



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AFRICA LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM
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MEASURING RESULTS: Agribusiness Learning Exchanges

What does agribusiness in India have in common with agribusiness in African countries? Africa Lead supported three food security business representatives from Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda to journey to the Punjab region to find out. In addition to its core training programs, Africa Lead supports African professionals through agribusiness business-to-business (B2B) exchanges. The program places individuals with host companies to facilitate skills transfer and exposure to effective and efficient agribusiness practices. In November, Zamindara Farm Solutions in the Punjab province of India hosted the Africa Lead champions for 3-weeks providing practical training in agriculture equipment leasing.

Zamindara welcomed the three participants and graciously shared their business vision, strategy and overall practices for providing small farmers access to modern farm machinery at a lower cost, helping to eliminate the need for farmers to take out loans to buy costly equipment that will take them years to repay. Titus Gakwaya, a former professor and agriculture engineer who is currently the Mechanization Program Manager with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources' Task Force on Irrigation and Mechanization traveled from Rwanda.



Photo taken by Gus Roberts

Mr. Gakwaya also owns a company, which provides engineering and agro-technology services. Traveling from Uganda, Aaron Ngobi is a mechanical engineer who works as the Sales Manager for Engineering Solutions Uganda Limited (ENG SOL) which sells and leases agricultural equipment. Mr. Ngobi's primary responsibilities are focused on profitable sales, promotions and marketing products. The third participant, Gus Roberts, established the Buchanan Resource and Development Corp. (BRANDCO) to provide inexpensive labor-saving devices and equipment to smaller scale farmers. He is also an active member of the Agriculture Coordinating Committee, a member of the Country CAADP Team and serves as Vice Chair of the National Cassava Sector Coordinating Committee (NCSCC), which is responsible for implementing the Liberia National Cassava Strategy in developing a vibrant and sustainable cassava industry.

"The number of face to face meetings we have held in the three weeks of the training would take years of travelling to different countries and cities to accomplish the training/deal."

- Aaron Ngobi

Being on-site allowed the three African agricultural entrepreneurs to engage directly with Zamindara's business partners, who lease tractors from the company and then rent them out to farmers based in local communities. This community-based model offered insights on how farmers adapt to mechanization. They also learned the importance of ensuring the equipment's maintenance and servicing.

The B2B exchange's value is through the hands-on experience they provide. During the participants' time at

Zamindara they visited multiple manufacturers of machinery, operators of a grain market and a local rice mill that purchases, processes and packages paddy rice for wholesale, a Biomass power plant operator which uses farm wastes to generate electricity which is then sold to the government power grid, and the Industrial Training Institute.

With B2B exchanges learning new skills and processes works both ways. At one point during a field visit, a new machine, a New Holland Forager, was being tested for possible use on cutting and processing cotton sticks for Biomass use. The machine was not working as well as anticipated, however, Mr. Ngobi, who has vast experience with this particular machine, was able to make helpful suggestions on better alternatives that could be used.

The African professionals reported great value from the variety of hands-on experiences they had.

Knowledge and Experience Gained By Participants:

- Understanding alternative agribusiness development, leasing and service models to gain competitive advantages.
- Establishing successful public-private partnerships and working to meet the needs of the local farmers.
- Identifying investment expansions and new business opportunities across emerging agribusiness market, including collaboration with partners to set up agribusiness infrastructure.
- Utilizing waste materials such as animal feed, local home fuel materials, and bio-mass to generate electricity.
- Identifying the different types of agriculture machinery/equipment, how they are used and what they are used for, including weeding, irrigation schemes, & harvesting planting crops.
- Integrating the latest technologies to agribusiness.

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Each of them expressed that they learned different methodologies ranging from technical to leasing and business strategies which they witnessed at Zamindara and will adapt for their own country and company.

Beyond the technical skills, Mr. Roberts saw the importance of sharing his experience once he returned to Liberia. He created a PowerPoint presentation which he will use to disseminate information that he learned during his



Photo taken by Gus Roberts

time at Zamindara, including new ways to look at business relationships, the types of services provided and the relationship with customers and the communities.

The three travelers also emphasized how valuable they found the opportunity to share in this exchange together.

In returning to their disparate locations across Sub-Saharan Africa, they expect the experience they shared to bind them together for future exchange within the region as they apply their common learning. Zamindara Farm Solutions is also eager to host another set of African colleagues in the near future.

“Thus, my colleagues and I would like to thank the DAI Team, the Zamindara Farm Solutions Executives, and all staffs for exposing us to the learning missions undertaken. We do promise you to put in practice what we have learned.”

- Titus Gakwaya

Visit us on the web at
www.AfricaLeadFTF.org

For the latest news, training descriptions, and our online database of upcoming short courses relevant to African agriculture professionals.

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What is Africa Lead?

A USAID-funded program – and part of the Feed the Future global food security initiative – that builds the capacity of African agriculture professionals to lead change in food security

Africa Lead supports the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) by providing 4 main services to participating countries and regions:

- Developing and delivering **training modules**:

CAADP Champions for Change: a 5 day course about CAADP and leading change, **Module 1**

A second 4 or 5 day course, tailored to each country, has been developed to equip CAADP leaders to operationalize investment plans, **Module 2**

- Providing logistical and financial support for other trainings and **innovative learning partnerships** that connect participants with institutional hosts, such as the *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)*, the *World Food Programme*, and private sector agribusinesses.
- **Assessing capacity needs** of national and regional institutions, CAADP Country Teams, and National Agriculture Investment Plan implementation.
- Developing an **online database** of short courses relevant to African agriculture professionals.

RESULTS TO DATE

- ✓ **1,310** trained CAADP “Champions” from 29 countries (Module 1):
 - 545 in East Africa
 - 375 in West Africa
 - 390 in Southern Africa
- ✓ **273** trained in Module 2 from 23 countries:
 - 73 in East Africa
 - 200 West Africa
- ✓ **73** trained in short courses from CORAF and CILSS and **10** professional Interns
- ✓ **8** professional interns trained in agriculture show management and agribusiness management (“B2B”)
- ✓ **12** national non-state actor workshops held to mobilize NGOs and private sector actors to participate in CAADP –with **546** participants
- ✓ Facilitation and logistics preparation for various conferences and meetings
- ✓ **43** institutional capacity assessments
- ✓ **2** assessments of CAADP Country Team processes ; **2** CAADP/NAIPs implementation case studies: Ethiopia and Rwanda
- ✓ A short course database featuring over 480 upcoming offerings relevant to African