



FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2013



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COVER PHOTO: Farmer Ruben Nuayea in Nimba County shows his voucher for fertilizer.

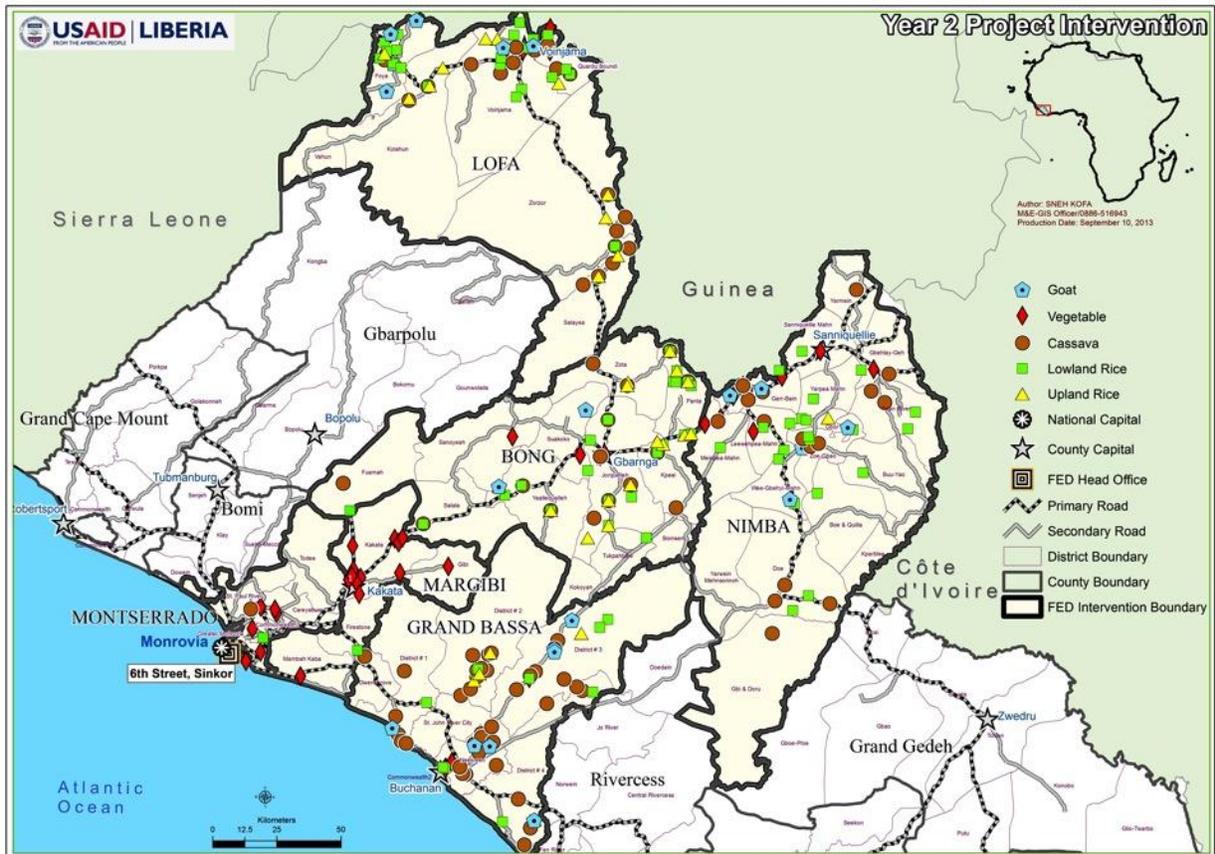
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MAP OF FED INTERVENTIONS



ABBREVIATIONS

AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
APDRA	Appaloosa Distance Ride Association
AM	ArcelorMittal
ASRP	Agricultural Sector Recovery Program
AYP	Advance Youth Program
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technology, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CAAPD	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program
CAC	County Agriculture Coordinator
CARI	Center for Agriculture Research Institute
CBO	Community Base Organization
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
COSEO	Community Sustainable and Educational/Empowerment Organization
COTR	Contracting Office Technical Representative
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
ECHOPPE	Echange pour l'Organisation et la Promotion des Petits Entrepreneurs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ED	Enterprise Development
EHELD	Excellence in Higher Education for Liberian Development
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBO	Farm Based Organization
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FTF	Feed the Future
FY	First Year
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GBCCC	Grand Bassa County Community College
GIS	Geographic Information Systems

GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IBEX	Investing for Business Expansion
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
IT	Information Technology
LASIP	Liberia National Agricultural Investment Plan
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LBBF	Liberian Better Business Forum
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
L-MEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LoL	Land O'Lakes
LREC	Liberia Renaissance Education Complex
LSU	Louisiana State University
LTТА	Long Term Technical Assistant
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDF	Market Development Fund
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micros/Small and Medium Enterprise
MTТА	Medium Term Technical Assistant
NAD	National Agriculture Diploma
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGW	New Generational Women
NIC	National Investment Commission
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan

PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
PSD	Private Sector Development Strategy
PROSPER	People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
PUA	Peri Urban Agriculture
R&R	Rights & Rice Foundation
RFQ	Request for Quotation
RFTOP	Requests for Task Order Proposal
SBA	Subah Belleh Associates
SEAS	Strengthening Agricultural and Advisory Services
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SMS	Subject Matter Specialists
STTAs	Short Term Technical Assistants
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department for Agriculture
VES	Vocational Education Specialist
VMHS	Voinjama Multilateral High School
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
VTNFES	Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education Specialist
VTTS	Vocational Teacher Training specialist
WAD	West African Dwarf
WHL	Welt Hunger Life
WOFPD	Women Organization for Peace and Development

COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Category A Sites: At A-sites all technologies are applied—urea deep placement trials for lowland rice; mounds, ridges and contours for cassava and more—and used as a central training and demonstration site for technologies not applied in other sites. Category A-sites are fully supervised by FED staff.

Category B Sites: At B-sites improved technologies are applied on a site specific basis and include water management control structures, line planting, improved seeds varieties for rice, cassava mounds for flat lands that have sandy clay loam soil, and ridges on gentle slopes. Category B-sites are supervised by sub-contracted NGOs that are overseen by FED staff.

Category C Sites: C-sites are usually located in very remote areas and select interventions and technologies are applied such as essential tools, improved seeds and Lead Farmers trained by FED. C-sites are overseen by NGO staff.

Task 1.1 Input Supply System Interventions

Activity 1.1.a: Smallholder Capacity Building

Seven UDP demonstration sites in Bong and Nimba were visited by World Bank consultants hired by USAID's Bureau of Food Security, Niklas Buehren and Tammy Mcgavock from August 18-23. Potential next steps were discussed the action plan will be decided depending on the result of the field trials, and will be included in FED's annual workplan for FY14.

Activity 1.1.b: Agro-Dealer Capacity Strengthening

Training activities in Product Knowledge and Business Management took place on August 1-2 in Nimba County for four agro-dealers: LNFOCS, Gla Pah Jay, Becky's and Rainforest Agricultural Enterprises. Agricultural supplier Wenco provided training in Product Knowledge for 12 participants (4 agro-dealer managers and 8 lead farmers) on the use of inorganic fertilizers and crop protection products for vegetable production. The business management training was carried out by the Khana Group for the same 12 participants on recordkeeping, inventory control, and marketing strategies. From August 1-2, training was held in Ganta, Nimba County for 20 participants (4 females, 16 males). The agro-input dealers will participate in FED's pilot voucher program which will roll out in September.

Fig. 1 Example voucher

USAID | LIBERIA

50% OFF

0001

GROUP VOUCHER

USAID | LIBERIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

VOUCHER PROGRAM

Food & Enterprise Development Program

GROUP VOUCHER

MDF: **0081 0001**

Group's Name: _____

Chairperson's Name: _____ Signature _____ Agrodealer's Stamp here: _____

Secretary's Name: _____ Signature _____

Treasurer's Name: _____ Signature _____

Product: _____ Quantity: _____ Retail price: _____ Total Amt. Paid: _____

50% OFF

Expiration Date: November 1, 2013

Activity I.1.c: Input Vouchers

Meetings were held in order to prepare the list of voucher recipients with six farmer groups in Bong (Kokoya, Palala Women) and Nimba (Menlekoye, Dokodan, Dounpa, Payee), and the finalized list will be provided to four agro-dealers. The pilot voucher program activity is scheduled to begin on September 9-13 for the initial distribution of NPK fertilizer vouchers. An estimated 1,093 women and men farmer participants are eligible to redeem their vouchers from September 22 to October 9.

