embrace agriculture which is gainful employment for the unemployed

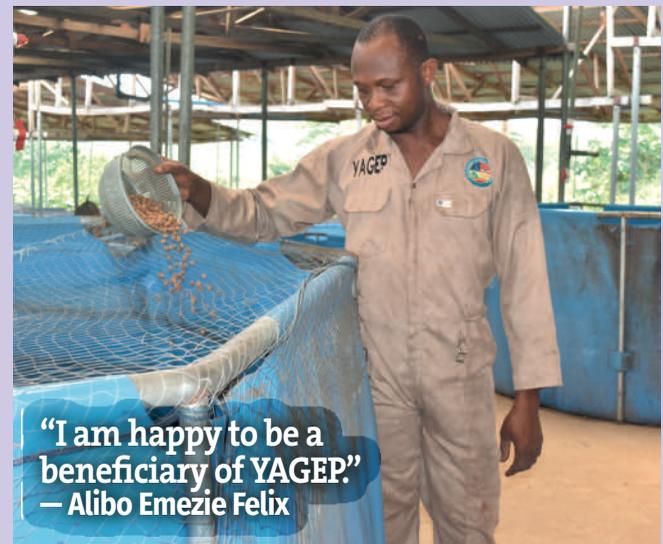


“What I appreciate most in the programme is the knowledge I acquired.”
— Stanley Idietakare

ALIBO EMEZIE FELIX is the CEO of JamesWhite Ventures. He is from Oshimili South Local Government Area and attended National Open University of Nigeria where he bagged a B.Sc in Peace and Conflict Resolution. He enrolled in YAGEP in the 2017/2019 Cycle. From three tarpaulin fish tanks as Starter Pack, he has progressed to having seven fish tanks and has diversified to Crop Production. He has made significant progress. He affirmed he was able to tackle his challenges because he is meaningfully engaged in YAGEP.

“Fish business is good business, but capital intensive due to the high cost of fish feeds. Prices of fish feeds increased by 80%. To make good profit, one needs huge capital. In this regard, I appeal to the State Government to make available to us soft loans to help us grow our businesses. I currently have 1,500 fish because I recently sold off my mature fish and I am yet to restock. It is a business that that gives one adequate time to engage in other businesses. I am a transporter, a registered tricycle rider.

“I am happy to be a beneficiary of YAGEP. I produce cassava and yam. I got married from the proceeds from my farm and I was able to overcome life threatening family challenges through it. I want to say that the programme should be sustained to employ more youths and to give support to youths in agribusiness.”



“I am happy to be a beneficiary of YAGEP.”
— Alibo Emezie Felix

NNEKA OKONJO, from Aniocha South Local Government Area, has a Higher National Diploma in Agricultural Science from the Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro. As one of the pioneers of YAGEP, Nneka was trained and established in the 2015/2016 YAGEP Cycle with 400 point of lay birds, 200 broilers, 150 bags of bird feeds, a poultry pen with battery cages and other items. Five years after, she has made remarkable progress; she has been able to sustain her poultry enterprise till date which has in no small measure bridged the short fall in the supply of poultry products in the state. She supplies her broilers to eateries and hotels.



“The programme made me meaningfully engaged; otherwise, I would have been in the unemployment market.”
— Nneka Okonji

She shares her story.

“Poultry business though very challenging is very lucrative. I have done so many cycles. I have an employee. I have gained experience by doing same thing over and over again. For broilers, I brood six to seven cycles yearly. I currently have five hundred layers which I brooded myself. I no longer buy point of lay birds, rather I do it myself. I have also diversified into crop production, maize, cassava and vegetable farming. The programme made me meaningfully engaged; otherwise, I would have been in the unemployment market.”

CHIKE URIAH, from Oshimili South Local Government Area, is the CEO of Nellsvile Enterprise. He is a round peg in a round hole having studied Agric Economics from the University of Benin. He was trained in the 2017/2018 cycle and has done exceedingly well after three years. He has increased the number of his ponds to 14, acquired more equipment through a Central Bank agricultural loan, bought a plot of land for his permanent site and is currently a trainee of the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF).

He speaks on his success.

“I am three years in fish production. I have 5,500 fish and 14 tarpaulin fish tanks. The progress has been slow but steady. I applied for Central Bank loan immediately I got started up by the State Government. Though the process was rigorous, yet I got the approval for equipment as in three tarpaulin fish tanks of 10 X 15 feet, a 7.2 KVA generator, 2,000 fingerlings and 160 bags of fish feeds to bring them to table size. I have acquired a land for my permanent site. To crown it all, I am a trainee of the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

“Apart from fish farming, I am in the process of acquiring skill in Website Designing. My interest is in Agricultural Technology with special focus on applications in farming. I want to develop

software for record keeping and financial record in agriculture. I can be reached @ nellsvilefarms on Facebook and Instagram.

“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy of the State Government that needs to be sustained. It is a business, and every business needs sustainability, both financially and materially. As start-ups, we need to be nurtured for five years till we are very firm. Government is trying its best, but needs to try more in the area of Public Private Partnership to boost the production of animal feeds because of high cost of feeds.”



“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy of the State Government that needs to be sustained.”
— Chike Uriah

STEPHEN EZEDIUNOR was trained in the YAGEP 2015/2016 cycle, having graduated from Federal Polytechnic, Oko where he obtained an HND in Business Administration. He was trained in poultry production and established at YAGEP Poultry Farm Cluster at Aboh-Ogwashi. He has excelled greatly in his business, bought a car and acquired plots of land from the proceeds. He has diversified to crop production and to building technology and drawing of building plans, a skill he acquired from his late father. His experience with YAGEP so far changed his earlier perception about government’s agricultural and social investment programmes.

He tells his story.

“When we started, I never knew it would be like this. I am one of those who criticized government’s programmes and who never believed that it could be this good. I reluctantly picked the form, but was surprised I was invited for interview and, later, to Songhai Delta, Amukpe where we had our Orientation and Personal Effectiveness Training for a week.

“The establishment package was commendable for a start-up. Ever since, I have been in business. There was no time I was without stock. In fact, I have lost count of the number of cycles I have completed. From my proceeds, I bought a car and acquired a hectare of land. I run consultancy services for other farmers. I also produce cassava, yam, vegetable and maize. The



“If every government is doing this, unemployment will be brought to the barest minimum.”
 — Stephen Ezediunor

tubers of yam I harvest from my farm sustain my family all year round.

“I commend Governor Okowa for this laudable initiative. If every government is doing this, unemployment will be brought to the barest minimum, thereby reducing social vices among youths. I knew the pitiable state we were when we got enrolled into YAGEP. I know how well it is with every one of us in this cluster now.”

ATSEPOYI TOLA BILLY, from Warri South West Local Government Area, is a graduate of Delta State University where he studied Biology Education. He was unemployed for two years till he got enrolled in the 2017/2018 cycle. He is the CEO of Atse Aqua Enterprise located at Ugbokodo-Okpe YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster. After three years in the business of fish production, Billy is making progress. He is independent of his parents, having

rented and furnished his own apartment, got married and is taking care of his family.

He tells his story.

“Thanks to God that I am still in here in spite of the challenges of oil spillage and flooding. At present, I have progressed from two ponds and 2,000 fishes to four ponds and 6,000 fishes. I had a stock of 10,000 fishes at a time. The knowledge and experience I have gained in the past three years are of great value to me.

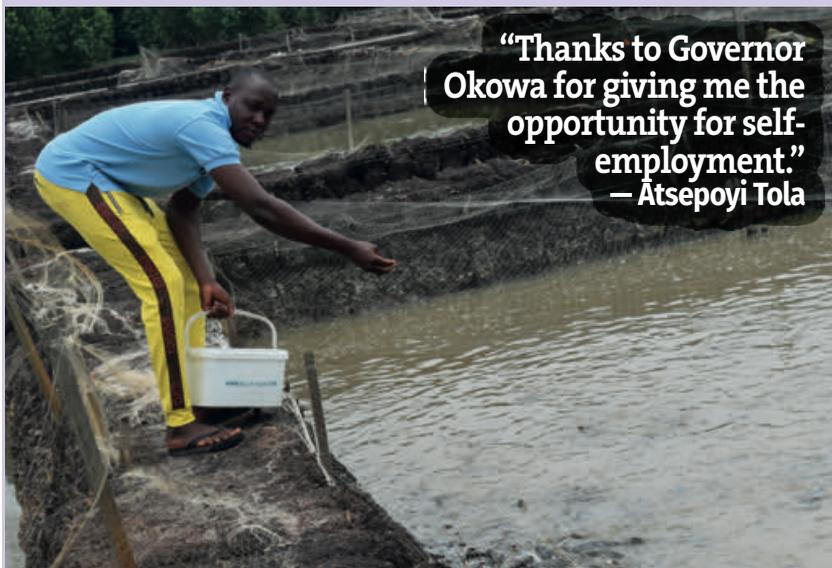
“Fish farming is profitable. I look forward to business expansion on my personal land. The challenge I have is the rising price of fish feeds which is affecting my profit margin adversely. All the same, YAGEP has taken me off the street. I came into the programme as a single man, but I am married now, providing for my family.

“Thanks to Governor Okowa for giving me the opportunity for self-employment. I appeal that successive governments should continue with the job creation programmes of the present administration.”

OGHENEORHIE ATIAMARE is the CEO of Luzniffy Livestock Enterprise located at YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster, Ugbokodo-Okpe. He studied Agricultural Science Education in the Delta State University and, upon graduation, enrolled in the 2016/2017 Cycle. Being an educationalist, he combines fish farming with teaching. He has completed eight production cycles and has diversified into piggery. He has acquired a plot of land for his permanent site.

He shares his story.

“YAGEP is a success. After I was established as a start-up, I began business in earnest. Ever since, I have completed eight production cycles by stocking fingerlings and feeding them to



“Thanks to Governor Okowa for giving me the opportunity for self-employment.”
 — Atsepoi Tola



“ My standard of living has improved.”
 — Ogheneorhie Atiamare

table size. At present, I have four ponds and 3,000 fish. In 2018, I diversified into piggery; I have 9 pigs. I also acquired a plot of land which I intend to use as my permanent site.

“Fish farming has been rewarding. My standard of living has improved. I have rented and furnished my apartment to my taste. I have two casual staff; while one cares for my fish farm, the other cares for the piggery.

“This innovation of Governor Okowa is a laudable one that should be sustained by successive administrations. It has created employment for youths including me. Making us fish farmers has contributed immensely to bridging the gap between the demand and supply for fresh fish. However, I appeal to the government to grant us soft loans to cushion the effects of high cost of feeds on our businesses.”

ODU UNUAKPOREGBETAYE SUNDAY began his farm business as a local farmer before his enrolment in the 2017/2018 cycle. He hails from Okpe Local Government Area and is the Chairman of Odu Fish Farm Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd, a subsidiary of Odu Technical Resources Enterprise located at YAGEP Fish Farm, Ugbokodo-Okpe. Though his initial start-up ponds collapsed, he was not discouraged. Rather, through personal effort, he developed new ponds and used his start-up fish feeds. At present, he has 16 giant earthen fish ponds within the cluster. He co-opted other fish farmers to register his farm as a cooperative society.



Hear him.

“The job creation YAGEP is a commendable agricultural policy any government can make in the interest of its youths, especially those who are success driven. The two fish ponds allocated to me collapsed, but I saw the challenge as an

opportunity to develop mine. I developed seven 20 X 40 feet ponds; four 50 X 50 ponds, and five 30 X 40 ponds.

