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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	ANTENATAL CARE
BCC	BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION
CDHC	COMMUNITY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
CDMC	COMMUNITY DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
CHC	COMMUNITY HEALTH COMMITTEE
CHV	COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS
C-IMCI	COMMUNITY INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CHILDHOOD ILLNESS
CMAM	COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION
DMU	DISASTER MANAGEMENT UNIT
DRR	DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
ERRP	EBOLA RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PROGRAM
ENA	ESSENTIAL NUTRITION ACTIONS
EVD	EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE
FAAB	FARMING AS A BUSINESS
FED	FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
FFP	FOOD FOR PEACE
FY	FISCAL YEAR
gCHV	GENERAL COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS
GCHV	GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS
GMP	GROWTH MONITORING AND PROMOTION
GoL	GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
IY	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR
JSI	JOHN SNOW, INC.
LAUNCH	LIBERIAN AGRICULTURAL UPGRADING NUTRITIONAL AND CHILD HEALTH
LM	LEAD MOTHER
LOA	LIFE OF AWARD
M&E	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
MCI	MAKING CENTS INTERNATIONAL
MOA	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
MOE	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
MOH	MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MOHSW	MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE
MOU	MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
PCI	PROJECT CONCERN INTERNATIONAL
PHH	POST HARVEST HANDLING
PLW	PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN
PM2A	PREVENTING MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN UNDER TWO APPROACH
PTA	PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION
QIVC	QUALITY IMPROVEMENT VERIFICATION CHECKLIST
RBHS	REBUILDING BASIC HEALTH SERVICES/FUNDED BY USAID
SBC	SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL CHANGE
SO	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
TBA	TRADITIONAL BIRTH ATTENDANTS
TTM	TRADITIONALLY TRAINED MIDWIVES
USAID	UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASH	WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

I. Introduction

This report presents the achievements of the Liberian Agricultural Upgrading, Nutrition and Child Health (LAUNCH) program during fiscal year (FY) 2015 by ACDI/VOCA and its partners Project Concern International (PCI), John Snow Inc. (JSI) and Making Cents International (MCI). The report highlights field-level program activities achievements, challenges and lessons learned. Overall, the LAUNCH program was able to achieve positive results during a challenging year.

During FY15, LAUNCH contributed to the improved food security of communities in Bong and Nimba Counties, and used the lessons learned from previous years to scale up agricultural, nutrition and child health activities. Program implementation focused on increasing resilience and addressing the aftershocks of the Ebola outbreak under the three Strategic Objectives (SOs). Further emphasis was placed on delivering quality training to participants while strengthening institutional support for community groups, local and national government partners.

When the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak peaked in Liberia during the final quarter of FY14 and the first quarter of FY15 the Government of Liberia declared a state of emergency, closing schools and enacting quarantines and movement restrictions. In this challenging context, LAUNCH continued to operate and adapt to the needs of communities, leveraging community volunteers including care group leaders and household mothers and disaster risk management committee members.

Under strategic objective (SO) 1 the LAUNCH program continued to reorganize and facilitate farmers groups, especially the 144 groups that were affected by the EVD outbreak. LAUNCH conducted trainings and collaborated with the Ebola Recovery and Resilience Program (ERRP) to identify farmers to participate in the agricultural voucher scheme. The trainings focused on organizational development for farmer groups, strengthening participants' knowledge of and skills development in appropriate crop production practices, post-harvest handling and loss prevention, farming as a business, accumulating savings and credit, and poultry husbandry practices. Review and analysis indicate the trainings led to increased farm level productivity. The 2015 annual survey results showed that yields of the top staple crops (rice and cassava) increased above the baseline of 1,208 kg/Ha (rice) and 5,000 kg/Ha (cassava) to 1,485.84 kg/Ha, a 23% increase in rice production and to 7,753.63 kg/Ha, a 55% increase in cassava production. Additionally, the survey findings also showed that approximately 82% of SO1 participants reported selling agricultural produce following their previous harvest, and 83% of SO1 participants reported having access to either loans or credit from LAUNCH-facilitated savings and credit groups and other sources.