The voucher designs have been finalized (above) and printed and extension materials are currently being developed. Voucher printing and distribution is underway and will be completed by September 6.

Activity I.1.d: Improved Appropriate Technologies

Food processing equipment manufacturing training was carried out in Buchanan and Compound 3, Grand Bassa County for 6 private sector agriculture equipment manufacturers. Two motorized cassava mills and three manual rice threshers were fabricated with the use of local materials and were demonstrated at public markets.

The cassava mill training was conducted by FED staff with two welding groups: God Bless You Hill Workshop in Buchanan and Monsehkou Welding Shop in Compound # 3. Training was carried out from July 24 – August 14. Three participants attended the training, during which two sets of cassava mills were fabricated. The facilitator worked for ten days to fabricate one set, and then the second set was fabricated by the participants themselves with supervision from the instructor. FED mechanization specialists also conducted 4 days of demonstration starting August 15 at Siahn market, August 16 in Grand Bassa August 17 at St John Market and August 19 at the Buchanan General market.

Manual rice thresher fabrication training was provided to 3 welders at the Monsehkou Welding Shop in Compound 3, Grand Bassa. During the training three rice threshers were fabricated. After the training, the use of the thresher was demonstrated between August 15 and 19 at four locations in Grand Bassa. Interest for the machinery remains high. The MOA County Agricultural Coordinator for Grand Bassa participated in the demonstration with the manual rice thresher at the Buchanan General Market.

Task 1.2 Increased Production and Profitability of Quality Rice

Activity 1.2.c. Improved Production Practices and Technologies

Lofa County

Major activities carried out under the rice component for this reporting period were weeding of FED's upland rice sites, fencing, transplanting of lowland sites, plowing of lowland sites, construction of major swamp infrastructures such as peripherals canals, inner bunds, and site leveling and clearing.

Rice crops in four UDP demonstration sites located in Voinjama, Kolahum, and Foya are growing well. Major activities done in these sites were weeding, irrigation control, and transplanting in the adoption plots. Kahenjala and Kobekah UDP sites are now in the panicle stage with additional land development ongoing in the four sites.

Upland Rice Production

Weeding has been completed at eight of the 11 upland rice sites in Lofa: WOFPD, Sovasu, Sammie-ta, Lawalazu, Wolamai, Damadu, Salayea women Agro, and Farmers united for Development associations have all completed weeding. The total land area completed with this activity is equivalent to 11 hectares that have so far been weeded in the above upland sites. Weeding is ongoing in the remaining three sites.

Lowland Rice Production

Nine lowland sites with the total area of 11.59 hectares have completed transplanting in Lofa. They are all category B sites and are as follows: Kormai, Kulika, Galamai, AICC, Moibadu, Kissi

Fig. 2 Lowland rice farmers in Nimba. (Zoeguozoyea Farmers)



Ethnic, Chellandoe, Sodu, Somboloe farmer associations. Land clearing and the construction of paddy bunds and layout is still ongoing in the following sites which are considered the most difficult sites in Lofa for the current production period; Barzzagizia, Seekemai, and Wangladu farmer association.

Soil leveling has been completed in Lepalloe, Ngoyelagai, Kpandu, FAAH, and Ohnae, with the total land area transplanted at 16.35 ha. Transplanting is expected to be completed at these sites by September 10.

Nimba County

Lowland Rice Production

NCCC and Payee rice planted in UDP plots is experiencing slow growth, suggesting a problem with pests. In order to tackle this issue the fields have been drained, and pesticide (Deltamethrin) has been applied to the affected area. Weeding and the clearing of paddy bunds at all UDP sites in Nimba are ongoing. Rice in the fields in Doumpa, Taylay and Gbedin Camp 3 are showing strong progress in growth stages.

Rice in category B & C sites are currently carrying out a mixture of land preparation, nurseries, bunds construction and transplanting. SERE-Liberia, the local implementing partner reported that a total of 142 plots have been planted with rice seedlings.

Nimba County Community College (NCCC) Fish Production

Inputs including wheelbarrows, head pens and twine rope have been supplied to speed up fish pond construction work at the NCCC. As a result of a collaborative meeting held with Appaloosa Distance Ride Association (APDRA) and the NCCC, the pond construction work is now being fast-tracked. At the meeting held on August 23, it was agreed that each day the projected work rate should be 30 wheelbarrow loads of dirt per worker. At this speed work should progress faster and more efficiently. All 16 community workers will work on one pond weekly to speed up the work. After the meeting, APDRA gave its commitment that the work will be completed on schedule.

Bong County

Lowland Rice Production

The rice farming groups continue to work with the 26 lowland rice groups that include 11 UDP lowland sites. All lowland rice groups have cleared and laid out their fields with inner canals, plots, bunds, and peripheral canals. Seventy five percent of the groups have completed transplanting of the demonstration plots and they are working on the adoption fields. A total of 25ha have been transplanted on 20 lowland sites with additional preparation ongoing in land clearing and the construction of dykes, bunds and canals.

Upland Rice Production

Among 16 upland rice production groups there have been a total of 9.28 ha planted during the period, with all of the groups using improved Nerica 2 seeds. Many of the groups have adopted seed drilling, in line planting, and intercropping methods with corn or vegetables. Other groups are still using traditional methods of broadcasting planting but using the improved Nerica 2 seeds.

Grand Bassa County

Lowland Rice Production

Plowing and transplanting are currently ongoing at 8 lowland sites located at Kuotarr, Kpelleh, Buegbahn, Mensah, Kaytor Town, Pipeline Community, Gardour, and Gonnigar Towns. A total of 1.3 ha has been cleared during the period while one hectare was transplanted using FRK 19 rice variety. Pipeline community completed a head dyke with a distance of 40m long x 1m in width.

Activity I.2.d. Mechanical Aids

Bong County

The following table illustrates the number of hectares plowed with the use of power tillers in adoption sites in the UDP lowland sites in Bong County.

Table I.

No	Districts	Sites/Community	Group	# Hectares plowed and leveled
1	Panta	Garmue I	Kwepagei Development Association	1.40
2	Panta	Jorwah	Kponmah #2	0
3	Kpail	Palala	Palala Rural Women	0.32
4	Panta	Garmue # 2	Yalakponmah	1.44
5	Kpail	Palala # 1	Palala Self Help Project/Koitonore	0.40
6	Panta	Gbarngasiaquelleh	Kukatonon	0
7	Kpail	Doetai - ta	Welekermah	0.36
8	Suakoko	Gwenimah	kwapagai	0.88
9	Salala	Totota	Willing women initiative	0,40

10	Kokoyah	Bellemu # 2	Kokoyah Rural Women	0
11	Fuamah	Bong Mines	Fuamah district Multipurpose cooperative	5.60
	Total			10.8

Activity I.2.e. Post-Harvest and Marketing

A request for quotations was sent out and bids have been received by six agro-suppliers for the procurement of 12 sets of rice mills.

A civil engineer has been identified for the design of the rice processing centers, and a work contract is under process.

Three communities in Nimba (Payee-kolakeh, Boweh-lolewon and Doumpa) signed the partnership agreement/MOU in the rice processing center activity which outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each party (FED and Farming groups) in the setting up of rice mills and community warehouses/stores.

Task I.3 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Cassava

Lofa County

One of the three category A cassava sites in Lofa has completed 100% of the planting and intercropping activities, while the other two sites in Foya and Voinjama are nearing completion. The Zorzor site has a total area of 0.7 ha and the Foya and Voinjama sites have planted an area equivalent to 0.5 ha.

The total land area under improved cultivation planted with improved cassava cuttings during this reporting period for category B and C sites is 1.859 ha. Planting continues at other sites and it is expected to be completed by 10th of September 2013. Ongoing activities at the remaining sites are mainly focused on the construction of mounds and ridges and the clearing of remaining areas in all six project districts. The total number of mounds and ridges constructed during this reporting period amount to 2,403 mounds and 680 ridges.

