THE POLICY PROJECT INNOVATIVELY ENGAGES YOUNG MINDS IN ANY WAY WE CAN. A first-hand account: My experience working on the poultry-maize value chain with the MSU team

I was privileged to be a part of a study to examine how growth and transformation in the Nigerian poultry and maize subsectors is taking place. I interviewed maize farmers and heard first-hand some of the changes that have occurred in the maize production sub-sector within the last decade. I visited poultry farms and talked to farmers about their businesses and adjustments they had to make to meet the growing demand for poultry products and how they have sustained their businesses over time.

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I have a deep passion for growth, financial independence, and self-reliance for the average Nigerian, so I look for ways to find opportunities and technologies to foster these passions. My ultimate dream is to get as many people thinking about solving the problem of poverty in Nigeria and actually doing something positive about it. Agriculture for me is the way to go. Food security and, in the process, job creation are aspects we as a people should be paying unfaltering attention to. We should be helping to generate good policies that build and sustain this very vital sector of the economy.

Attending the training on the poultry-maize value chain in Ibadan and working with Dr. Saweda Liverpool-Tasie and Professor Thomas Reardon gave me a whole new way of looking at the problems of poverty and food security. I was challenged to practice very critical thinking and analysis; I was shown better ways to go about analyzing a problem by building a dense outline – which we built on the poultry business on our way to Lagos from Ibadan. In the class, I was able to clearly understand what processes were involved in carrying out researches of this magnitude, pay attention to the important variables to work with, think more clearly about the types of questions to ask for maximum effectiveness and even the type of questionnaires to develop. I was also exposed to practical methods of dealing with panel data and more. As an offshoot of the training and the poultry-maize work with the Michigan State University team, I started an online STATA class with a tutor from MSU, and I have continued to improve on my data analysis skills since. Writing reports with Dr. Liverpool-Tasie helped me become more emphatic on data and numbers, as she made sure I understood the emphasis laid on my econometrics class and how revealing numbers were in communicating problems, their effects and solutions.

A valuable lesson I have taken home is that the best way to find the relevant gaps is to critically examine the subject matter in its entirety.

I have since challenged some of my course mates to write their thesis on agriculture related topics.

I look forward to continuing work on this project as I hone my research skills and prepare for a career in research and academia.

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