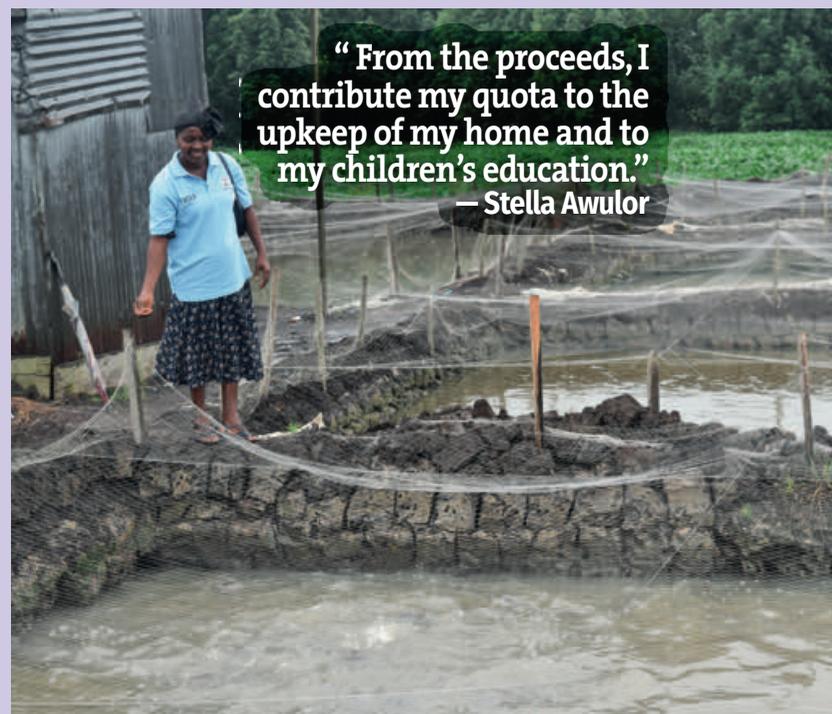
“I used the feeds given to me as a start-up to feed the fish I bought when my ponds collapsed. The demand for fish is high. Therefore, more youths should be engaged in agriculture to meet market demand for fish production. I have also diversified into cassava farming and building technology.

“I appeal to the State Government to identify YAGEpreneurs who are determined to succeed in fish business. They should be encouraged and assisted with soft loans to help them grow their enterprises and, in the long run, help the Governor realize his overall objective of initiating YAGEP.”

STELLA AWULOR hails from Ika North East and is the CEO of AkaChukwu Fish Farm located at Egbokodo-Itsekiri in Warri South West Local Government area. She is four years in business, having enrolled in the 2016/2017 Cycle. In spite of challenges of inadequate funds, she is gradually growing her business. She affirmed that the training she received from the job creation programme was her greatest asset.

Hear her.

“I currently have six ponds and 6,000 fish. I maintain the practice of completing two production cycles yearly. I plough back my profit to grow my business because I have not been able to source for funding elsewhere. The farm has been of immense benefit to me and my family. From the proceeds, I contribute my quota to the upkeep of my home and to my children’s education.



“The major challenge is that we have no storage facility in Egbokodo-Itsekiri Fish Farm cluster and difficulty in securing loans. The initiative is commendable and should be sustained.”

ANNA ONOME EYIMEJE is the CEO of Anazek and Sons Enterprise located at YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster, Egbokodo-Itsekiri. He hails from Ethiope East Local Government Area and is a graduate of Sociology from the Delta State University, Abraka. She is a product of the 2016/2017 cycle.

Her story.

“Four years after, I now have six fish ponds stocked with 5,000 fish. I have trained two persons who are established and have begun their own fish farms. I have a casual staff. I am working towards expanding my business and diversifying into poultry when I acquire a personal land. I acquired a personal pumping machine and measuring scale.



“YAGEP has created employment for many youths in Delta.”
— Anna Onome

“YAGEP has created employment for many youths in Delta. I appeal to the Government to engage more youths in YAGEP and to support existing youth farmers in order to provide more food for our people.”

PATIENCE ETOROMA is a product of the 2016/2017 cycle. She hails from Isoko South and is the CEO of Oruogho and Sons Enterprise. She harvests and sells fish all year round. She is growing her enterprise and testifies that her business has improved the living condition of her family.

Hear her.

“From 2,000 fish in two fish ponds which I began with as a start-up, I now have six fish ponds stocked with 6,500 fish. I sell fish all year round, back-to-back.

“I am working towards acquiring a land for expansion. The cost of land in Warri is expensive, the reason I have not being able



“I am happy contributing to my children’s education with the proceeds from my farm.”
— Patience Etoroma

to achieve that. I am happy contributing to my children’s education with the proceeds from my farm.

“YAGEP is a laudable and an excellent programme. I wish that it is sustained to take more youths off the street. As a fish farmer, the greatest challenge I have is the high cost of fish feeds and its negative effects. In this regard, I appeal for State Government’s support by venturing into the production of fish feeds through Public Private Partnership.”

MERCY OGHALE AKPUKANE has an OND in Business Administration from Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro. She hails from Isoko North Local Government Area and is the CEO of Mercy O.G Global Venture. Four years after her higher education, she enrolled in the 2018/2019 cycle. She is passionate about agriculture and feels fulfilled practicing it. She has diversified



“I’m a testimony that YAGEP is successful. I feel fulfilled being a YAGEPreneur.”
— Mercy Oghale

into poultry, into agricultural stocks supply and has acquired some tools for personal use.

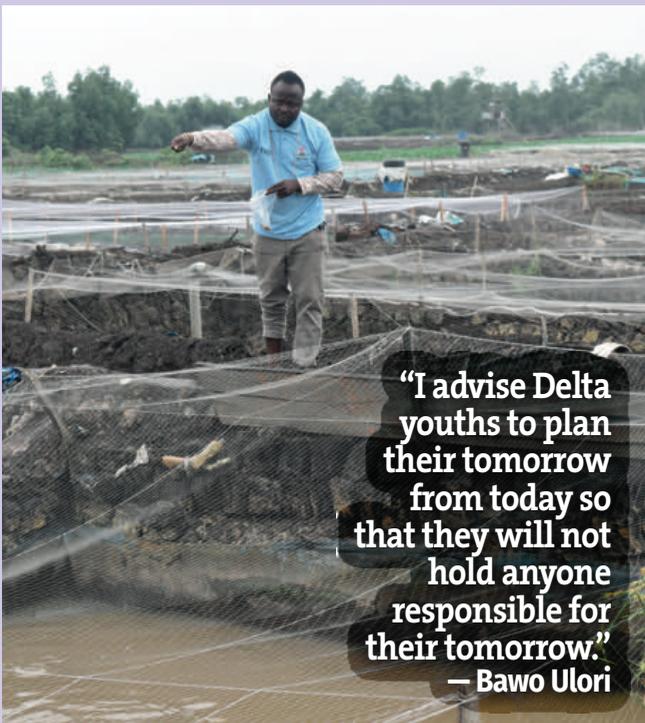
She tells her story.

“I currently have seven fish ponds and 7,000 fish. First and foremost, YAGEP gave me a sense of belonging after four years of unemployment. It gave me the opportunity to associate with others; the joy of leaving home in the morning and having somewhere meaningful to go to.

“YAGEP has given me financial freedom to some extent. I have rented and furnished an apartment where I live and at the same time contribute to the upkeep and education of my siblings. I have acquired a personal pumping machine and scale. I do not need to queue up to harvest my fish. I work according to my own timetable.

“I am a testimony that YAGEP is successful. I feel fulfilled being a YAGEPpreneur. I am developing my entrepreneurial skills. I have diversified into poultry. I have 500 broilers. I supply day-old birds, point of lay birds, fish fingerlings, post-fingerlings, juveniles, medication for birds among others.”

BAWO ULORI hails from Warri North Local Government Area. He attended the Delta State University, Abraka where he obtained a B.Sc. in Economics. Having graduated from the 2016/2017 cycle, he was established at the YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster at Egbokodo-Itsekiri. Barely four years, he has grown his business to an enviable height. He began as a bachelor but he is married now, blessed with a son, acquired a plot of land, and is building on it. He is a consultant, an employer, a trainer and the CEO of Ulori G8 Global Resort.



“I advise Delta youths to plan their tomorrow from today so that they will not hold anyone responsible for their tomorrow.”
— Bawo Ulori

He shares his experience.

“I have grown my business and I am still doing so. I have 15 fish ponds stocked with 10,000 fish at the moment. I am now a married man and I have a son too. I am building on a 100 X 100 plot of land which I acquired. I live in a completed apartment in that building. All these achievements are possible because of Governor Okowa’s YAGEP. I have trained four persons who are now established. I have one trainee and three casual staff.

“Fish farming is very lucrative, but it is what one gives to them that they give back to one. Finance is very important in business. Make quality decisions as an entrepreneur. The mistake of underestimation is very harmful in fish business. Anyone who ventures into it should have 60% capital before investing in it.

“I advise Delta youths to plan their tomorrow from today so that they will not hold anyone responsible for their tomorrow. There is dignity in labour.

“The in-coming government should continue in the legacy of the present administration because it is only agriculture that can lead Nigeria out of its present predicament.”

HELEN UWIGHO hails from Isoko South and has an HND in Agricultural Extension Management from the Delta Polytechnic, Ozoro. She is a product of the 2016/2017 cycle and is currently the CEO of Helen O Fish Farm Enterprise. In spite of the challenges she encountered in her first year of operation, she is forging on. She is a consultant and has diversified into stock supply.

Three years after, she shares her story.

“I have gained lots of experience in fish production in the past three years. I thank God I am still here in Egbokodo-Itsekiri Fish



“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy.”
— Helen Uwigho

Farm Cluster. At a time, I took a cooperative loan to boost my business.

“Currently, I have four ponds stocked with 3,000 fish. I have stock all year round. It is quite rewarding. YAGEP made me financially independent. I have diversified into supply of fingerlings, post fingerlings and juveniles to farmers within and outside Delta. The market for fish is there. I sell to major buyers who off-take or to market women.

“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy. It is helpful to youths all over Delta State. Kudos to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa. Successive governments should not only continue with it but should improve on it.”

VICTOR TAMARAKE-PREYE LOKOSI is a graduate of Political Science from the Niger Delta University, but took to farming as an occupation when he could not secure a job. He hails from Patani Local Government Area and enrolled into the 2018/2019 cycle under the Brown YAGEP category as an already existing farmer. He is the CEO of Lovita Salvation Farm, and a cassava and plantain farmer, but received government’s support in Cassava Production. He looks forward to when purely mechanized farming is practised in the state.

His story.

“Nigeria is not favourable job-wise for my course of study, Political Science. To engage myself meaningfully, I took to farming cassava and plantain in commercial quantities. I cultivated cassava in a three and half acre land, after I received

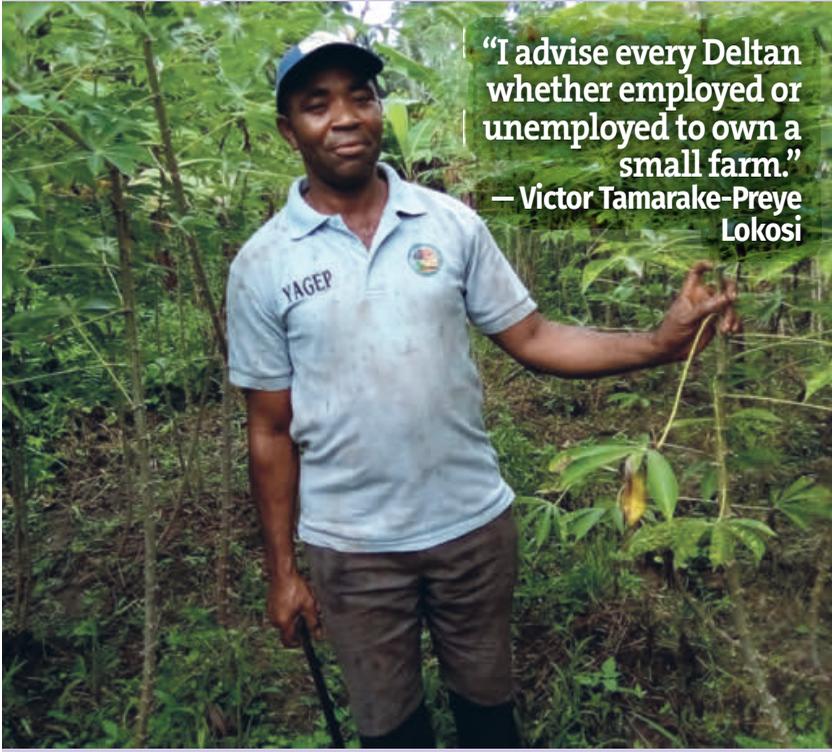
farm input from the Job Creation Bureau and the sum of ₦450,000.00.