Nimba County

Planting has been completed at 3 of the 22 cassava sites managed by local partners. Field monitoring and maintenance is ongoing at these sites. Planting is about 95% complete at 17 sites. Meanwhile harvesting has commenced at six of the seven FY12 sites. Yield and sales records are being collected by Extension and M&E staff. Records so far show that one site, Koteamon Cassava Farmers Association, has harvested 2,093 kg of cassava and sold 1,923 kg. The sale amounted to \$ 6,855.00 LD (\$87USD)

Bong County

Ninety percent of the 17 cassava groups have cleared their fields and currently planting cassava cuttings using ridges and mounds. A total of 10.5 ha were planted during the reporting period using improved methods.

Grand Bassa County

The following communities received cassava cuttings and were trained on improved technology practices of handling and planting methods:

Compound # 2 received 6 bundles of cassava cuttings for nursery establishment. Jeremiah Gardee Town received 15 bundles for immediate planting at the demo site (33m x 83 meter) plus an additional 6 bundles for nursery planting. Jeremiah Gardee Town also completed the planting of 18 plots using traditional methods and local varieties and partial adoption by planting in line. Philip Roberts received 6 bundles of cassava cuttings for nursery planting. In total, 33 bundles were distributed and planted.

There are 18 communities awaiting cassava cuttings to commence planting of demo sites and nursery. Demonstration site preparation and nurseries constructions in these communities has been completed.

Montserrado County

An additional two hectares of cassava was planted during the reporting period at NGW with land preparation completed for an additional 3 ha. Other activities carried out during the month consist of the planting of cowpea intercropped with cassava, additional vetiver plants planted along the waterways in the newly planted areas, and the commencement of the peanut harvest. Data on peanut yield is being gathered as the harvest progresses and will be reported once completed.

Activity 1.3.1c: Training FED Partners along the Cassava Value Chain

The Cassava Value Chain Manager in collaboration with the Youth and Community Officer of FED conducted a two day ToT workshop on August 26 – 27 on sustainable cassava production for 28 National Youth volunteers at the Booker Washington Institute in Kakata, Margibi County. Topics covered ranged from an overview of the cassava sector along the value chain, to the cultivation, harvesting and value addition of cassava. A field visit segment accompanied the training on the BWI campus to help the youth identify cassava varieties as well as cassava pests and diseases, thereby giving them a full exposure to cassava.

Task 1.4 Improving the Quality and Quantity of Peri-Urban Vegetables

Activity 1.4.a Awareness Raising

Peri-Urban Agriculture (PUA) beneficiary selection is ongoing for 2014 activities while groups and individual farmers are being identified. Meanwhile seedling producers are being identified for the third phase of the seedling producer trainings. Twenty sets of PUA training manuals

were distributed to PUA farmers, local NGOs and stakeholders for the feedback and finalization of the PUA manual.

Activity 1.4.b Capacity Building

Montserrado County

United Farmers Association (UFA) has prepared two 10m² plots, planted cowpeas and started land preparation for 2014 production. At Kpormai site the group weeded two plots of corn and cowpeas, have laid out an additional two plots, and begun to harvest. At the MOWEDE vegetables site, three cowpea plots were weeded.

Margibi County

Two nurseries (1x10m) were constructed at the Kakata demonstration site and vegetables seeds sown into nurseries for production. Greenfield located in Compound 2 carried out field maintenance on four plots (10m²) of corn while Kuwaki vegetables farmers laid out and planted four plots of peanuts.

Bong County

There are six PUA groups currently supported by FED in Bong County, these groups have completed clearing and site layouts, and planted peanuts and beans.

Development and Progressive Action has cleared 0.2 ha with 15 plots (10m X 10m). This group is now planting the beans, corns and peanuts seeds in their field.

Melekie Vegetable Farmers Association cleared 0.09ha, established 5 plots (10m×10m), laid out and planted 0.01ha (1 plot, 10m×10m) with corn and transplanted 0.02ha (2 plots, 10m×10m) with bitter ball.

Welekermah Women's group has cleared and laid out 0.06ha of land and planted 6 10m×10m sized plots, planted peanuts on 0.01 ha (1plot 10×10m) and cow peas on 0.02ha (2 plots 10m×10m).

The Iyallakermana group has cleared and laid out 0.3 ha of land and planted 4 plots in corn and 2 plots in bitter ball

Yalafama has cleared and laid out .02ha of land and planting is on-going with peanuts on 0.01ha (1 plot 10m×10m).

Nimba County

The Gbudeamon group has planted five plots (10X10m) with peanuts and two plots with beans. Zoedoar Farmers Association has carried out land preparation and planted six plots (10X10m) with peanuts. Kpein Project United has completed construction and plowing of five plots (10X10m). The Kekaiba group has planted five plots (10X10m) with peanuts, and the Menlekoyee group has planted 5 plots with peanuts and 11 plots with beans

The Ganta Methodist PUA Group has completed planting 3 plots with peanuts and 3 plots with beans, and the Gbedin Vegetable Farmers has carried out plot preparation and planted 6 plots with beans and 2 plots with peanuts. The United Women Group has completed planting 3 plots with peanuts and 2 plots with beans.

Grand Bassa County

Pipeline Vegetable Growers have planted 8 plots with peanuts and land preparation is ongoing, while Yeahbee vegetable farmers (Own Your Own) planted four plots with peanuts and planted three plots with corn. The Chann Community has planted 8 plots with peanuts and land preparation is ongoing, and the Kpain Kpaingbo vegetable farmers planted 8 plots with peanuts and land preparation is ongoing.

Activity 1.4.c Commercial Linkage Development

The Kpormai Group in Montserrado County harvested 55 kg of hot pepper and sold it for 4,400 LD (\$56 USD); the Kuwaki Vegetables Farmers Association in Margibi County harvested 7 kg of fresh pepper and sold for 700 LD (\$9 USD); the Liberian United For Food Productivity and Development (LUFPD) harvested and sold 280 kg of corn at \$4,365 LD (\$55 USD).

Task 1.5 Improving the Quality and Quantity of Goats

Activity 1.5.2 Community Goat Pass-on Schemes through Lead Farmers or CBO's.

Lofa County

Ten feeders and ten poly tanks were distributed at the five lead goat farmer sites in Lofa County for feeding and watering. A total of six goats were sold from Betijama for total sales of \$320 USD. Two bucks were sold for \$120 USD, one doe sold for \$80 USD, and three kids sold for \$120 USD. In addition, a total of eleven kids were born at the goat production sites in Lofa County, and 40 goats were treated for seasonal diarrheal illness and comprised a practical training exercise for farmers by FED county livestock agents in Kpassay, Lofa County. The chart below presents three shelters completed in the last month.

Table 2.

No	Community	County	District	Type of shelter	Type of shelter	Activities ongoing
1	Kpassay	Lofa	Foya	Maternity	General	-
2	Kpandu	Lofa	Foya	Maternity	General	-
3	Sandia	Lofa	Foya	Maternity	General	-

Nimba County

A total of 178 goats have been dewormed and administered with multivitamins. These measures are responses to seasonal diarrheal illnesses in Nimba County. FED staff uses such treatments as opportunities for practical training/demonstrations for local producers in routine goat production. Goat Groups A, B and C have 42, 29 and 26 goats while Zoelay Memorial Farm and Wuo Yeanue Farm have 55 and 26 goats.

Bong County

A total of 18 farmers, (seven female and 11 male) prepared blocks of mineral licks for their goats in Bong County as a result of training acquired from FED'S extension officers. The six mineral licks were prepared with oyster shells, salt, termite hills and cement. These ingredients are rich in calcium and phosphorus, necessary for bone strengthening.

During this reporting period four goat feeders were distributed to Bong County at the following goat production sites: Serengetti Goat farm (2), and Darfuwah-Ta Development project (2).

Grand Bassa County

Six goat feeders were also distributed to Grand Bassa County at the following lead farmers' sites: Gorgbah (2), Blaygbahn (2) and Neorpeh (2).



Fig. 3 Farmer from Bayleglay Women's Farmer Group

Shelters Completed in Grand Bassa County

Table 3.