The program also continued collaboration with the Government of Liberia (GoL) by participating in national coordination meetings to support the key line ministries. Collaboration with other key actors such as the USAID-funded Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Project and the USDA-funded, ACDI/VOCA-implemented LIFE III project at multiple levels (national, county, and district). LAUNCH's collaboration with LIFE III included use of their personnel's technical expertise to provide technical assistance to program staff, farmer groups and savings and credit groups on farming as a business and savings and credits, joint intervention to support smallholder farmers affected by the Ebola emergency in Saclepea, Nimba County, the exchange of project staff on critical areas of needs and the use of the same insurance company for both projects among others. In addition, the LAUNCH team

collaborated with FED particularly in the areas of information sharing to avoid overlap with participants within the same operational areas.

Collaboration continued with the main line ministries - mainly the Ministry of Agriculture - in joint monitoring visits to lead farmer's demonstration plot trainings at the county level. The LAUNCH team also participated in monthly Agriculture Committee Coordination (ACC) meetings in Monrovia, and Ministry extension workers facilitated workshops for lead farmers at the county level and during regular field coordination meetings. LAUNCH staff also participated in the Ministry of Agriculture Technical Committee for Rice and Soil sector working group. During the year under review, LAUNCH also actively collaborated with the ministry of public works on joint road identification and monitoring visits.

Through the height of the outbreak in the fall months of 2014, and as the epidemic continued through the first eight months of 2015, the LAUNCH program's SO2 staff worked on community Ebola education, contact tracing, active surveillance, and the distribution of educational materials to 402 communities, ultimately reaching approximately 135,000 people in Bong and Nimba counties. By the end of the outbreak, more than 98% of LAUNCH communities remained Ebola-free.

Building upon existing relationships with the Government of Liberia (GoL) fostered during previous project years, LAUNCH served as a partner for GoL ministries throughout the EVD response. Specifically, LAUNCH supported: efforts to re-establish health services and rebuild confidence in the health system in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW); WASH campaigns and back to school initiatives (during February and March 2015) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW); and efforts to organize disaster management activities at the community level in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. LAUNCH continues to collaborate with the GoL at multiple levels (i.e. national, county, and district), across several ministries (e.g. agriculture, health, gender, children and social welfare, education and public works), and participates in ministry coordination meetings both in Monrovia and at county level.

Some of the key achievements during the reporting period were:

- A significant increase in the number of participants diversifying crops on their farms. The annual survey shows that 43% of SO1 participants reported diversifying the crops they cultivated this year, an increase of 13% over FY 2014, and well above the LOA target of 30%.
- An increase in the number of SO1 participants interacting with markets: The annual survey shows that 82% of SO1 participants reported selling agricultural produce in the last harvest compared to 78% in FY 2014.
- An increase in the number of participants with access to financing (cash savings or credit): The annual survey found that 83% of SO1 participants reported having access to cash savings or credit through informal and formal networks (e.g. microfinance organizations and savings groups) in FY 2015, a significant increase when compared with FY 2014 and surpassing the 2015 target of 75%.
- Building upon existing relationships with the Government of Liberia (GoL) fostered during program implementation, LAUNCH partnered with GoL ministries throughout the EVD response.
- LAUNCH supported efforts to re-establish health services and rebuild confidence in the health system in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW); including providing training for health workers, joint monitoring and support visits to community health centers
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW); LAUNCH supported WASH campaigns and back to school initiatives in February and March 2015;

- LAUNCH continues to collaborate with the Government of Liberia (GoL) at multiple levels (i.e. national, county, and district). This collaboration will contribute to the exit strategy in building capacity of LAUNCH participants and in preparing to hand-over responsibility to the GOL and participants.
 - Ministry of Agriculture: In March, LAUNCH provided technical support and logistical support to the Ministry of Agriculture, WFP and FAO in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data for the National Comprehensive Food Security Survey, which was conducted in April and May, 2015. The LAUNCH team continues to participate in coordination meetings both at county and Monrovia levels, and co-facilitates training for Lead Farmers at the county level.
 - Ministry of Gender: LAUNCH participates in coordination meetings for cash transfers, and the Ministry also participated in the ACDI VOCA participant protection training.
 - Ministry of Public Works: LAUNCH worked in coordination with the ministry on the identification and monitoring of roads construction projects
- During FY15, 310 young people successfully completed the standardized three-unit training package developed to engage young people in agro-business. The training focused on seven key knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) necessary to start an agro-business, including taking initiative, effective communication, accessing and applying information, cost analysis, enterprise planning, problem solving and agricultural systems.
- 158 youth demonstrated application of the key KSAs from the agro-business training and therefore qualified to receive agro-business start-up grants. These grants included seeds and tools intended for sale to rural farmers, with guidance to reinvest earnings into buying new stocks to expand their business. Individual and small group coaching accompanied the grant distribution and focused on topics relevant to grantees as they began their agro-business, such as planning for investments, seeking support from others, learning from setbacks and managing cash flow.
- 129 youth started businesses after receiving the individual agro-business grant.