“At maturity, I sold them off and used the money to acquire another land, four acres size in order to increase my production. Farming is lucrative. I would have begun replanting right away but for flooding. It is hitting hard on us in this part of the state. This is really affecting my output and expectations. I also have 2,000 plantain stands and I am about to plant additional 5,000 suckers which I bought recently. Agriculture is viable and I am proud to be a farmer.

“Agriculture is the way out of unemployment and poverty. I advise every Deltan whether employed or unemployed to own a small farm. In that way, food security is assured for all families. Mechanized farming is needed to move most subsistent farmers to commercial farming to attract more people into it especially the youths.

“I appreciate Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for initiating YAGEP and for coming down to the grassroots during the selection process. If not, I would not have benefitted from the programme.”

SUNNY ODIAKOSE is the MD of Sunny Odiakose Farm located at Emuhu in Ika South Local Government Area. He is an SSCE holder who created job for himself and others through commercial farming even as a youth. He owns an oil palm processing mill. He farms cassava, pineapple and oil palm in commercial quantities and owns a piggery. He enrolled into Brown YAGEP in the 2019/2020 cycle to receive support in Piggery. He has done marvelously well by growing government’s



“I advise every Deltan whether employed or unemployed to own a small farm.”
— Victor Tamarake-Preye Lokosi



“The government needs to continue with this laudable programme to help farmers expand their farm enterprises.”
— Sunny Odiakose

input of ten pigs to 68 pigs within one year. He is a consultant, a trainer and an employer.

He shares his story.

“I am very grateful to the Okowa-led government for the initiative and for making me a beneficiary of YAGEP. It is a real boost to my agricultural investments. The government needs to continue with this laudable programme to help farmers expand their farm enterprises.

“I was given ₦440,000.00 to procure a sow and nine in-pigs and an additional ₦200,000.00 to feed them. Today, the ten pigs have produced 58 pigs, making it a total of 68 within a year and they are expecting again. I have three trainees in piggery section. I am overjoyed!

“Agriculture is the best. We have a large population of graduates roaming the streets without job. I urge them to go back to land and to engage themselves meaningfully.”

HENRY CHUKWUMA OFIEN is the CEO of Chukky Go Farm located at YAGEP Farm Cluster, Owa-Alero. His enthusiasm and passion for hard work distinguished him from his peers. He was an “okada” rider before he got enrolled into YAGEP. He was trained and established in Fish Production in the 2017/2018 Cycle.

His establishment package included three in-door tarpaulin fish tanks, 2,000 juveniles, 145 bags of fish feeds, training, ₦15,000.00 monthly stipend for nine months and other technical support. Being in business for over three years, Ofien has done so well and has diversified into crop production.



“I advise STEP/YAGEP trainees not to sell their starter packs when established.”
— Henry Chukwuma

He shares his experience.

“From three small size tarpaulin fish tanks, I now have 14 of that size and additional four medium size fish tanks at home. At present, I have 12,000 fish of different growth stages stocked in them. After government’s support package, I sold my fish at maturity, restocked by ploughing back my profit. I did not stop there. I take loans from the associations I belong to; these loans are invested in the business. I have fish all year round.

“I attribute my success rate to prudence and financial discipline, ability to manage funds well. While an okada rider, I was able to acquire a land, get married and to build the house where I live with my family.

“I have two casual workers. My wife and children assist me too. We are in it together. I make a minimum of 1.2m annually. From the proceeds, I provide for my family and pay my children’s school fees. I have diversified into crop production. I cultivate cassava, yam, maize, melon and vegetable in commercial quantities. I look forward to expanding my farm business.

“Fish production is lucrative. The State Government has done well for the youths and needs to continue with it. The number one failure is selling of starter pack with the false hope that the government will intervene again. I advise STEP/YAGEP trainees not to sell their starter packs when established. When they do so, they sell their future and live to regret it.”

VOTARY EBUKE NWOSU hails from Aniocha North Local Government Area and is the CEO of Mmedu Ventures. He has an OND in Computer Engineering from the Delta State Polytechnic,



“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy of the State Government targeted at the youth.”
— Votary Ebuke Nwosu

Ogwashi-Uku. He enrolled into the programme in the 2019/2020 cycle as a Brown YAGEP beneficiary in plantain production. Then, he had only 60 plantain stands.

As a support package to an already existing plantain farmer, he was given ₦320,000.00 for land preparation and to purchase plantain suckers for expansion, 14 bags of fertilizers and agro-chemicals to eliminate pests and weeds. These he executed judiciously and are evident in the 700 plantain stands in his farm.

“I did not only plant 700 plantain suckers; I also planted maize sparingly since the suckers were small to occupy the space. I realized over ₦100,000.00 from the sales of maize last year. The plantain is doing well and are beginning to bear fruit. I hope to realize a minimum of half a million annually from the sales of plantain.

“YAGEP is an excellent agricultural policy of the State Government targeted at the youth. As you can see, I am not an idle youth. I am happy to have a farm; my entire family is. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we were busy at this farm. I have gone back to school for my HND and at the same time, I am a plantain farmer.

“I want to specially thank Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for YAGEP and for making me a beneficiary. I shall be making money while studying for my HND. I appeal that the programme is continued to engage more youths.”

JOHN OKAFOR is the CEO of G.Husb Enterprise located at Ugbolu. He hails from Ika North East Local Government Area. He holds a B.Sc., M.Sc. and about to complete his PhD in Economics

from the University of Benin. He is a focused and enterprising young man who in spite of being a fulltime student gives time to running an integrated farm. He practises poultry, piggery and crop production. He was a Brown YAGEP beneficiary in the 2019/2020 cycle and received support in piggery.

His story.

“I received from the State Government ₦440,000.00 for 10 pigs, two soar and eight in-pigs and the sum of ₦200,000.00 for feeding and medication as the approved support package for Brown YAGEPreneurs in Piggery Production.

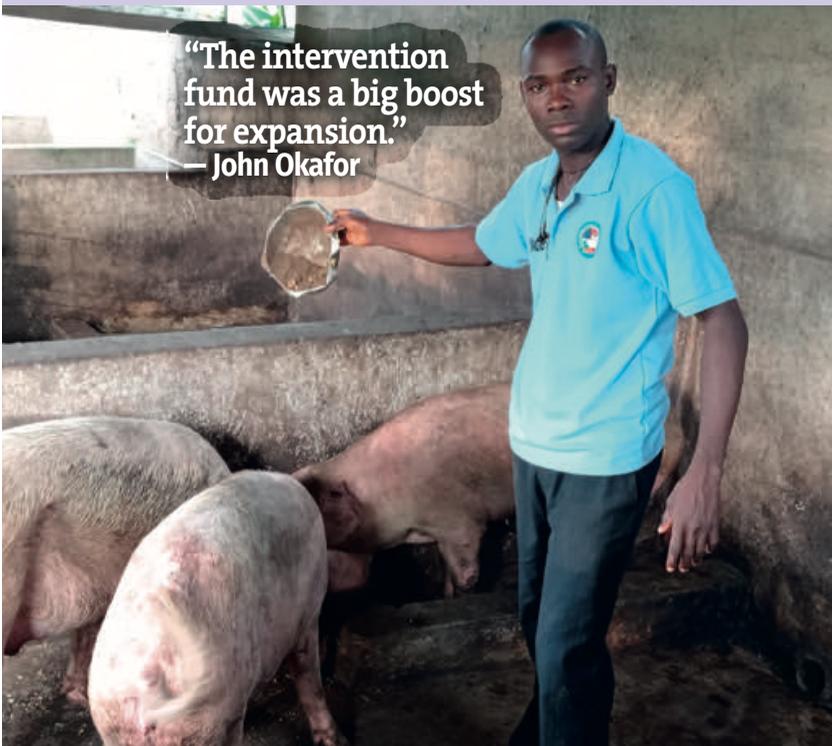
“Before the support, I had 30 pigs. One year after government’s intervention, I now have over 100 pigs in my pen. I sell pigs every two months. I want to maintain the number at 100 being the capacity of my pen and the number I can conveniently feed. With good management, the business can feed itself.

“The intervention fund was a big boost for expansion. It has yielded the desired result and I appreciate our Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa for the initiative. The programme should be sustained to encourage youths in agriculture to expand their farm enterprises.”

NWANNE CONFIDENT is a poultry farmer who benefitted from the job creation programme under Brown YAGEP in the 2018/2019 cycle. She is the CEO of Confidential Enterprise located at YAGEP Farm Cluster in Owa-Alero. She has an HND in Computer Science from the Edo State Polytechnic. She received support package comprising 400 point of lay birds and 90 bags of bird feed.

She shares her experience.

“The intervention fund was a big boost for expansion.”
— John Okafor



“My joy is that I have something to do. I am busy and no longer jobless.”
— Nwanne Confident



“I received a support package of 400 point of lay birds and 90 bags of bird feed to boost my poultry business. The layer birds laid 15 crates of eggs daily till they were sold off as old layers. I restocked with 600 poulets, which have grown and are ready to lay. Some of them have started laying, some are at point of lay.

“Poultry enterprise is lucrative if well managed. Though risky, my joy is that I have something to do. I am busy and no longer jobless. YAGEP is a good programme that should be continued with to help farmers to overcome some challenges.”

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JOY TORERE is a Green YAGEP beneficiary in the 2019/2020 cycle. She hails from Udu Local Government Area and has a BSC.ED in Agricultural Science from the Delta State University. She is a diligent young woman with passion for agriculture which she described as the future of Nigeria. She is a professional teacher and the CEO of WEC International and Agro Allied Venture located in Okolor Inland. After training, she received a buffer establishment package from the State Government to begin her enterprise in fish production.

Her story.

“I am a beneficiary of Green YAGEP, trained and established in fish production in the 2019/2020 cycle. I thank the Delta State Government for making my dream to come true after five years of joblessness.

“I received 120 bags of fish feeds of various sizes, 2mm, 3mm, 4mm, 6mm and 9mm. My establishment package included 6 months training, monthly stipend of ₦15,000.00 for nine months, three 13 X 13 X 4 feet polypon tarpaulin fish tanks, 1,500

juveniles, a solid basement for the tanks, a roof to house the tanks and 120 bags of feeds to grow the fish to maturity.

“Training began before the lockdown. After the lockdown, we resumed and we trained for six months. It wasn't easy, but I scaled through. I was amazed when the contractor called me to see my site. I did and went back to training. I didn't expect what I received.

“They built the roof, the basement for three tarpaulin tanks, stocked it with fish and gave me quality feeds of different sizes to grow the fish to table size. This government is good! I didn't know I will receive the establishment package as soon as I completed training. I am grateful. Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has made my dream of becoming a fish farmer to come true.