No.	Community	County	District	Type of shelter	Type of shelter	Activities ongoing
1	Blaygbahn	Grand Bassa	#3	Maternity	General	-
2	Neorpeh	Grand Bassa	#3	Maternity	General	-
3	Gorgbahn	Grand Bassa	#4	Maternity	General	Fencing

Activity 1.5.6 Assist Land O'Lakes (LOL) to Import Improved Bloodlines of West African Dwarf Goats.

FED, Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) and Land O' Lakes have agreed to sign a tripartite MOU recently for the importation of improved goats to Liberia. The MoU draft is being reviewed by LOL home office. FED is going to rehabilitate/upgrade the livestock quarantine facility at CARI. Assessment and designing (budget/cost estimate) of the facility is ongoing, and a report is expected by the first week of September 2013.

COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Task 2.1 SME Development

Activity 2.1.A.a.i – Value Chain and Sector Studies

The Cassava Value Chain Study RFP in partnership with the European Union (EU) and Zuidoost-Azië (ZOA, "South East Asia" in Dutch) was released April 22. This RFP was designed to identify qualified individual consultants or consultancy firms to conduct a cassava market study in nine primary counties where partners are working in cassava production (Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Cape Mount, Bomi and Gbarpolu.) The study will include:

- Profitability of cassava production, processing and marketing of products such as gari, deepa, cassava chips, cassava animal feed and starch in Liberia.
- Comprehensive domestic market overview showing the market size, trends, preferences and structure.
- Business models for profitable production and processing of cassava products in Liberia to enhance productivity and competitiveness.
- Investment cost for implementing recommended business models.
- Baseline information in the 9 counties specified above.

On July 25, an Agri-Impact Consultant was selected as the service provider to conduct the study. The cassava market study launched on August 12 and enumerators began gathering data on August 15. As of August 30, the field data collection phase has been completed and the first draft of the report will be submitted the first week of September. The outcome of the study will help the cassava value chain team review its approach in putting in place a system which will help increase farmers' access to markets.

Market Data for the Vegetable Value Chain

During Q3, the ED team conducted a backward mapping exercise to find out the needs, quality standards and procurement procedures of large buyers such as the hotels, supermarkets, restaurants, and mining companies in order to facilitate linkages between the farmers and buyers. Also in Q3, the ED team conducted two linking events with USAID's Sustainable

Market Initiative (SMI) that brought together producers, caterers, aggregators, and traders in Buchanan and Ganta.

From July 17 - 20, the ED team conducted a rapid market assessment in the Monrovia area of the cold storage facilities available. All of the cold stores available in the major market areas (i.e. Duala, Red Light) are set up for frozen meat and some smaller cold stores are for packaged water. The only vegetable cold stores found are at major grocery stores, which are not available for use by the traders and aggregators.

By August 1, the ED team had gathered additional data about the vegetable market and value chain through informal interviews and focus groups, specifically with the traders from the Monrovia Vegetable Seller's Association and aggregators (Mrs. Anna Blackett of ROSNA, caterer to Arcelor Mittal). The key constraint consistently mentioned is the lack of adequate storage and lack of a cold chain for vegetables. Many traders and aggregators experience losses when they are unable to sell large quantities of vegetables bought from farmers. Mrs. Anna Blackett believes she can offer lower prices to her buyers if she is able to reduce these losses and store vegetables for a longer period of time.

In addition, traders and aggregators consistently mention that the most promising opportunity for local suppliers is with tomatoes. Tomatoes are now in huge demand year round in Monrovia. All or most of the tomatoes traded come from the Ivory Coast and due to the long distance and the lack of storage, traders report low profit margins.

Finally, there is no efficient system for organizing supply by the farmers to the market or purchasing of supply by aggregators and traders. Farmers are communicating with Go Buy Chop women on an ad-hoc basis for sales, and traders do not have direct access to farmers and are penalized by Go Buy Chop women if they venture to conduct business directly. Farmers are also producing according to traditional seasons, which causes a surplus of supply on the market.

On August 14, the ED vegetable team in conjunction with the Women and Business Officer and other FED staff held a discussion group with the leadership and vegetable sellers of the Go-Buy-Chop women at Red Light market. The purpose of the discussion was to once again determine the major constraints faced by the women when trading in fresh vegetables. Major constraints expressed were the lack of reliability of farmers (farmers take loans from the women to produce, but then do not sell their produce to the lender as agreed), and lack of storage. The information will be used to develop improved linkages between the farmers and buyers for the produce that is most demanded on the market.

Activity 2.1.A.b. Linking Value Chain Participants

Investment Promotion Activities

In May and June, FED worked with UNDP, NIC, IFC/World Bank and EU in the planning of the Investment Facilitation Platform to accelerate and foster private sector involvement and

investment in the undertaking of projects to support the Liberia National Agricultural Investment Plan (LASIP). The platform also aims to collectively advocate for the Liberian government to redouble its effort and commitment to hit and surpass the CAADP 10% and 6% targets as well as identify the types of “foreign” investment that will be most desirable to buttress the domestic efforts that will be launched. FED was tasked with the responsibility of identifying Liberian entrepreneurs who need financial and technical support from large investors to upgrade their agribusinesses. In August, FED and Building Markets were given the responsibility to support four local private sector promoters/entrepreneurs to develop their investment profiles that can attract investment capital to specific "investment ready" initiatives. The main event which aims to attract domestic and international investors to invest in and support the implementation of national agriculture implementation plans, will take place on the 9-10 of September.

Activity 2.1.B.b – Develop Cadre of Business Development Service Providers and Curriculum Farming as a Business Pilot Program

In conjunction with Component Three, nine business service providers were selected and hired under an Indefinite Quantity Contract to provide business training to farming groups and agribusiness entrepreneurs on an ongoing basis. In July, those business service providers were trained in the Farming as a Business (FaaB) methodology by consultant Robert Alea. In August, the Component Three team and the ED team identified 31 farming groups from Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties to participate in a pilot training that will take place from September to October.

Activity 2.2.A.c – Targeted Technical Support

In May, the ED team conducted a consultation with God to Man (FGM) in Doumpa, Nimba County. The group had requested assistance from FED with deciding how to invest the \$3,000 USD they currently have in the bank as a result of the first year’s sales. The group had also sent a letter of request for a loan for \$100,000 to buy a bulldozer in order to build roads in their community to link the farmers. The ED team collected production cost and sales information from the group from last year’s crops and discussed more reasonable options for investment (e.g. mechanized production and post-harvest production.) In July, the group decided to use \$2,500 to purchase rice from Monrovia to sell in their community during the next two months, which they consider the ‘hunger season’. The ED Assistant assisted them with a cost and profit analysis to show them that buying the rice in Saclapea, a much closer market, would be more profitable. On August 12, the group purchased 125 (25kg bags) of imported rice and opened a mini store in their warehouse to sell rice during the ‘hunger season’ to their community.

FGM will be harvesting their rice and vegetables in the next two months and FED will continue to support them on marketing and selling of their produce this season and planning for the next season.

Between July 3 and August 7, the Koeteman Cassava Farmer's Association of Zoeluapa, Zorgeh District, Nimba County, reported sales of 1,923 kg of cassava for a total of LD \$6,855.00. The group consists of 38 persons working with FED on a demonstration plot of less than one hectare of cassava. The group was part of first round of Organizational Strengthening training conducted by Rights and Rice in December 2012 in which the group learned the importance of working as a group and keeping records. Harvesting and selling will continue through August. The group is making plans to sell cassava cuttings as well.

In Bong County, FED held various consultations with the Palala Rural Women to prepare them for accessing finance to expand their operations. Currently, this group engages in lowland rice production, rice processing, and vegetable production. They are looking to expand to cow pea production. The ED assistant is helping them draft a short cash flow plan for the loan they are seeking to ensure they can pay the loan back. If approved, the women may be eligible for a pilot loan of \$2K from Liberia Entrepreneurial and Asset Development (LEAD) for their venture.

In Grand Bassa County, FED helped ten groups finalize and adopt by-laws and constitutions and assisted 13 more groups with templates. In addition, the Liberians United for Food Productivity and Development in District #1 reported sales of 280 kg of corn for LD \$4,364. (USD \$55.42) FED is helping them for the next season in which they plan to plant pepper, corn, watermelon, beans, and cabbage. The money earned will be reinvested in inputs and tools for this next season.

