

# Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

November 2019

Scholar Program 60

## THE PROJECT SCHOLAR PROGRAM: A RARE PRIVILEGE AND WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE WORTH SHARING.

Ever since I arrived at the Michigan State University, East Lansing on November 23, 2019 for a tenure with the Feed the Future Scholar Program, it has been daily learning experience for me. The program coordinators welcomed the professors warmly and explained the fine points of the mission of the trips. All aspects of the visit have been very educative, from relating to the college staff to auditing lectures. Personally, I have learnt a lot observing MSU teaching methods at undergraduate and graduate levels. The methods are much more of a participatory approach with take home assignments. This I will share with my colleagues in Nigeria for improved lecture delivery and knowledge exchange.

My project scholar (a PhD student), has gained a lot from the research methodology and applied econometrics courses he took. More importantly his exposure to current analytical packages and softwares such as STATA, R, and NGENE is awesome. I am sure he is one of the very few Nigerian academics in our university who can use these softwares efficiently. The scholar - Charles Olumba, will be useful to me and other academics including the post-graduate students. He will provide leadership in data analysis techniques and capacity building in our university and sister institutions. It is noteworthy that Mr. Olumba has already initiated this capacity building effort in our university when he was in Nigeria for his spring vacation. The university will highly value his enhanced capacity for academic support to both the Departments of Agricultural Economics and Economics.

I am taking home proposal for significant changes in the curriculum of our department, especially from the curriculum of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics (AFRE) at MSU and other American sources. In most Nigerian universities the agricultural curriculum is still much as it was in 1960s, when MSU established the agricultural program at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I will advocate for the general review of the agricultural program in Nigerian universities to align with international best practices, as it is at MSU.



Prof Alimba addressing AFRE FACULTY and students in a special presentation.

I must express my profound gratitude for visiting MSU research facilities. The visit to the Kellogg Biological Station was an eye opener that provided a take home idea I will be canvassing for, a self sustaining research and production farm attached to Nigerian faculties of agriculture. The field trip to Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Bright Moore Artisans Collective (both in Detroit Michigan) are good examples of urban agriculture practices targeted at reducing urban youth unemployment and poverty. I was fascinated with what they are doing and the experience is worth sharing with our university and our state government.



Nigerian visiting professors making up a panel for discussion at a special presentation

In general, my interactions with the staff of AFRE and others at the library, the museum, the African Center and Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) have been so rewarding. Most of the issues discussed and agreed on will be relayed to the management of our institution. I know that

many in my university and the state will be fascinated to hear that the African Center of MSU will be honoring the first president of Nigeria, the late Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (first African leader to seek partnership with MSU) with an MSU project to be named after him. It was that collaboration with MSU that culminated in the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960.

I am expecting and indeed optimistic of further MSU collaboration with Nigerian institutions including our university, following this visit.

I am so happy for this short tenure at MSU, an institution I have been hearing and reading about since my undergraduate years at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I consider it a rare privilege.

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This work is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Feed the Future initiative through the Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project, Associate Cooperative Agreement Number AJD-620-LA-15-00001. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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Published by the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University, Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture, 446 West Circle Dr., Room 202, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.