“I studied Agricultural Science Education at the Delta State University, Abraka and was unemployed for five years till I got enrolled in the State Government's YAGEP. Agriculture is the future of this country; with good management, no one ventures into it and loses. We need more hands in the agricultural sector to boost food production

“I am a year old in business and I am gradually growing my business. I currently have four tarpaulin fish tanks stocked with 3,500 fish. I combine my fish enterprise with a teaching job in a private school. I want to expand, acquire a large expanse of land for plantain plantation and to dig earthen fish ponds.

“Delta youths should brace up to practise agriculture. There is no work without stress. The government should do more in the area of monitoring and mentoring to sustain these businesses.”

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ALVIN OKECHUKWU MOKAOGWU is the CEO of Bikenenye Global Venture. He hails from Oshimili North Local Government Area. He has an HND in Business Administration from the Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku. He is a pioneer YAGEPreneur in crop production from the 2015/2016 Cycle. Six years after, he is still in business. He has his farm located in Ibusa where he cultivates cassava, yam and vegetable in commercial quantities. He combines farming with building technology, a skill he acquired from his uncle.

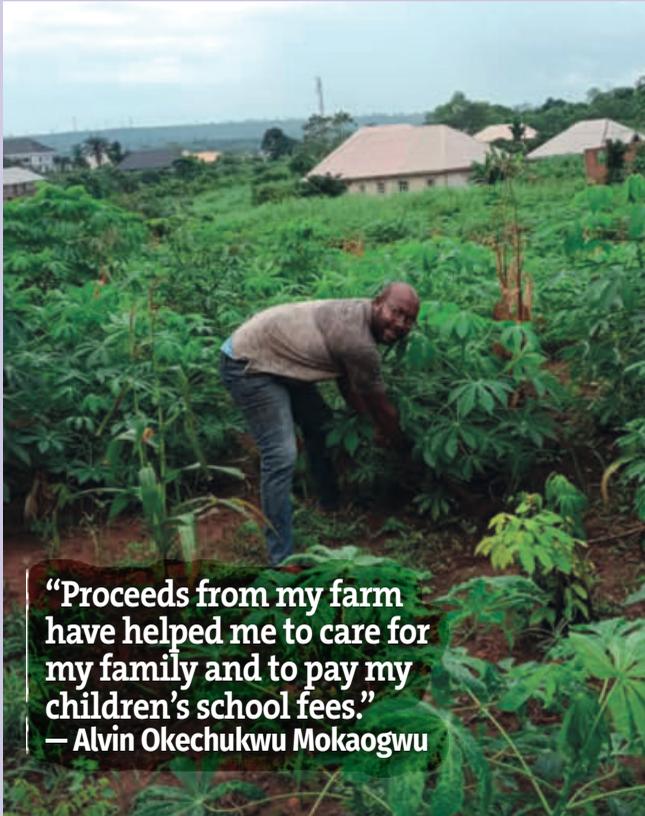
His story.

“I enrolled in YAGEP after years of unemployment and was established by the State Government to own and run a farm in crop production. Six years on, I have never stayed a year without farming. After my first harvest, I acquired two acres of land for expansion.

“Proceeds from my farm have helped me to care for my family and to pay my children's school fees. We get our food items fresh from the farm. So far, I have acquired another ten acres for expansion. I am a busy man; I combine farming with my job as a builder, a skill I acquired from my uncle.

“My only regret is that I was not established in a YAGEP Farm Cluster. For that reason, there is communication gap. Those





“Proceeds from my farm have helped me to care for my family and to pay my children’s school fees.”
— Alvin Okechukwu Mokaogwu

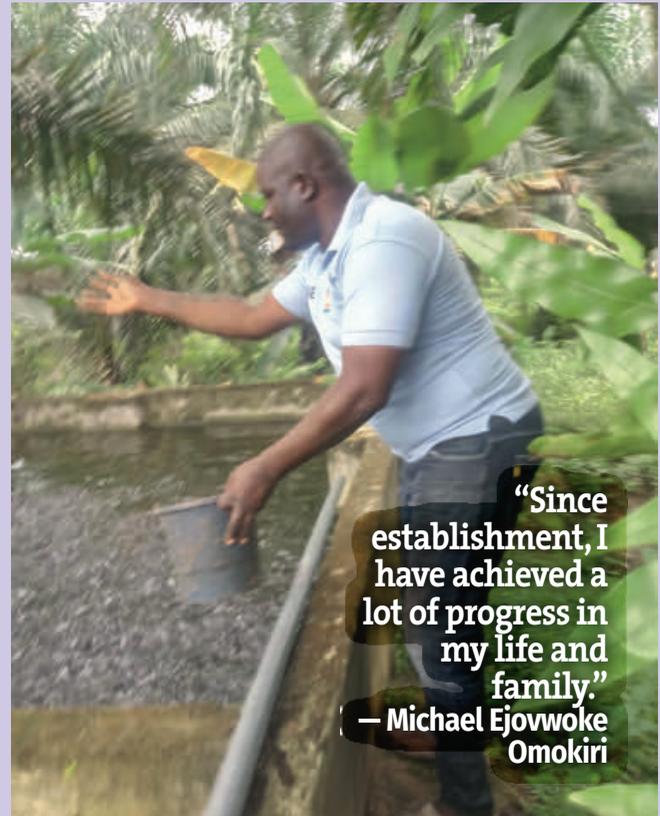
established in clusters receive more information than those of us located in private property.

Agriculture is the best sector to invest in right now if we look at it holistically. It is only through agriculture that one can feed the nation and guarantee food security. To me, YAGEP is successful and should be sustained by successive governments.”

MICHAEL EJOVWOKE OMOKIRI is a pioneer YAGEpreneur and was trained and established to own and run a poultry enterprise. He hails from Ughelli North Local Government Area and is the CEO of Myke Reen Agro Enterprise located in Ughelli. He has a B.Sc. Ed. from the Delta State University. Despite the challenges associated with poultry business, he has been able to sustain his. He is resourceful, enterprising and passionate about his business. These qualities distinguished him from his peers. Within six years, not only did he diversify into piggery and fish production, he has also acquired landed property and lives in his own house. He is a consultant, an entrepreneur, a trainer and an employer.

He tells his story.

“I was established with 400 point of lay birds, 200 day old broilers, 145 bags of feeds, a poultry pen equipped with battery cages and its accessories right in a private land. I lost 50 of the layer birds immediately after delivery and I was left with 350 which I reared successfully.



“Since establishment, I have achieved a lot of progress in my life and family.”
— Michael Ejovwoke Omokiri

“Since establishment, I have achieved a lot of progress in my life and family. I have consistently stocked layers and sold them off every two years. At some point, I made ₦4,000 daily and at the peak ₦5,000 as profit after expenditure from the sale of eggs till the birds are sold off as old layers.

“I diversified into piggery and fish production to expand my business and to increase my streams of income. Livestock business is lucrative. I sold some piglets and a soar four days ago. I currently have 17 pigs in my piggery and 5,500 fish of various growth stages stocked in two giant size concrete fish tanks and an earthen fish pond. I suffered a major setback last year when all my layer birds and broilers were wiped away by bird flu. Nevertheless, I have booked for 150-day-old broilers for a start.

“I have two staff I pay ₦10,000 monthly and have trained three persons who have established their own farms. “I am blessed. I am a landlord. I live in my own house, comprising a three-bedroom apartment and two self-contained apartments on a 100 X 100 plot of land. I acquired and built them out of the proceeds from my livestock business. I also bought one acre of land for the purpose of expansion in future.

“I have gained lots of experience in livestock farming in the past six years. I want to appreciate Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for the initiative of supporting the youth to harness their hidden potentials.”

PERCULIAR EHIENTA is the CEO of Pec Bella Enterprise located at YAGEP Farm Cluster, Owa-Alero. She holds a B.Sc.Ed. in Business Education and is a pioneer YAGEP beneficiary established in the 2015/2016 Cycle. Six years after, she is still in business and has grown it satisfactorily.

“From 400 layers, I now have over 1,000 layer birds from which I harvest 25 crates of eggs daily, and I have also grown my broiler birds from the initial 200 seed stock to 400.

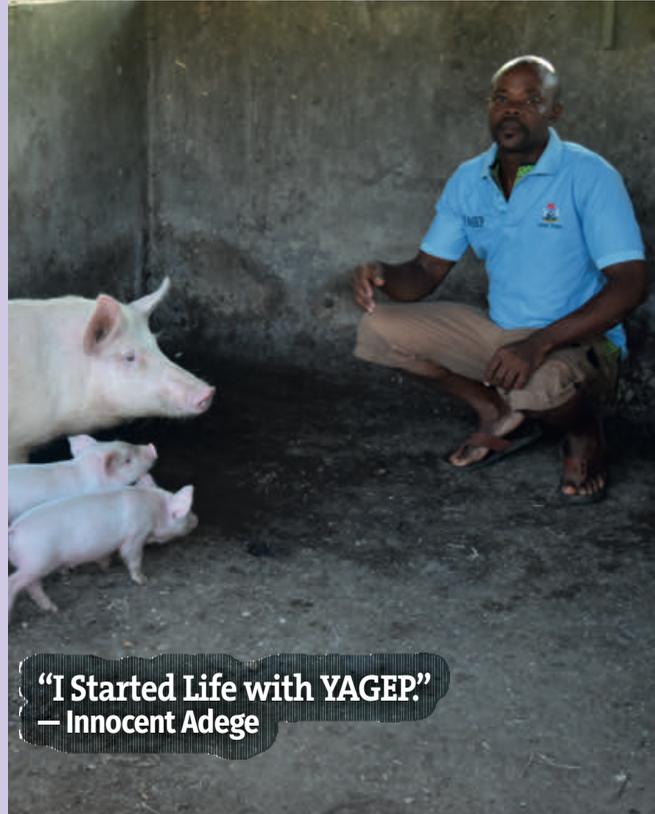
“By God’s grace I am growing. The business has been very helpful. With it, I support my husband in the upkeep of our home and the payment of our children’s school fees. It has improved our living standard. Other families also benefit. I have two employees whom I pay ₦10,000.00 monthly. I look forward to expansion”



“YAGEP Improved our living standards.”
— Perculiar Ehenta

INNOCENT ADEGE, a graduate of Business Education, enrolled into YAGEP in the 2015/2016 Cycle. He trained in fish production and was established in YAGEP Farm Cluster, Owa-Alero. After two years as a fish farmer, he converted his fish ponds into a piggery pen.

“I have 30 pigs currently after I lost so many to swine flu last year. I have 25 piggery pens. I have diversified to crop production; I cultivate yam, plantain, cassava, and maize. I started life with YAGEP, got married from the proceeds, feed my three children and wife, and bought a vehicle for transportation business and a motor bike for mobility. I pay my house rent and children’s school fees. I also



“I Started Life with YAGEP.”
— Innocent Adege

have two staff. I give kudos to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for all he has done for the youth.”

NELSON AYAIGBE was initially established in poultry production at YAGEP Farm Cluster at Owa-Alero but later switched to piggery.



“I am living comfortably with my family as a YAGEPpreneur.”
— Nelson Ayaigbe

He shares his story.

“Currently, I am starting afresh with 35 pigs. I lost all my pigs to swine flu last year. I have diversified to crop production. I cultivate yam, cassava, melon, maize, plantain and vegetable at commercial level. These are what I do for a living. I am living comfortably with my family as a YAGEPreneur. From the proceeds from my farm, I got married, pay my house rent, pay my children’s school fees and feed my family. I also bought a motor bike for mobility. I look forward to expanding my business.”