In Montserrado and Margibi, FED held consultations with nine groups to pilot a short and simplified Farm Business Plan. The plan lays out the group's overall goals, prior year activities and plans for future season activities (e.g. projected sales and resource needs.) FED staff then uses this information to show them what profit they can expect to make from their activities and help them plan how to generate resources. The plan will be used as a group deliverable on the upcoming Farming as a Business pilot.

In Lofa, FED-supported Welerkamai Farmer Association sold 100 bundles of cuttings for LD \$25K (USD \$333), Belape Vegetable Farmer Association sold 225 kg of pepper for LD \$12,750 (USD\$170), Kpandu Farmers Association sold 350 kg of rice for LD \$26,600 (USD \$355), and Letulu Vegetable Farmer Association sold 100 kg of pepper, bitterball, and okra for LD \$3,000 (USD \$40). The groups are reserving money from sales in savings until they can decide on



Fig. 4 Bagged Liberian rice in the warehouse in Totota, Bong. Ready to be sold.

future investment. For example, Welerkamai would like to purchase a cassava processing machine.

New Generational Women

During August, FED continued to provide technical assistance to New Generational Women (NGW), a group of 23 farmers (16 women, 7 men) involved in developing cassava and vegetable production and processing in Upper Clay Ashland of Montserrado. With FED and Chevron support, the group has been able to brush and clear 21 hectares. As of the end of August, the group set up nurseries, prepared and planted 8 hectares with cassava, groundnuts, and corn and prepared an additional 3 hectares for planting.

In June, the group registered as a corporation with share values set at of LD \$5,000 (\$63 USD) per share. Members will have the next six months to raise the cash through income generating activities on the farm such as selling and selling corn and peanuts from their harvests. Between August 19 and 23, the FED team held two consultations with the leadership to estimate profitability for the next three years for the combined venture and to help them with their business plan. From August 19 to the 30, the group harvested .2 acres of peanuts yielding 9 small buckets (13.5 kg) and sold 8 buckets for LD \$1,060 (\$13 USD) in the local market across the St. Paul River. In addition, they harvested .5 acre of corn yielding seven bags. They plan to sell six bags of corn at the market for an estimated LD \$5,100 (\$64). The group will continue to harvest peanuts and corn throughout September.

In addition, the group finished construction of a farm road and a palava hut at the farm site on August 27. These will be used to help the group collect, sort and package the produce for sale to the market or for distribution to the processing center. Construction of the cassava processing center, funded by the Chevron grant, also commenced in August and is expected to be completed by November.

On August 28, NGW, the FED team and AEDE hosted a visit to the site by United States Senator, Christopher Coons, and United States Ambassador for Liberia, Ms. Deborah Malac.

In September, NGW will clear and prepare an additional 3.9 hectares for vegetable production. Nurseries will be planted in September and transplanting will take place in October. In addition,

Fig. 5 Senator Coons and Ambassador Malac visit NGW Site



to further build their capacity to develop this venture as a profitable business, the ED team will hire business service providers under an IQC to perform Organizational Strengthening, Financial Management, Small Business Management, Marketing, and Business Planning training for the group members and leadership.

Fuamah Multipurpose Cooperative Re-Activation

With the help of the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), FED supported a membership re-activation and leadership election workshop held with the Fuamah Multipurpose Cooperative August 29-30. The Fuamah Multipurpose Cooperative, located in Bong Mines of Bong County, is a cooperative of 526 members (296 female, 230 male) active in lowland rice production on 300 acres. The cooperative has been mostly inactive since inception in 2002. As a result of the event, the group has come up with a new constitution, and has chosen to re-elect new leadership in January. The interim leadership will therefore remain until January. The FED team will meet with the members and the interim leadership the first week of September to sign an MOU for the rice cluster program.

Cassava Processing Update

In July, the ED team finalized the concept note to pilot an integrated or multipurpose cassava processing plant with selected entrepreneurs. In August, the ED team upgraded the plan to account for additional equipment and training that will be needed as well as for hiring a civil engineer to advise on building structures. The activity aims at assisting existing cassava processors or entrepreneurs establish multipurpose/integrated cassava processing centers at a commercial scale. The processing plants will focus on the production of gari, fufu, deepa, starch and animal feed which are often required on the domestic market. These processing plants will be located in areas where there are a substantial number of cassava farmers to ensure the constant supply of raw materials across all counties where FED is operating. This will encourage farmers to cultivate more since they will have ready-made market for their crops.

The establishment of the multi-purpose/integrated cassava processing centers will involve a cost sharing mechanism between FED and the entrepreneurs for the procurement and installation of processing machines, building shelters/storage and testing of equipment for commercial take-off. Improvement of cassava processing and utilization techniques would greatly increase labor efficiency and incomes. Social and economic benefits derived from the activity, among others will be a reduction of post-harvest losses, enhanced shelf life of products, increased marketing opportunities, improved human and livestock nutrition, employment generation, poverty alleviation, improved rural income, food for the masses, diversification of the economic base and optimal utilization of resources. To ensure ownership and sustainability of the processing plants, several meetings were held with equipment manufacturers, processors to agree on the key machinery required, profitability of the venture, and contribution of the processors. FED support will include coaching and mentoring processors on quality production, food safety standards, marketing strategies, financial management, and extension service provision to farmers. FED will also assist the farmers in the surrounding areas to

organize cluster production for a sustainable supply of raw materials to feed the processing plant. They will also be taught good agricultural practices to increase their yields. The activity will help FED have a better understanding of how to strengthen linkages between the different value chain actors to ensure the ownership and sustainability of the activity. There will be one cassava processing business supported in each of the FED counties. The project is expected to be completed by the end of September.

Activity 2.1.B.e – Radio Entrepreneurship Outreach

Interactive Radio Training for Liberian Journalists

In June and July, FED Radio Specialists conducted a training and mentorship program for 28 Liberian radio journalists representing 14 radio stations from FED’s six counties. The program introduced the journalists to FED’s objectives and

Fig.6 Completion of training with Liberian Radio Journalists



activities and the agriculture sector in general. In addition, journalists learned how to conduct effective interviews and implement radio programming appropriate for the agriculture sector.

From August 16 to 31 the FED radio specialists traveled to Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa, and Margibi counties to continue the mentorship program. Radio station journalists were mentored in establishing a network of expert informants (FED staff), conducting field visitations, interviews and focus groups with farmers, improving studio management, and using Adobe Cool Edit brush-ups to improve farm radio production.

Each community radio station has the potential to reach over 200,000 listeners. The following radio stations produced and aired three radio programs each concerning rice, cassava, livestock and vegetable production.

Table 4.

Radio Station	Program Name	Program Times
Radio Kergheamahn, Ganta, Nimba County	“Soil the Bank”	Wednesday 7:30 pm; Sunday 11 am
Radio Saclepea, Saclepea, Nimba County	“Back to the Soil”	Saturday & Sunday, 7 pm

Magic FM, Buchannan, Grand Bassa County	“Farmers Talk”	Saturday 6 am; Sunday 7 am
LACSA Radio, Buchannan, Grand Bassa County	“Agriculture and You”	N/A
SAWU FM, Kakata, Margibi County	“Farmers Talk”	Thursday 4 pm; Sunday 7 pm
Atlantic Radio, Kakata, Margibi County	“Back to the Soil”	Tuesday 9 am, Sunday 10 pm

Challenges listed by the radio stations were the following:

- Lack of transport, mainly motor bikes to travel longer distances where FED’s farmers are located;
- Limited technical equipment like laptops reserved exclusively for farm radio production and digital recorders (Zoom H4n Portable and Maringze);
- Low level of skill in using Adobe Cool Edit software; and
- Lack of rain gear to gather content, especially during the rainy season.

The Radio Specialists will continue to mentor the radio stations in production and agriculture messages in line with the farm calendar. They will also be available to help the radio stations trouble shoot issues with Adobe Cool Edit software. The radio programming will be an important aspect of the Year 3 work plan to extend FED’s reach to more farmers.

Task 2.2 Access to Finance

Activity 2.2.e – Village Savings and Loan

Village Savings and Loan Training and Mentoring

On July 25, two business service providers, Liberia Initiative for Development Services (LIDS) and Educare, were notified they would be awarded contracts to roll out VSLA training to 26 farming groups in FED’s six counties. On August 28, the purchase order for Educare was signed and roll out began. Training for rural farmers will last through the groups’ first payout. The program will include training and mentorship over a 12 month period through the groups’ first payout and will include the election of savings club leadership, the importance of saving and investing, and record keeping. A maximum of 25 members per group, involving primarily women, will be trained and mentored in village savings and loan methodology. The ED team estimates that the 26 groups will generate at total of \$185,000 in ag-related loans for the farmers at a 15.65% annual return for the savings group over a three year period (estimate for year one is \$26,000). Groups will begin saving in October.

Funding from USADF for Farming Groups Processing Cassava

On August 2, the ED cassava team was notified by United States African Development Agency (USADF) that they are awarding grants to four beneficiaries in cassava processing due to FED's assistance. This was a culmination of activities organized by FED to support the development of cassava processors to supply the HANDS project with gari. In February, FED concluded a Pilot Youth Business Plan training, mentorship, and competition with 28 youth representing 11 business ideas from local universities. The winners of the competition wrote business plans for producing and processing cassava, though none had any prior experience working in the industry. In April, FED supported 12 prospective processors (entrepreneurs and farming groups) and the 3 winners of the youth business plan competition to visit the HANDS cassava processing center in Zwedru, Gran Gede County in order to expose them to a functioning cassava processing factory. The youth then partnered with the cassava processors, who lacked in knowledge of business plan writing, to help them write grant proposals for funding. Four farming groups were subsequently awarded grants. The estimated grant amounts are \$50,000 USD each.

The FED project will continue to partner with USADF in this manner. In particular, USADF is currently reviewing and closing a grant given to LEAD, a local micro-finance organization that has successfully conducted a pilot program lending to groups of farmers in Bong and Nimba with the SHOPS project. The organization would like to expand their lending program in agriculture, but lack funds to increase the loan pool. LEAD received a grant from USADF and a loan from the Central Bank for their non-agriculture lending programs. If the closing of the grant goes well, USADF is willing to extend a new grant to LEAD just for agri-lending. In this case, FED will review the possibility of partnering with USADF to help LEAD expand its operations. In the meantime, LEAD has approximately \$2,000 USD of funding they can extend to additional farming groups and is willing to conduct a pilot with FED farmers. The Access to Finance Officer will be working with the field teams to evaluate and locate farming groups for the pilot.

COMPONENT THREE: BUILDING LOCAL HUMAN TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL CAPACITY

Summary

The revitalization of the Booker T. Washington Institute's one hectare swamp for low-land rice production has begun this month. The swamp had been neglected since 2009 and needed significant human labor and power tiller assistance to bring it back into production.

During August, the Career Resource and Internship Center (CRIC) was also finalized and is being presented to the centers of excellence for their approval and acceptance. Currently, several component three staff are on the road explaining the Career Resource and Internship Center to the community colleges and BWI.

Work is ongoing to enhance the facilities at Nimba County Community College (NCCC). The rice and fish farming project is being established at NCCC. The UDP lowland rice demonstration site is progressing.

Task 3.1 CREATING CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Activity 3.1.1 Vocational Instructor Capacity Development

The Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education Specialist attended the opening ceremony for the third ECOWAS-TVET Curriculum Development workshop on August 8 at the Tubman Vocational High School in Sinkor. At the workshop, the education and trade specialists worked on creating various curricula for post-secondary vocational institutions. The curriculum for agriculture was completed earlier this year with significant FED assistance and will be approved by the Minister of Education at a ceremony on September 3.



Fig 7. NCCC Volunteers Working Together to Prepare the Rice and Fish Farm Activity

Activity 3.1.2 Improved Access and Use of Information

Activities to finalize the purchase of computers for Centers of Excellence are progressing and bids went out on August 26. Out of the four sealed bids none of the local providers were sufficiently compliant to meet the needs laid out in the request for quotes. A re-advertisement of the specifications and guidelines must be tendered. This is necessary but delaying the process. In the RFQ, 12 desktop and four laptop computers are to be purchased for each CoE as well as display projector, scanner, printer and photocopier.

Activity 3.1.3 Internship Program

FED has taken the step to provide the Centers of Excellence with Career Resource and Internship Centers (CRIC). Career plans or goals have a significant impact on a student's persistence in staying in school. More specifically, those students who have a defined job-related career goal are more apt to persist in their college career than those who lack a focused career plan.

Due to Liberia's post-war context, most of the young adults at the county level have not had the opportunity to go back to school after high school or to continue their educational sojourn. This is either because of the unavailability or inaccessibility to vocational technical schools or

academic institutions. Many now have this opportunity in the form of the newly opened community colleges and technical colleges in the various counties.

Interest in technical vocational education has mushroomed. There is a need for more marketable skills at the county level with the coming of large concession companies and the extractive industry. Community colleges are now tasked with the responsibility of managing this new trend and influx of students without an appropriate mechanism in place for their guidance towards realistic career goals.

FED will address this career counseling and internship need in our target counties by partnering with these Institutions to establish CRICs. The CRICs will offer the resources and aid students need to help them make informed, attainable career plans and at the same time support a wide range of learning activities by improving access to information, as information plays an important role in the wider learning process – i.e. helping students to understand the context of their work, follow new approaches, undertake new responsibilities, improve their practice, and remind them of basic concepts.

Active work is underway to provide these centers for all five (four county vocational centers and BWI) institutions. Construction has started to convert a wing of the NCCC education campus into a CRIC along with the offices for FED and the department of agriculture.



Fig. 8 Low Land Rice Swamp Power Tilling Activity at Booker Washington Institute, Kakata

Activity 3.1.4 Practical Agriculture Experience

During this reporting period is the new activity at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) 1,2 hectare year-round swamp. This swamp was last in production over four years ago. With a recent change in academic schedule, places like BWI have been unable to get the necessary labor that is needed to conduct low-land rice cultivation. With four years of neglect, it required major energy to bring it back into production.

FED Vocational Education Specialist has been working with BWI to consider agricultural activities as opportunities for income generating ventures. . Last month agriculture department head, Jacob Swee, presented a robust plan to make the BWI agriculture program more self-supporting by working with existing farm activities. These activities include swine, beef and poultry production as well as rubber, vegetables and rice. FED agreed to help support action to refurbish the one hectare lowland rice swamp.

This activity has also been good to show case use of the power tiller and UDP technologies. The swamp will still need to have permanent dikes and canals installed. This will happen during the dry season, when water flow is at a minimum.

Activity 3.1.5 Student Leadership

The Training Specialist, and the Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education Specialist, each conducted a day-long training for the National Volunteers. These happened on July 30 at Grand Bassa Community College in Buchanan and on August 29, at Booker Washington Institute in Kakata. These 12 (GBCC) and 25 (BWI) National Volunteers were recruited by UNICEF and will work for the Advancing Youth Project (AYP) throughout the four counties where FED has a mandate to promote Farming and Youth related activities.

Task 3.2 SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ADVISOR SUPPORT

Two Short Term Technical Assistants arrived on August 26 to begin a 55-day activity to determine the Market Analysis and Organizational Development, both STTAs will be working on Strategic Planning for areas where the Centers of Excellence and Enterprise Service Centers are located. These two STTAs will spend eight days working in each of four existing centers of excellence communities. Nimba, Lofa, Grand Bassa and Margibi. They will give a presentation on October 18 on their finding and recommendations.

A rapid market analysis also will be conducted to determine gap in the demand and supply for goods and services in the counties where these CoEs are located to give specific guidance on the potential agricultural or vocational products or services that can be offered. The business plan will address the investments and CD needed to meet identified demands with expectations for the return on investment for each marketable service or product line.

Task 3.3 NON FORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Activity 3.3.1 Community Based Projects

Farming as a Business ToT activities have finished, and the current plan is to recruit 31 farm groups in Grand Bassa (25), Margibi (3) and Monsterrado (3) counties to attend training. The activity is underway as farm groups are being determined according to their receptivity and ability to make best use of such training. The actual training will be done through the trained partners, not directly by FED. Close monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of this first phase of program implementation using FED contracted partners.