IFECHUKWUDE ELURO is the CEO of Ika Investment Nig. Ltd. He was in and out of job for nine years until he enrolled in YAGEP in the 2015/2016 Cycle and was established at the YAGEP Farm Cluster in Owa-Alero. After six years as a pig farmer, he shares his success story.

“It has been a successful story. First of all, I want to thank the Delta State Government for embarking on such a laudable project to engage the youth meaningfully. The opportunity the state gave to me gave me the opportunity to engage other persons who work and benefit from me. This initiative should be sustained because it has greatly reduced social vices among Delta youths.

“I have been able to expand my pen from 14 to 21 pens and there is still room for expansion. I have grown my pigs from 10 in 2016 to 200 pigs at present. I have sold so many and invested the proceeds in other businesses I established to have multiple streams of income. I live a comfortable life with my family. I have also diversified into crop production. I am proud to be a YAGEPreneur.”



“I am proud to be a YAGEPreneur.”
—Ifechukwude Eluro



“YAGEP Has Impacted on My Life Positively.”
—Nkechi Isede

NKECHI ISEDE, is the CEO of Vicchs Nk located at YAGEP Farm Cluster, Owa-Alero. She is an SSCE holder who enrolled into the 2018/2019 Cycle as a Brown YAGEPreneur in poultry production.

Hear her: “I received 400 broilers, 150 bags of bird feed, drinkers, feeders and stove from the job creation bureau as my support package. I suffered some setback due to high mortality. Nevertheless, I am still in business and striving to grow my business. Currently, I have 250 broilers and 37 turkeys.

“YAGEP has impacted on my life positively. From the proceeds from poultry business, I bought a motor bike for mobility. From it, I pay my children’s school fees, pay my house rent and feed my children. My plan is to have a personal land.”

BLESSING MAILE was established in YAGEP Farm Cluster, Owa-Alero in 2016 with a buffer starter pack, comprising 400 point of lay birds, 200 day old broiler birds, 145 bags of feeds, a well-equipped poultry pen and other technical support. Six years after, she has grown her business beyond her starter stock.

Hear her, “YAGEP has been so helpful to me and my family. My business is growing. I have 700 layers and 100 broilers at present. I have diversified into crop production. I produce cassava, maize, vegetable, pepper and tomato in commercial quantities. I have a staff whom I pay ₦8,000.00 monthly.

“I am happy being a YAGEPreneur; if not I would have been at home as a full-time homemaker. I use the proceeds from my farm to support my husband. My family is feeding well. I have a motor bike which I bought from the proceeds. I look forward to expanding my farm.”



“I am happy being a YAGEPreneur.”
—Blessing Maile

PATRICIA NGERE, is a Green YAGEP beneficiary in the 2016/2017 Cycle. He holds an SSCE and is five years in business. She broods and sells off her stock before maturity for quick returns and to save her the high cost of feeding the birds to maturity.

Hear her, “I have only 200 broilers in stock because I recently sold off my layers birds. I am planning to restock them. In addition to my poultry business, I am a cassava and maize farmer. I practise crop production in commercial quantities. It has been rewarding too. YAGEP has been of immense benefit



“YAGEP has been of immense benefit to me.”
—Patricia Ngere

to me. Proceeds from my farm provide my needs. I bought a motor bike to enhance my movement; I feed my children and sponsor their education from there too.”

JOSHUA UMUAKPERO, is the CEO of Mabel-Joshua Agricultural Farm. He studied Agricultural Science Education, but was unemployed for eleven years which made him venture into poultry business. He was fortunate to be enrolled in the 2019/2020 Cycle as a Brown YAGEPreneur. The support package he received turned his fortune around. He is now into integrated farming. Hear him.

“I had 150 layer birds before job creation bureau came to my rescue. I received as support package, ₦495,000.00 for 300 point of lay birds and 60 bags of grower bird feed. With this support, I diversified to fish production and piggery since last year. I added 250 layers to the 150 I began with to make it 400 layers. I sell 13 crates of eggs daily on the average.

“In addition, I have 150 broilers, 9 pigs and 4,000 fish. Most often, I brood and sell off my birds for quick returns. I know the future is bright. Integrated farming is the best. I am grateful to the State Government for this good initiative that has created jobs and wealth for unemployed youths in Delta State.”

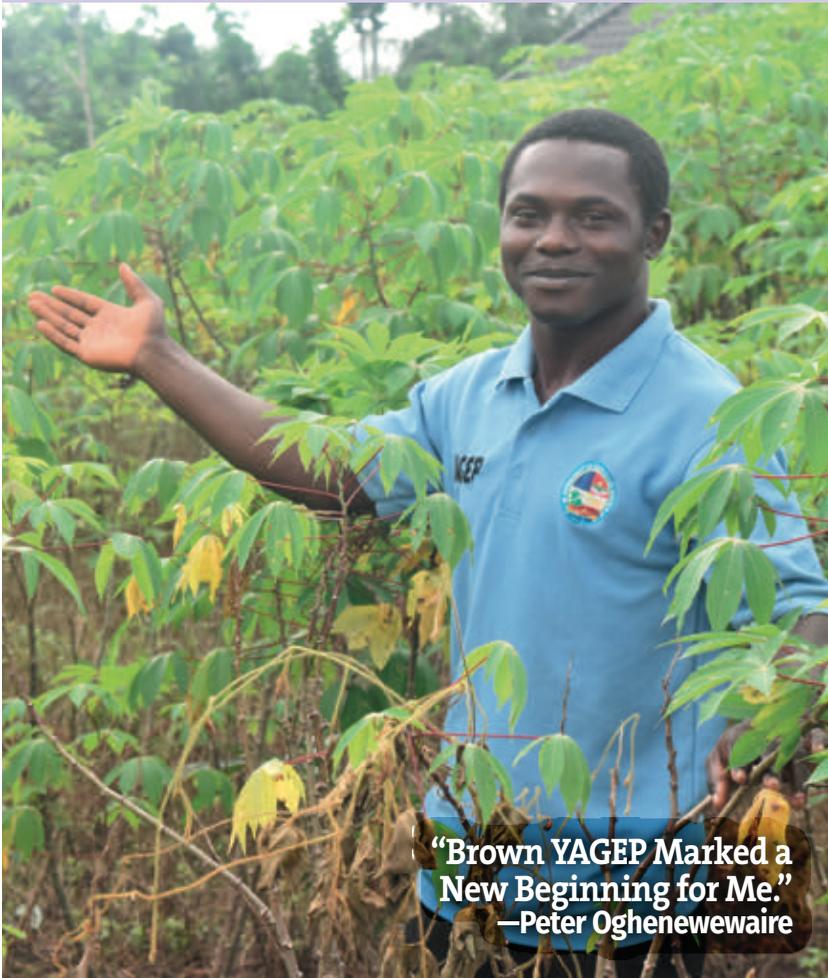


“I know the future is bright; integrated farming is the best.”
—Joshua Umuakpero

PETER OGHENEWEWAIRE is an OND holder; he studied Science Laboratory Technology. He could not continue with his education due to poor funding. In order to survive he began cassava and maize farming, and at the same time enrolled as an apprentice to acquire a skill in fashion design. He was fortunate to be enrolled as a Brown YAGEPreneur in the 2019/2020 Cycle. Hear him.

“The support package for cassava farmers was good. It was very helpful to me because at the point I received it, I was hopeless and helpless. It marked a new beginning for me and my family.

“The first thing I did was to expand the land. I got a 400 X 100 plot of land on lease which increased my output. From the sales of cassava, I bought a sewing machine for my fashion business and I contribute my quota to the upkeep of my family. Farming gives one opportunity to do other things. I shall continue with it while running my fashion business.”



“Brown YAGEP Marked a New Beginning for Me.”
—Peter Oghenewewaire



“The support package was a boost on my farm business.”
—Ogheneworo Obonejero

OGHENEWORO OBONEJERO, is a graduate of Library Science from the Delta State University, Abraka. After four years of being unemployed, he took to cassava farming and was fortunate to receive support in the 2019/2020 Cycle as a Brown YAGEPreneur in crop production.

With the support package of five bags of fertilizer, 12 cans of agro-chemicals and the sum of ₦326,000.00 for land preparation, labour and cassava cuttings, there was a great turnaround in his farm enterprise. He expanded his farm.

“The support package was a boost on my farm business. I am happy I have something to look up to, and to provide my needs while I wait for a job to complement my effort. Through this farm, I support my younger brother in Delta State University of Technology, Ozoro. He assists me in the farm when he is not at school. My major challenge is flood.”

TRACTORS FOR DISTRIBUTION DURING PPSP FLAG-OFF

HANDING OUT OF OUTBOARD ENGINES AND FISHING NETS TO COOPERATIVES

Echoes from PPSP

MELON SHELLING MACHINES FOR WOMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

OUTBOARD ENGINES FOR DISTRIBUTION

FISH SMOKING KILNS FOR WOMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Production and Processing Support Programme (PPSP) is an agricultural value chain support programme designed to upscale the use of modern inputs and technologies.

This is to increase outputs and productivity of crop, livestock and fishery enterprises. The packages include inputs, technologies and materials necessary to make production and processing more efficient.

PPSP was implemented in the following ways:

- i. Provide subsidized inputs and production technologies to crop, livestock and fish farmers;
- ii. Provide subsidized agricultural processing and value-addition equipment and facilities to agricultural cooperative societies, commodity associations and women;
- iii. Facilitate private sector-owned and managed agribusiness services and farm service centres including tractors and implements, processing

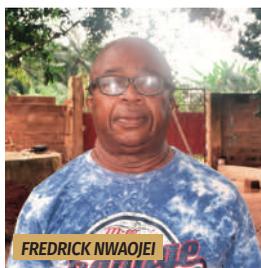
- mills, inputs and commodity marketing;
- iv. Mobilize and facilitate high impact PPP investments along the agricultural value chain for the integration of agricultural production, processing and markets; and
- v. Facilitate agricultural loans for agricultural cooperative societies, farmers, processing entities and operators along the agricultural value chain.

The programme recorded significant achievements top of which were the distribution of tractors to 39 cooperative societies, while 106 cooperative societies received melon shelling machines. Eighteen other cooperative societies received outboard engines and fishing gears support package, while 815 farmers got support packages in poultry, fishery, piggery and crop production.

Gertrude Onyekachukwu-Uteh, visited some of the beneficiaries for feedback on the effects of the support package on their farm enterprises. →

Government's Intervention Through PPSP Six Years Ago Had a Multiplier Effect in My Farm.

Fredrick Nwaojei (Aniocha North LGA) is the MD of Chu Resources Enterprises, Issele-Uku and a renowned pig farmer. He received ten piglets and the sum of N200,000.00 for pigs feed from the State Government. He applauded the state for recognizing the efforts of farmers at promoting self-reliance and food security.



FREDRICK NWAJOEI

"Government's intervention in my farm through PPSP six years ago had a multiplier effect," he said. "Those piglets were served by my boars when they became of age and I used the two little male piglets when they came of age to serve my own female pigs. This cross-fertilization continued over time to avoid in-breeding and as a result, they multiplied exceedingly over the years. The gestation period was eight months. They fallowed at sixty kilo weights.

"I am not looking at the support package, but at the multiplier effect; that the government gave us good breed was a big plus. Therefore, Governor Okowa did so well. Piggery is a money-spinning venture, but capital intensive. PPSP was a great encouragement to me and I used the input as a project in my farm. After four years, I culled the animals and sold each for sixty thousand naira. Till date, their breed and off spring are still in my farm and I am still reaping the benefits."

PPSP Has Helped Me Stay Out of Labour Market.