Upcoming Activities, September 1-15

- The BWI Rice Swamp will be completed and returning students will participate in enterprise activities;
- ICT equipment will be installed in NCCC;
- Farm groups for Farming as a Business training recruitment will be completed;
- Teacher education workshops will be conducted at NCCC. The Vocational Training and Non Formal Education Specialist will present Curriculum Development, Lesson

Planning, Testing and Evaluation as well as Classroom Management for all instructors at the college.

COMPONENT FOUR: CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES

GENDER

On August 16, FED team members met with representatives from Coca-Cola's 5 by 20 Program, which aims to promote the economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs worldwide by the year 2020. They are looking for development partners to help fund a local project with women entrepreneurs in agriculture. Agri-Impact Consult, a Ghanaian-based consulting firm specializing in implementation of vegetable value chain upgrading strategies, presented a proposal for Coca-Cola and FED to pilot the use of protected and soil-less horticultural technology with 75 women entrepreneurs. The pilot project would produce high value vegetable crops (e.g., tomatoes and sweet peppers) for sale on local and export markets and is expected to produce \$150,000 USD in sales in the first year. The initiative will use modern tech infrastructure (initially galvanized metal covered with breathable netting) for the pilot with the plan to replace this with more affordable materials such as bamboo for replication. Another meeting between FED and Coca-Cola is planned to flesh out details of the partnership that will be part of the FY2014 work plan.

From August 5 -16, Marcia Odell the Gender Specialist Consultant arrived to work with the Cross Cutting Team on Gender. The purpose of consultancy was to plan FED strategies to integrate Gender in its FY14 activities.

- FED will consider, at every point in its work and activates, the gender constraints that may exist;
- FED will design, and implement its activities to mitigate the impact of those constraints;
- FED will integrate a gender inclusive clause in all appropriate correspondence; and
- All FED staff will participate in gender mainstreaming training.

On August 7, FED attended a meeting at the Ministry of Gender and Development in Monrovia with Parleh Harris, the Director for women empowerment and Lawodo Nimly, a Ministry of Gender and Development Consultant. The parties discussed building synergies between the FED project and the Ministry of Gender and Development County Coordinators, and the empowering value of the VSLA amongst women's groups.

All future training in Gender by FED will be communicated, along with an invitation to attend, to the MoGD's County Office Coordinator. FED will communicate regularly with MoGD, sharing information and ongoing activities.

FED followed up with COSEO-trained women in improved food during the first week of August in Nimba County. The women's group in Ganta has completed their business

registration and they are in the process of getting the articles of incorporation completed in order to be officially recorded.

On August 12, the Women in Business Officer conducted a Gender Awareness Training on Gender Mainstreaming in FED's programs and activities at UNICEF and FED Technical Agriculture ToTs workshop at Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in Kakata, Margibi County.

On August 20, the Senior Program Specialist and the Women in Business Officer met with two representatives of the National Federation of Women Empowerment in Agriculture (NFWEA). NFWEA supports women in agriculture in Liberia with a goal of promoting women's full participation in and access to equal opportunity in Liberia. The representatives from NFWEA were Madam Edith K. Ankrah and Madam Elizabeth Ktoto. A MoU between the parties is being discussed and will be drafted if their needs can be met.

YOUTH

FED held capacity training from August 19-31 on technical and improved practices in agriculture. The ToT workshop was held in Kakata, Margibi County for 28 National Agriculture Volunteers from the UNICEF/MoYS National Volunteers Program.

The training focused on providing best practices theory and practical knowledge with a concentration on growing vegetables, lowland and upland rice, and cassava. Additional subjects of gender mainstreaming, USAID's environmental compliance policy, and workforce readiness capacity building in agriculture were presented. The volunteers experienced hands on training in the field, where they demonstrated the best practices they were learning. They constructed beds for vegetable planting and mounds and ridges for cassava cultivation. Fertilizer application, intercropping best practices, as well as pest and diseases control measures were introduced to the volunteers as they prepared to begin their employment as National Agriculture Volunteers.

At the end of the training, Mr. Mathew Ndote, a representative from USAID Advancing Youth Project (AYP) provided an overview of his project interventions and counties of operations. The volunteers will be assigned with AYP to provide agriculture extension services to the AYP youth garden clubs for a period of 11 months starting September 2013. The training supplied by FED is defined in a memorandum of understanding between FED and USAID's Advancing Youth Project (AYP).



Fig. 9 FED's Cassava Manager demonstrates to NVs on how to properly cut a cutting before planting.

In August a two day workshop on the importance of Agriculture as a Business TOT was held by FED staff for 60 of AYP's youth club members in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, who are participants in the Back to School Garden 2013 competition. The training focused on how school youth clubs can create and establish businesses

with the harvests from their farms including coaching on how to identify markets for the vegetables and cassava they have produced.

After a series of meetings, on August 23, FED and AYP formally signed a (MoU) to encourage and increase youth involvement in agriculture. FED is to provide agriculture technical training support for AYP's youth club gardens within the two party's counties of operations. AYP will provide Extending Alternative Basic Education (ABE) literacy to young AYP and FED young farmer(s) or groups as appropriate and mutually agreed to. The participation of youth in the agriculture sector is vital for Liberia's future prosperity. The FED MoU with AYP is intended to increase the opportunities to reach out to youth groups to get them involved in the profession of agriculture in FED's counties of operations

FED has provided training on improved agricultural technology and practices in the production of cassava, rice, vegetables and/or goats, FED's priority value chains, for AYP's youth clubs in five counties, Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa. The National Volunteers trained by FED will provide agricultural extension support to AYP's youth clubs, along with continued support to the clubs. In addition four Extension Officers assigned to FED and AYP's youth beneficiaries will be based in Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties.

As a result of this collaboration, AYP will, absorb and support the smooth deployment of allocated National Youth Volunteers to respective clusters and youth clubs for the term of their internship, and mobilize youth to actively participate in FED supported activities including youth club gardens and value chain operations as appropriate

Moreover, the MoU will also strengthen the impact of the initiatives presently being delivered by both parties; encourage and facilitate systematic and cooperative action between AYP and FED as USAID implementing partners in achieving a common vision and objectives.

INTEGRATING NUTRITION INTO FED ACTIVITIES

The FED Nutritionist attended a meeting on August 8 with Rev. John Sumo, Director of National Health Promotion Division and Garmetta T. Brown, Information Education and Communication Coordinator at the Ministry of Health to discuss the production and airing of radio dramas and spot messages on county partner radio stations, regarding the importance of dietary diversity for children's and women's nutrition.

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) will review and approve the messages, these will then be sent to USAID for approval once they have been developed by FED and then professionally produced by a local Liberian business. A representative from MOHSW has agreed to collaborate with FED and hold a pre-test of the messages in the field before airing. The messages will be aired on FED partner radio stations as a pilot activity in two counties starting in late September of 2013. The FED M&E staff will monitor the result of the radio messages and the activity will be modified, if needed, and expanded with additional messages and broadcasts in other communities and counties in the upcoming year.



Fig 10. FED's PUA Extension Officer demonstrates to NVs some best field layout and planting skills.

TASK 4.1 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Field testing of all FED extension materials has now been completed. We received feedback from 78 individuals on various materials. All extension materials are now being edited according to the feedback provided and will be ready for general distribution by the end of September 2013, with the help of the incoming extension LTTA.

Follow up is being conducted on various activities that were implemented in 2012 that were closed out. The objective is to analyze how groups or individuals have benefited from the activities and in the process, learn the best practices that can be replicated. Several reports are being compiled to help with 2013/2014 work plan.

FED collaborated with World Food Program to host a “Food Security Consultation” workshop. The purpose of the consultation was to share information on where each project is working (town and county), who are the beneficiaries (group names) and the types of intervention/assistance being provided. Participants included 10 international NGOs and the Ministry of Agriculture. The workshop raised several issues based on stakeholders’ difficulties and a roundtable discussion has been scheduled for November to discuss shared constraints.