Queeneth Ighonmietetan (Warri South LGA) received support in fish production. Speaking on the support package she received under PPSP through Alero Egbokodo Cluster Farm Cooperative, she said a stock of one thousand juveniles and forty bags of fish feeds were given to her to boost her fish business. "I had two fish ponds before I benefitted from PPSP. I now have additional three ponds, making the number five fish ponds," she enthused.



QUEENETH IGHONMIETETAN

PPSP Enhanced My Business.

Shola Omaretseione (Warri South LGA) is one of the fish farmers located at Egbokodo-Itsekiri Fish Farm Cluster.



SHOLA OMARETSEIONE

Hear him: "PPSP enhanced my business. I received one thousand fish and forty bags of feeds support through Iwere Cooperative Society in Egbokodo-Itsekiri. I used the proceeds to expand my business. I had two ponds then, but I now have four ponds."

The Support Package Came Timely to Cushion the Effects of Our Loss.

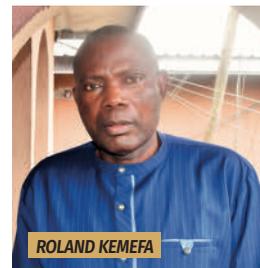
Shola Tuoyo (Warri South LGA) is the MD of Shola Farms at Egbokodo-Itsekiri and is a big-time farmer with over 20,000 stocks. According to Tuoyo "after the 2015 flooding, relief materials were sent to us under PPSP. Fish feeds and juveniles were delivered to Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 at Ubeji Egbokodo-Itsekiri Fish Farmers. The support package came timely to cushion the effects of our loss, though not commensurate with what we lost."



SHOLA TUOYO

PPSP Was a Boost to My Poultry Enterprise.

Chief Roland Kemeffa (Okpe LGA) is the MD of Rokeba Farms in Ororo-okpe. He received 200 broiler birds, 30 bags of bird feeds and money for medication. He said he was surprised when he was called by a staff of the job creation office and invited for verification. "It was during the ember months," he recalled. "It was of great lift to my business and the products were of good quality. I had only three mortalities. I commend the State Government for that. I had thought it would be a continuous programme, but it never came again."

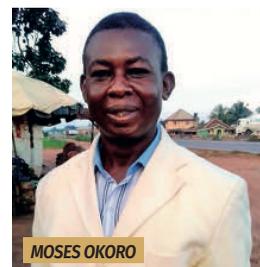


ROLAND KEMEFA

PPSP Was a Very Good Initiative.

Moses Okoro (Ika North East LGA) received support in cassava production. He was given improved variety of cassava cuttings, fertilizer and cash for labour.

"It was a very good initiative, but it got to us late during the dry season," he remarked. "Those of us who are professionally inclined were able to manage it. We nurtured it and it developed. I harvested mine after nine months and it yielded very big tubers. Unfortunately, I lost some of my cuttings to fire as a result of indiscriminate bush burning. I still have some which I nurture for multiplication to supply to others."



MOSES OKORO

Norsworthy Farm: Setting the Pace in Private Sector Investment in Agricultural Value Chain

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH.

CROSS SECTION OIL PALM TREES AT 3 YEARS

It is a truism that a responsive government provides the enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Government alone cannot do everything; it needs business-oriented private sector to invest their resources to complement its developmental efforts. It is based on this premise that the Delta State Government partnered with Norsworthy Farm and Agro-Allied Industries Limited (Norsworthy Farm) to establish an oil palm plantation in Akwukwu-Igbo in Oshimili North Local Government Area.

One of the pillars of the Stronger Delta agenda is agricultural reforms and accelerated industrialization. To make that a reality the administration embarked on measures to facilitate ease of land acquisition by prospective investors. Governor Ifeanyi Okowa on July 01, 2016 inaugurated a 12-member Land Acquisition Committee under the coordination of the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau. The committee was charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a Land Bank, which serves as a repository of available arable land that can be accessed and utilized by private investors that are partnering with the State Government for the purpose of agricultural, industrial and other land-based economic development.

One of the fruits of this policy is the acquisition of a massive expanse of land measuring 1,425 hectares where Norsworthy Farm is sitting. It has borders with three communities,

Akwukwu-Igbo by the North, Ilah by the East, and Ugbolu by the West and South. The acquisition of the land was facilitated by the State Government with the cooperation of the local communities.

Owned by one of Nigeria's foremost entrepreneurs, Gabriel Ogbechie, the Managing Director of Rainoil Limited, Norsworthy Farm has the vision of becoming one of the leading palm oil producers in Nigeria providing superior and high-quality palm produce at all times. The farm commenced operations in 2017 with the nursery development, and, consequently completed land preparation and cultivation between 2019 to 2021 in three tranches.

Meanwhile, 1, 303 hectares of the Nors Farm have been cultivated with 252,700 oil palm seedlings which are in their different stages of development. The uncultivated portion is mainly swarms and streams, which are sources of water for irrigation during the dry season. The oil palms planted in 2019 are already fruiting which means that processing will begin soon. Based on this, the foundation for the oil palm processing mill has begun to enable the farm commence processing next year.

The benefits of such private sector participation and investment in oil palm development cannot be over-emphasized. The benefits are not only for Deltans but for all Nigerians. Apart from bridging the shortfall in oil palm supply



THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE NORS FARM OIL PALM PROCESSING MILL

in the country, it will foster development in the area, especially within the host communities, create thousands of direct and indirect jobs for the people as it is already doing, project Delta as an investors' friendly state, and develop the oil palm value chain.

According to the Nors Farm Project Manager, Mr. Philip Otobo, "the project is beginning with oil palm development and processing to support the Okowa-led government's agricultural policy. Already, the farm has 265 workers, 250 indirect workers and 15 direct staff. It is of immense benefit to the host communities because most of our workers are from these communities while some are from other parts of the country. It is providing food and creating wealth for many households."

Speaking on the company's target market, he said the demand for palm oil products in the country is high. "There is need to meet local consumption first before

export. It is estimated that 4,333 tons of fresh fruit bunches will be harvested annually when the oil palms are fully grown. High profile indigenous food product companies are the target market." This, therefore, means that when fully operational, the importation of oil palm products into Nigeria will reduce, which will in turn bring down the prices of products that use them as raw material.

Being a partner in the tripartite Joint Venture Agreement between the State Government and Mirai Technologies Limited in the development of the Delta State Agro-Industrial Park (DAIP), Norsworthy Investment Limited will be processing agro-allied products there. Mr. Otobo disclosed that they are already discussing how the company will site its cassava, maize and crude oil palm processing mills at the park.

While commending the State Government for transforming the agricultural landscape of the state through its policies and programmes such as the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), agro-industrial park and the diverse programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Otobo tasked the Federal Government and other State Governments to adopt the Delta State model for development in terms of providing access roads to farms and constituting a committee on Land Bank. "Land is the chief obstacle to agricultural development," he asserted. "There is poor land ownership and that is the reason why there are so many uncultivated arable lands in Nigeria."



PROJECT MANAGER, NORSWORTHY FARMS & AGRO-ALLIED INDUSTRIES LIMITED, MR. PHILIP OTOBO



LAUNCH OF HIGH QUALITY DELTA GARRI FOR EXPORT

Delta Foods Export Initiative: Empowering Farmers, Growing the Economy

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

One of the pillars of the S.M.A.R.T, now Stronger Delta, agenda is agricultural reform and accelerated Industrialisation. As spelt out in the vision statement, the goal is to diversify the economy, boost food security, encourage farmers by providing a ready market for their products, create job and wealth, especially for youth farmers, and make agricultural farm produce exportable through value addition. As part of his determination to revolutionize and develop the cassava value chain, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, set up a committee on Delta Foods Export Initiative with garri as the pilot product. In the words of the Governor, "We want to ensure that our farmers who are mainly into subsistent farming are taken away from subsistent farming. We want to make farming a more profitable venture. We want to make it more as a business among our people."

The State Executive Council gave approval for the project on September 5, 2017 which was followed by the approval for release of funds by the Governor on September 29, 2017. The Delta High Quality Yellow Garri was subsequently launched by the Governor on the January 24, 2019, at the Event Centre, as part of the events of the 2019 Job Creation Product Exhibition.

The Delta Foods Export Initiative Committee was headed by Prof. Eric Eboh, the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of implementing a pilot project for the production of high quality exportable garri. According to Prof. Eboh, "the central goal was to create a sustainable assured market for Delta State agricultural products based on fair prices, to bridge the gap between farmers and processors and to transform the cassava value chain from the market-end."

Milestones.

The project management committee made significant milestones in three areas such as human resource capacities for the production of high quality garri in Delta State, the upgrading and accreditation of four processing mills at Oroakpor, Ute-Enugu, Owa-Alero and Abavo and the establishment of an automated High Quality Garri Export Packaging Factory with a Food Quality Laboratory in Issele-Uku.

A variety of necessary activities and tasks aimed at processing and packaging high quality garri for export were carried out. They included:

1. Rapid appraisals of cassava production systems in Delta State.
2. Benchmarked assessments of cassava processing mills and technologies in Delta State.
3. Needs assessment for the development of cassava-garri value chain in Delta State.
4. Meetings with cassava processors and cassava farmers.
5. Pathfinding the cassava tuber raw material supply chain in Delta State
6. Food quality assessments of marketed garri in Delta State.
7. Upgrading and standardization of designated cassava processing mills.
8. Training and capacity building for cassava processing mill managers, operators and workers.
9. Rectifying the technological and investment gap in garri packaging and branding in Delta State.
10. Engagement with off-takers (sellers) to diaspora consumers.
11. Engagement with product name (trademark) registration institutions and food-quality certification agencies.
12. Engagement with export promotion agencies.

The Committee built export relationships and received certification from regulatory agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investments; Nigerian Export Promotion Council and the National Food and Drugs

Administration Council (NAFDAC). With the all-encompassing product trademark, Delta State Foods Export Initiative can market other agricultural food products for local consumption and international export.

Harvesting/Direct Purchase of Cassava Tubers

The journey towards the making of Delta Export High Quality Yellow Garri begins from the farm where the cassava tubers are harvested from or through direct purchase of the tubers from farmers. The tubers are carefully weighed on a scale and payments made per kilogramme as approved by the committee.

For Miss Ozioma Nkwor at Ute-Okpu in Ika North East Local Government Area, off-taking the cassava tubers by the State Government provides a ready market for her farm produce. According to her, “the government has made farming easier and has reduced the stress faced by farmers getting their produce to would-be buyers. This is really encouraging. It is a motivation





DELTA GARRI ON A GROCERY SHOP SHELF IN THE UK

utmost hygiene free from microbial contaminants, hydrogen cyanide, extraneous materials, moist and odour.

The Programme Supervisor, YAGEP, Mr Sam Ndikanwu, told OkowaPlus that the four private processing centres were upgraded by the State Government to meet the internationally acceptable standard for export. “This first phase of the cassava value chain,” he said, “involves buying cassava roots from farmers, transporting the tubers to the processing centre, peeling, washing, grating, mixing with oil free from fatty acid, fermentation pressing, de-lumping, toasting, cooling, testing for microbial and extraneous materials, bagging and conveying to the packaging factory in Issele-Uku.”

The Machines Operator at the processing centre, Mr. Jebuose Osamor, said the activities are carried out within four days in a most hygienic manner, pointing out that it is the cleanest and most modern garri processing environment he has ever seen. Mr Osamor disclosed that “the opportunity is an added advantage to me as an electrician. What I receive here augments my income in electrical installation and repairs. It helps me to provide for my family and to pay my children’s school fees.”

for me to increase my input in order to get higher yields.”

In the same vein, Mrs Mercy Dumbiri, hoped that the government would continue to buy raw cassava tubers from farmers in order to increase their sales and to cushion the high cost of living. In her words, “helping farmers to buy their cassava tubers will give quick returns for investments, help us to sell in bulk and to make enough money to buy other food items, pay our children’s school fees, reinvest and buy more farm inputs in preparation for greater yields in the next planting season.”

Cassava Processing at Upgraded Mill.

The second stage of garri processing takes place at the accredited processing mills. One of such upgraded cassava mills for the production of Delta Export High Quality Garri is the one owned by Onyemenyenibe Multipurpose Cooperative Society at Owa-Alero. To ensure quality control and quality assurance, the services of a specialist and a chemist were engaged by the committee. By the quality assurance mechanisms, it is ensured that the processes involved in the production of the Delta Yellow Garri right from peeling, washing, grating, fermentation, dewatering, sieving, roasting, cooling and packaging are carried out in

Processes at Automated Export Garri Packaging Factory in Issele-Uku.

One of the most distinctive achievements of the foods export initiative is the creation of the state-of-the-art automated garri packaging factory at Issele-Uku. The automated packaging factory is exclusively for packaging, branding, labelling and sealing of high-quality Delta Yellow Garri in 2kg and 10kg bags. It is packaged under global best practices to meet international export quality.

The 2kg packaging line has capacity for 5,000 packs daily, which is 10 metric tonnes per day, while the 10kg line has capacity for



AUTOMATED GARRI PACKAGING FACTORY IN ISSELE-UKU



GRATING CASSAVA



FRYING GARRI



DE-WATERING



SEALING AND PACKAGING



DE-LUMPING

500 packs daily, the equivalent of five metric tonnes, giving a total operational capacity of 15 metric tonnes of Delta Export High Quality Yellow Garri daily.

The production equipment performs operations beginning from filling, weighing, packaging, sealing/sewing to roll-out of package. The entire process is closely operated by trained and hygienically fitted factory supervisors. Other component facilities and units of the factory are as follows: input section, product storage section, quality assurance test laboratory, mini-clinic, machine control room, cloak section, office section, rest room and lodge.

The food quality test laboratory is the first of its kind in Delta State. The laboratory will in the future be available for food quality assessments regarding other agricultural commodities.

The food products that will benefit from the use of the quality test laboratory facilities include processed fish, yam flour, cassava flour, cassava starch and cassava chips.

Impacts.

The production of Delta Export High Quality Yellow Garri has a lot of multiplier effects as it would boost cassava production, increase earnings from cassava farming, encourage more people especially the youths to go into cassava farming and create employment opportunities for all those in processing and the packaging and branding factory. Furthermore, cassava farmers in Delta State will have a ready market for their cassava tubers.

Chinedu Okonkwo, a cassava farmer asserted that “this initiative of government has made cassava farming easier for me since I do not need to source for buyers or take my cassava to the market all the time. The most interesting thing is that I get paid immediately and reinvest my money on a larger scale.”

The knock-on effects of the garri export market are phenomenal on the entire cassava value chain. The daily packaging factory capacity of 15 Metric Tonnes translates to a daily demand for 60 Metric Tonnes of cassava tubers. In total, 24,409 direct and indirect jobs will be created on an annual basis along the cassava value chain comprising land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, transportation, peeling, processing, logistics and packaging. Surely, the foods export initiative is poised to revolutionize the cassava economy of Delta State towards building a Stronger Delta.

YAGEP: Leading the Way in Transforming the Agricultural Landscape in Delta

YAGEP FISH FARM CLUSTER AT UGBOKODO-OKPE

The administration of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa at inception identified agricultural value chain as the cornerstone for achieving food security, job and wealth creation. The objective of Youth Agriculture Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) is to train and develop youth entrepreneurs in agriculture and agribusiness and equip the beneficiaries to establish and run their own farm enterprises. YAGEP has two streams: Green YAGEP and Brown YAGEP.

Green YAGEP: This category refers to YAGEP candidates who have no prior practical knowledge (fresher) in agricultural skills and desire to be trained and, thereafter, established with Starter Packs to own and run their farm enterprises. Under this category unemployed youths are selected, trained and established in their chosen agricultural enterprises including poultry, piggery, fishery and crop (Cassava, maize, rice and vegetables) production. Beneficiaries under this category are branded

The theoretical and hands on practical agricultural training is conducted at various accredited agricultural training centers across the state over a given period (between three- six

months) depending on the enterprise. Beneficiaries in Green YAGEP are supported to establish and run their own enterprises through the provision of Starter Packs. In addition, beneficiaries receive buffer stipend during their training period.

Brown YAGEP: This refers to YAGEP candidates who already have agricultural skills and own agricultural enterprises but need refresher training in practical and managerial skills plus support packages to grow and sustain their existing enterprises. Brown YAGEP covers enterprises such as poultry, fishery, piggery and crops (maize, cassava, plantain, rice, oil palm and vegetables) production. Beneficiaries of Brown YAGEP take part in agricultural best practices workshops and are, thereafter, given support packages for their existing enterprises.

Implementation Strategy

The success of the programme is dependent on the selection of well-targeted candidates. Selection of YAGEP beneficiaries is guided by the principle of accurate targeting to eliminate incidence of unintended beneficiaries. The selection process builds in measures to ensure that only youths who are willing and available to take up agriculture or agribusiness as an

enterprise are included. The selection process is implemented first, through open calls for applications (using print, electronic and online media), then followed by profiling of applicants, conduct of physical verification and interviews to generate short-list of successful applicants across the 25 local government areas of the state. With the introduction of Brown YAGEP in 2018, it became imperative to review the selection process to include on-farm physical verification of candidates.

Training of beneficiaries

The training of the beneficiaries which come in various phases is aimed at producing entrepreneurs with positive mind-set, well-motivated, totally skilled and equipped for success. These phases of training are:

Orientation and Personal effectiveness Training

This is the orientation, on-boarding and life skills training aimed at positioning the intakes with the right mindset for successful participation in the programme. The successful candidates are taken through an orientation workshop where they are given insight to the programme content, and life skills training. Specifically, critical topics at this training include personal effectiveness, success drivers, interpersonal relations, personal branding, visioning and planning, leadership virtues, self-discovery, time management, teaming and partnering, problem solving and other interpersonal relations. However, with the current emphasis on Brown YAGEP, the intakes undergo orientation and farm enterprise training (OFET)

Instructional/practical on-farm training

This involves training in various agricultural enterprises - crop production, livestock and fish production in accredited training centers. The training is designed to equip the beneficiaries with practical agricultural knowledge/skills as basis for owning, co-owning and running an enterprise. The curriculum is designed to expose participants to both theoretical instruction and hands-on experience in existing enterprises. Training is based on standard fit-for-purpose modules for the enterprise and daily activity logbooks prepared by practitioners in conjunction with the Job and Wealth Creation Bureau. While the training modules ensure quality assurance by trainers/training centres, the daily activity logbook is the tool for ensuring discipline among the beneficiaries, preventing truancy/absenteeism and upholding the quality of training. This training is applicable to Green YAGEP beneficiaries only.



FISH CLUSTER AT DARDA, IBUSA

Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness Management Training (EBMT)

This involves training to impart critical entrepreneurship and farm business management skills and abilities. To complement the personal effectiveness training and having acquired agricultural skills, the beneficiaries are taken through basic entrepreneurship and farm business management seminars. The idea is to prepare them to own and run their farm enterprise independently.

Starter Packs/Support Packs

On successful completion of training, the beneficiaries are provided with Starter Packs as in the case of Green YAGEP to enable them set up and run their various agricultural enterprises. The Starter Packs for YAGEPreneurs vary from one agricultural enterprise to another. In the case of livestock/fish enterprises, the Starter Packs include livestock houses/fishponds (with roof shed for tarpaulin ponds), operating facilities and inputs such as Day-Old-Chicks (DOC)/ Point-of-Lay (POL) birds, poultry feeds, fish juvenile, fish feeds, sows/in-pigs as well as feeding/medication support for pig enterprise.

In the case of crops, the Starter Packs include land preparation, seed/seedlings, fertilizers and agrochemicals. Over the years, YAGEP adopted the cluster and non-cluster models in establishing the Green YAGEPreneurs. Cluster model involves co-locating YAGEPreneurs of different enterprise combinations where structures and other facilities/amenities are provided for common use; while non-cluster model is where the YAGEPreneur is established in his/her individual location. With the introduction of Brown YAGEP, support packs in form of inputs (in-kind and cash) are delivered to the beneficiaries at the nearest distribution centre to their farm enterprise locations.

Monitoring and Feedback

The effectiveness and sustainability of the programme depend to a large extent on the efficacy of the monitoring and feedback mechanism. The implementation of YAGEP has been matched with varied kinds of monitoring and live assessments which are necessary to identify gaps and weaknesses and ensure that programme activities are aligned to desired results and outcomes.

In order to streamline and strengthen monitoring and mentoring, the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) was created in the Governor's office. The information from the monitoring and feedback system is constantly used to make adjustment in implementation and realign activities towards programme objectives. Specific information from the monitoring process is useful for deciding and applying sanctions on erring training centres and beneficiaries.

Tracking and Mentoring

After the YAGEPreneurs have been established with Starter/Support Packs, they are followed up through tracking and mentorship. The tracking is done through internal and independent monitoring mechanisms of the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring. It helps to identify how the YAGEPreneurs are utilizing the Starter/Support Pack. The mentorship process involves designating mentors (nearby practitioners in the enterprise) with the responsibility to provide business advisory and business problem solving assistance to the YAGEPreneurs. The purpose of the mentorship process is to assist the YAGEPreneurs to survive, succeed and grow as entrepreneurs and business owners. Mentors provide assistance regarding enterprise management challenges and issues including input sourcing, production practices, crop/livestock management, financial management and marketing.

Achievements of YAGEP

YAGEP as a model in pursuing the strategic job and wealth creation goal of the Okowa administration. As other job and wealth creation programmes, YAGEP is underpinned by core values including integrity, service quality and discipline. As a result, the programme has gained wide stakeholders' acceptance.

Over the past five years, Delta state government through YAGEP has enlisted, trained and established/supported 1174 youths comprising 27.89% female and 70.11% male in various agricultural enterprises such as fishery, piggery, poultry, crop and agro-processing. Also, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) were enlisted, trained and established in fishery and poultry enterprises under YAGEP.

Furthermore, the YAGEP has helped in enhancing financial inclusion of youths, enhanced food production, generate employment and changed the perception of youths towards agriculture thereby engendering inclusive growth in Delta state. Also, through a well-structured training in personal effectiveness, leadership skills, technical know-how and farm business management, YAGEP has raised a new generation of agribusiness entrepreneurs, some of whom have joined the league of agricultural products exporters. The robust engagement of youths in YAGEP and testimonies from beneficiaries has positively influenced more youths in the State to take up agriculture as a business (agribusiness) rather than as a way of life.

More so, according to the National Bureau for Statistics (NBS), YAGEP and other agricultural interventions resulted in agricultural growth from annual average of 8.6% from 2013-2015 to annual average of 13.3% from 2015-2017. The 25 farm clusters

established under YAGEP, which serve as co-location facilities for youth agricultural enterprises have become vital business hubs and demonstration centres for development of agricultural commodity value chains and transformation of agricultural landscape of the State.

In terms of creating new frontiers, YAGEP has helped to utilize supposedly waste lands in the swamp for establishment of YAGEP



YAGEP FISH CLUSTER AT DARDA, IBUSA

Fish farm clusters at Egbokodo-Itsekiri and Ugbokodo-Okpe, which are now fish production hubs in Delta state. Also, in 2018, YAGEP accomplished landmark production of rice known as YAGEP rice, through cultivation of 96 hectares of rice farms in Deghele and Mbiri, processing and packaging with the participation of YAGEPpreneurs.