USAID-EHELD extended an invitation to FED to participate in a career fair that was hosted in Bong County for the summer Upward Bound Program. The objective of the career fair was to ensure current and prospective students were exposed to various career possibilities in agriculture and engineering. Students attended from 6 high schools and 2 universities. The majority of students that visited the FED table were enrolled in Cuttington or University of Liberia. FED objective at the program was to promote the three components of FED, and relay job possibilities in agriculture. A total of 69 students visited the FED table.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.2a. Improving Data Collection Systems

M&E staff field trips followed-up on various surveys (cassava, vegetables, rice), collected and refined data and information (group member lists, measurements, environment, completed activity follow-up), oversaw the cassava farmer survey, conducted cassava harvest yield measurements, and managed the initial rice harvest on the Year 2 demonstration plots.

A meeting was held with the MoA Director of Planning to explore possible collaboration with MoA County Agriculture extension staff to initiate joint M&E activities and trainings. A subsequent meeting was held with the MoA Deputy Minister for Extension, Thomas Gbokie, to further pursue this initiative. A plan for collaboration will form part of the FED work plan for Year 3.

M&E is finalizing a macro template that will sort out beneficiaries to avoid double counting of participation in various activities, like trainings. This program will also include ranges that will act a guide for data entry and avoid errors.

Record-keeping at the demonstration sites and on individual farmer’s fields continued during the month. Forms were given to individual farmers, group leaders and lead farmers to begin recording production inputs. Later, data on harvests and sales will be recorded. M&E staff will follow-up to ensure that individuals are making correct entries, understand the items to be tracked, and resolve issues and questions within the process.

M&E staff participated in a Webinar with a USAID contractor to discuss recent findings from an ongoing study and review indicators and possible changes in scope and definitions. This was a very interesting and useful exercise and helped to solidify our understanding of several indicator definitions. FED is waiting for the final guide to be completed and distributed in late September.

M&E participated in an agenda setting series of meetings and a field trip in anticipation of an ongoing impact evaluation activity of the FED UDP program. The USAID funded World Bank consultants spent two days in discussions with FED and USAID and another 2 days in the field. This will be a long term study of the effects that UDP might have on the livelihoods of participants. The consultants are particularly interested in the impact on women.

4.2b. Baseline Surveys, Impact Surveys and Special Studies

Summary Table of Surveys (Table 5)

Ongoing Field Activities	Status
Year 2 rice farmer baseline survey	Report pending
Baseline surveys of the participating farmers in the Year 2 goat production and pass-on scheme	Report pending
Vegetable harvest and production surveys	Report pending
Cassava survey initiated during the month using PDA devices. Harvest yields from Year 1 crop being sampled in the field.	Survey completed; harvest sampling ongoing
Environmental compliance for Year 2 demonstration sites	Surveys completed
Measurements of the UDP and	These GPS measurements are

ISFM field sites	completed
Follow-up on completed activities to determine impacts and ongoing needs	These surveys have been initiated and will continue through the end of Year 2
Rice harvest on FED 2012 Year 2 demonstration sites were initiated at one site	The plan for yield measurement and schedule of harvests are being prepared. The harvest process will probably continue for 3-4 months

Task 4.2c. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E staff from the counties and Monrovia continued to oversee the NGO contracted cassava survey teams in the field. The surveys have all been transmitted to the Monrovia office and then redirected to the counties so the M&E staff can review the completed forms for errors and missing data.

This cassava farmer survey was completed during the month and the analysis of the data will begin in September. There were 335 households in the survey, including FED participants and non-FED participants. Concurrently, the FED county staff is measuring the yield from the demonstration site harvests and some individual farmer's fields.

Record keeping forms that were provided to the county extension staff and the contracted NGO extension staff to work with lead farmers and individual farmers to keep input and output records continue to be followed up. No results have been obtained as yet.

A draft plan for the Year 2 rice harvest yield measurement has been circulated and will be finalized early in September. Valuable experience was gained from the first harvest at Johnsonville, Montserrado County, and has been incorporated into the draft plan.

About 90 site monitoring visits were made by M&E staff to various ongoing activities during the month. These visits included:

Table 6.

1.	Continue to follow-up on completed activities impact and ongoing issues and needs
2.	Assessing progress at various Value Chain sites – e/g., cassava and goat farms
3.	Cassava Farmer Survey oversight and field visits to village being surveyed
4.	Follow-up on the progress of the record keeping initiative

5.	Monitoring and follow-up on school gardening activity, training for rice and cassava processing machinery manufacture, and youth intern agriculture training
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Indicators

During the month under the vegetable program, demonstration group members were trained and actually applied the knowledge learned on their farms (140 individuals – 65 male and 75 female). Another smaller group of students benefited from a 10 day capacity workshop held at the Booker Washington Institute in Kakata, Margibi county with a total of 28 (M=25, F=3) students benefitting from the National Youth Voluntary Services (NYVS), who will be assigned with the various agriculture youth clubs. Additionally, 10 students were trained in vegetable and cassava gardening and went back to their schools and applied the technology (10 individuals – 5 male and 5 female). Another 6 (M=6, F=0) individuals were trained in the manufacturing of rice and cassava threshers but have not applied these techniques in their shops as yet.

Capacity Building of M&E Staff

One M&E staff person has been approved to attend a 2-day workshop on ICT in Nairobi in early September where he will use the workshop format to develop plans for the introduction and use of PDA and GPS devices for monitoring and reporting from the field by FED extension staff, and in the Year 3 proposed collaboration with the MoA M&E program.

Activities Planned for Next Month

1. M&E staff will begin the process of analyzing the cassava farmer survey database from the completed field survey.
2. The cassava harvest continues to be measured and reported by M&E and county staff; the analysis of the cassava survey will begin.
3. M&E will initiate and oversee the rice harvest season. The results of this harvest will have an impact on FED planning for Year 3 activities.
4. The Quarterly M&E staff meeting will take place; an additional two-day working meeting will be scheduled for M&E data entry staff involved in activities on macro training, TAMIS training, completing some entries for the rice survey that was completed in May.
5. M&E staff will begin the second phase of interviews with rice farmers to gather data on production inputs this year on their own lands. These will be the same farmers that participated in the May survey.
6. Additional surveys will be initiated to look at the results of UDP, ISFM, rice seed production, and the Lead Farmer activity. All of these will have implications for the FED Year 3 Work Plan.

STTA Tracking Table

Table 7

Name	Position	Partner	Dates	Summary
Dennis McCarthy	Goat Value Chain Specialist	DAI	January-September 30, 2013	Oversight and implementation of all goat-related value chain activities.
Rachel Wade	Communications Specialist	DAI	February October 2013	Communications support to FED Comms team
Larry Tweed	Input Supply Specialist	IFDC	June August 2013	Support for pilot voucher program and UDP program.
Linda McGovern	Sr. Program Specialist	DAI	July-September 2013	Oversight and management support to FED's crosscutting components.
Marcia Odell	Gender Specialist	PLAN	August 9-20, 2013	Work with gender team on development of Yr. 3 workplan
June Lavelle	Agricultural Marketing Specialist	DAI	August 27-October 15, 2013	Conduct an agriculture marketing assessment of the CoE's FED is working with
Earnest Musinamwana	Capacity Development Specialist	DAI	August 27-October 15, 2013	Conducting organization capacity development assessments at CoEs
Patrick Hall	Environmental Compliance Specialist	Cadmus	August 8-23, 2013	Conduct site visits and prepare the Yr. 3 workplan inputs for Environmental Compliance
Souleymane Nacro	Rice Entomologist	DAI	Aug 25 – September 22, 2013	Carry out field investigation on the status of insect pests and their natural enemies in Liberia

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

This report covers August 2013 activities from the FED Human Resources department

Staff Recruited, LTTA:

- Tarnue G. Brooks: M&E Coordinator/Lofa
- Nico Parkinson: Communication Specialist
- Yei Legay: VAEO/ Nimba

Short-Term ICA Contractor:

- Aaron Tucker: Engineer
- Earnest Musinamwana
- June Lavelle
- Soulemame Nacro
- Modesco Y. Gbanawon: Agro-Equipment Technician
- 23 Low Land Swamp Developers

Ongoing hiring:

- ICA for Engineer for the Rice Activities

Training:

- Jusu Fahnbulleh MDF Assistant, is attending a 8 weeks Internal Audit and system control training at the Liberia Institute of Public Administration-LIPA

Other ongoing HR activities:

- Performance Management Plan
- Ethics Training