Challenges

Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) was established to create decent and gainful employment for the youth through the agricultural value chain, boost the agricultural productivity as well as diversify the economy of the State. In spite of the impacts of YAGEP, its beneficiaries are faced with some challenges ranging from socio-economic, environmental, institutional to technological challenges.

Economic Challenges:

These include problems relating to high and rising cost of agricultural inputs such as livestock and fish feeds, starter stock as well as planting materials, fertilizers and agrochemical for crop production, occasioned by general inflationary trend within the economy. Also, marketing uncertainties arising from price instability affect the growth and sustainability of beneficiaries of YAGEP.

In addition, perennial hike in transportation cost due to increase in pump price of petrol in the country has increased the cost of production and marketing of agricultural produce making it difficult for YAGEPpreneurs to break-even in their various enterprises. Furthermore, high incidence of theft especially in poultry and fish farms as well as activities of herders in some locations pose serious threat to life and the productivity of YAGEPpreneurs in their various locations of enterprise.

Environmental Challenges

Weather uncertainties arising from extreme weather events and climate change such as prolonged drought during the cropping season adversely affect agricultural productivity. It also results in excessive rainfall leading to flooding of crop farms and inundation of earthen fishponds. For instance, in 2017, YAGEP rice farm at Ugiliamaï in Ndokwa West Local Government Area of Delta State was totally overrun by flood; while in 2018, the YAGEP tomato farm at Ogwashi-Uku/Ewulu cluster and YAGEP rice clusters at Deghele and Mbiri were affected by drought which occurred at critical stages of fruit/panicle formation thereby reducing yield significantly.

In addition, the occasional oil spills/flooding at YAGEP fish clusters in Egbokodo-Itsekiri and Ugbokodo-Okpe negatively impacted on the production activities of the beneficiaries. More so, incidence of pests and diseases outbreak affect production and productivity levels of YAGEPpreneurs. For instance, the state-wide incidence of African Swine Fever (ASF) in 2020 caused huge losses among YAGEPpreneurs. Another

environmental risk is the threat which bird flu (Avian Influenza) poses to poultry farms in the state.

Institutional Challenges

The systems of land ownership and land tenure make it difficult for YAGEP beneficiaries to access contiguous land for their agricultural production. Often, incessant litigations and disputes from host communities have significantly affected progressive development of YAGEP clusters in the State. Also, YAGEPpreneurs have limited access to sources of credit facilities, which negatively impact on their expansion plans. In addition, poor agricultural extension services and low access to insurance scheme have negatively affected beneficiaries in their production as they are never readily available to provide useful information or mitigate losses from pest and disease, flooding, drought and other uncertainties.

Technological Challenges

One of the banes of youth involvement in agriculture is the associated drudgery in agricultural activities. Adoption of favourable technologies such as mechanization, use of improved crop varieties, livestock breeds and best management practices is a panacea for removing drudgery to attract youths into agribusiness. Poor access to agricultural machines and implements like tractors, processing equipment and operators as well as scarcity and high cost of improved varieties/breeds are constraints to agricultural productivity.

Prospects

Since 2015, the YAGEP has positively transformed the agricultural landscape of the State by demonstrating through practical, evidence-based results that youth involvement in agribusiness can work and has the potential of improving the status and livelihood of farmers. There is no gainsaying that the demonstrative effect of YAGEP as a job creation tool has lived up to stakeholders' expectations and gained their acceptance. The upgrading and transformation of Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer to Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau in 2019 is the direct outcome of various stakeholders' demand for continuity and sustainability of the job creation programmes.

Juxtaposing the successes and achievements with the challenges of YAGEP, it is imperative to state that going into the future, YAGEP is a veritable tool to positively transform the mindset of the youth towards agribusiness. In fact, YAGEP stands out as a proven template for reducing youth unemployment by engaging them in productive enterprises, diversifying the economy of the state, increasing food security/sufficiency, nurturing entrepreneurs and leaders, reducing youth restiveness and promoting communal peace and security, and ultimately achieving a Stronger Delta.

- *Contributed by Ndikanwu Sam, Chiejina Charles, Okeh Dono Edoja, Mordi Jude and Ubogu Godwin*

PHOTO *Splash*



FROM LEFT, PROGRAMME OFFICER, MR JUDE MORDI, DEPUTY SUPERVISOR, MR CHARLES CHIEJINE, PROGRAMME SUPERVISOR, MR SAM NDIKANWU, PROGRAMME OFFICERS, MR GODWIN UBOGU AND MR EDOJA OKEH



CROSS SECTION OF YAGEP TRAINEES



A SECTION OF GEEP PARTICIPANTS AT THE JOB READINESS WORKSHOP



THE CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH, ADDRESSING GEEP PARTICIPANTS AT THE WORKSHOP



THE PROJECT CONSULTANT TO THE DTSG ON AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PARK IN OGWASHI-UKU, ARC KESTER IFEADI GIVING PROGRESS REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROJECT



JOY TORERE (L) SIGNING FOR THE SECOND TRANCHE OF FISH FEEDS WHILE ASSISTANT COORDINATOR OF YAGEP, MR CHARLES CHIEJINE LOOKS ON



JOY TORERE IN HER FISH FARM



OZIOMA NKEM MORDI FEEDING HER BIRDS



A BENEFICIARY, STEPHEN ONWUDIKE, IN PLANTAIN PRODUCTION AND HIS INPUTS



YAGEP SUPERVISOR, MR SAM NDIKANWU, ADVISING BENEFICIARIES ON METHOD OF APPLICATION OF INPUTS



ROSEMARY UTI RECEIVES FISH FEEDS IN HER FISH FARM



DELTA STATE JOB & WEALTH CREATION BUREAU
Governor's Office, Asaba

YAGEP PROTOTYPE STARTER FISH FARM

17ft X 47ft Concrete Basement With Shed For 13ft Diameter Polygon Tarpaulin Fish Tanks (3 nos.)
Each With Capacity To Hold 500 Fish To Maturity



PROTOTYPE STARTER FISH TANKS FOR GREEN YAGEP BENEFICIARIES



DELTA STATE JOB & WEALTH CREATION BUREAU
Governor's Office, Asaba

YAGEP PROTOTYPE STARTER POULTRY FARM

21ft x 30ft Poultry Pen With Capacity To Hold 500 nos. Day-Old-Chicks (Broiler) To Maturity



PROTOTYPE STARTER POULTRY PEN FOR GREEN YAGEP BENEFICIARIES

Milestones

Delta State Land Bank

As part of efforts to improve the ease of doing business in Delta State, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa on July 01, 2016 inaugurated a 12-member Land Bank Committee under the coordination of the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer.

With membership drawn from relevant ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), the committee was charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a Land Bank.

The Land Bank served as a repository of available arable land that can be accessed and utilized by investors partnering with the State Government for the purpose of agricultural, industrial and other land-based economic development.

The members of the Committee included: -

The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development - *Chairman*;

The Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources - *Vice Chairman*;

The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Economic Planning - *Member*;

The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Justice - *Member*;

The Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer - *Coordinator*;

The Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Agriculture - *Member*;

The Director of Lands, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development - *Member*;

The General Manager, Communal Farms - *Member*;

Mr. Gerry Ossai - *Member*;

Dr. Theo Okpidi - *Member*;

Dr. Julius Oritsejafor - *Member* and

Mr. Joseph Efi - *Secretary* (Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau)

On inception, the Committee broke into three working groups representing the three Senatorial Districts of the State, which conducted field trips to local communities to identify and map out arable land that could be acquired by the State Government for agricultural use, or taken-up by private agricultural investors. This was achieved with the cooperation of the local communities.

Through this initiative, the Delta State Government facilitated the acquisition of a massive farmland for Norsworthy farm in Akwukwu-Igbo, Oshimili North Local Government Area, as well as arable land for YAGEP tomato and rice cultivation at Ugili-Amai, Ogwashi-Uku, Amukpe, Mbiri and Deghele.





GOV OKOWA LISTENS TO A YAGEPRENEUR
SHARE HIS EXPERIENCE

Drip Kits to Promote Irrigation Farming

— By Gertrude Onyekachukwu-Uteh

The need to boost tomato production and to develop the tomato value chain in Delta State is the drive behind the State Government's adoption of the Drip Irrigation System. It is one

among the innovations in the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), an agricultural programme initiated to attract and support youths to go into agriculture.

Drip Irrigation System, a technology that promotes all year farming, is to help farmers embrace the use of modern and scientific methods of farming to boost the quality and quantity of farm yields and to extend their period of harvesting. This is part of the State Government's efforts to promote the tomato value chain in the state.

With the technology, crop farmers are expected to focus and invest more on high yielding crops in order to achieve two to three cropping cycles in a year. It was against this backdrop that crop farmers in tomato and vegetable production located in YAGEP Farm Clusters in

Issele-Uku Traditional Ruler Lauds Okowa on Drip Irrigation Kits

The Traditional Ruler of Issele-Uku Kingdom, HRM Agbogidi Obi Nduka has applauded Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for his efforts to make farming more attractive to farmers in the state.

In a letter of appreciation dated October 14, 2021 and signed by the traditional ruler, he expressed his gratitude to the State Government for donating 30 cartons of Jain Irrigation Kits to members of Aniocha North SEEFOR Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative Society to encourage all year tomato and vegetable farming.

The letter read, "On behalf of the Issele-Uku Royal Palace and the good people of Issele-Uku kingdom, I am pleased to acknowledge the receipt of thirty

(30) cartons of Jain Drip Irrigation Kits, which your administration donated through the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau to the Aniocha North SEEFOR Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative Society."



HRM AGBOGIDI OBI NDUKA, OBI OF ISSELE-UKU

While assuring the government that the drip irrigation kits would be effectively utilized by the farmers to produce hybrid tomatoes and vegetables, he pointed out that the kits would reduce cost of labour, increase production, and lead to massive job and wealth creation along the tomatoes value chain for indigenes and non-indigenes in his kingdom.

He disclosed that the irrigation kits would be used for tomato and vegetable farming on two hectares of land by January, 2022.

Ogwashi-Uku and Amukpe were supported with the irrigation system to enable them produce tomato and vegetable all year round. Recently, SEEFOR Farmers' Multipurpose Societies in Issele-Uku and Ozoro in Aniocha North and Isoko North Local Government Areas respectively were supported with the full-fledged irrigation support system for two hectares of tomatoes farm each.

Hon. Paul Okpue, the facilitator of the project, explained that Drip Irrigation System is an Israeli innovation that would enable farmers to farm all year round specially in Ogwashi-Uku and Issele-Uku areas where there is shortage of water. According to him, the



YAGEPRENEURS DISPLAY THEIR TOMATO HARVEST AT OGWASHI-UKU



A YAGEPRENEUR TENDING HIS TOMATO NURSERY AT YAGEP TOMATO FARM CLUSTER AT OGWASHI-UKU



A YAGEPRENEUR WATERING TOMATO NURSERY AT YAGEP FARM CLUSTER, OGWASHI-UKU

irrigation system is cost effective, enhances greater yields and makes farming attractive to youths. He commended the Governor for this unique opportunity of creating a synergy between the State Government and farmers.

In the same vein, a member of the SEEFOR Farmers' Cooperative Society in Issele-Uku, Mr Stephen Nwamodon, lauded the State Government's efforts at boosting food production through its agricultural policies. He said the irrigation package received would be used on a two hectares land that would produce an estimated 2,500 baskets of tomatoes at the end of every production cycle.



Drivers of Agricultural Prosperity Under the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau

YAGEP

FOODS EXPORT
INITIATIVE

PPSP – AGRIC
VALUE CHAIN
INTERVENTIONS

LANDBANK
INITIATIVE

AGRO-
INDUSTRIAL
PARK