II. Strategic Objective 1: Increased Availability of and Access to Food of Vulnerable Rural Population

IR 1.1: Improved Smallholder Production

During FY15, the LAUNCH program reached 6,246 smallholder farmers (3,282 males and 2,964 females) through follow-up technical support and trainings on site selection, nursery management, land preparation, transplanting or appropriate seed sowing, integrated pest management, farm maintenance, and post-harvest loss prevention and market linkages. The LAUNCH team will continue to use the approach of extension service delivery to strengthen the technical capacity of lead farmers, and in so doing develop a cadre of community resource persons to continue to deliver extension services after the end of the LAUNCH program in the absence of a functional government-supported agricultural extension system.

The intensive outreach to smallholder farmers also resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of smallholder farmers diversifying crops cultivated from 36% in FY14 to 43% in FY15 against a baseline of 27% as shown in figure one (1) below. Despite EVD's negative effects on farm level productivity, yields of the top two staple crops (rice and cassava) continued to be above the baseline as indicated by the gross margin data. In FY15 there was an average yield increase of 1,485.84 kg/Ha for rice as compared to 1,208 kg/Ha as per the baseline data. Cassava increased from 5,650 kg/Ha to 7,753.63 kg/Ha as shown in figure two (2). The program will continue to support smallholder farmers to learn improved production techniques for new crop varieties and work with farmers build their knowledge across different crop types

to help ensure continuous crop diversification ultimately leading to improved household food security, nutritional status and income earning capacity. LAUNCH collaboration with community lead farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture extension personnel within the program area will continue to contribute to farmer’s capacity building.

Figure 1: Percentage of smallholder households diversifying crops cultivated

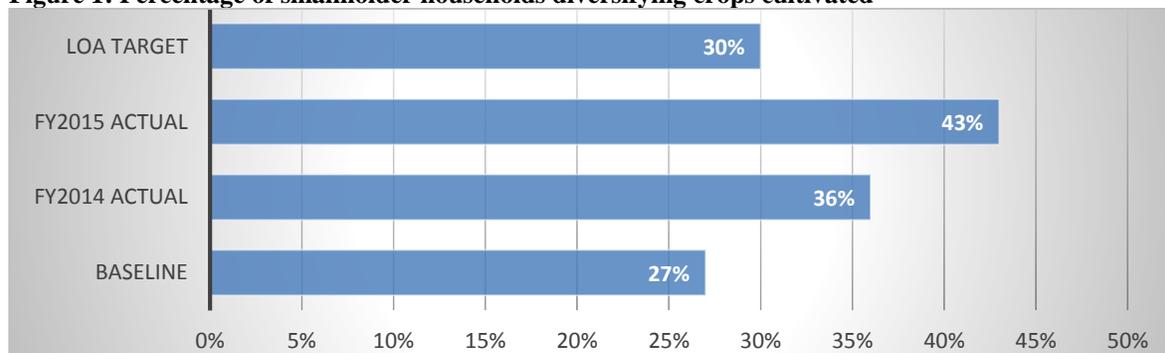


Figure 2: Percentage change in yield of specific food crops [rice] & [cassava]

Indicator	Baseline	FY14 Target	FY14 Actual	FY15 Target	FY15 Actual	LOA Target
% change in yield of specific food crops [rice]	1208 kg	7%	46% (1763.68 kg)	50%	23% (1485.84 kg)	28%
% change in yield of specific food crops [cassava]	5000 kg	12%	13% (5650 kg)	20%	55% (7753.63 kg)	33%

Sub-IR 1.1.1: Improved Farm Management Practices Adopted

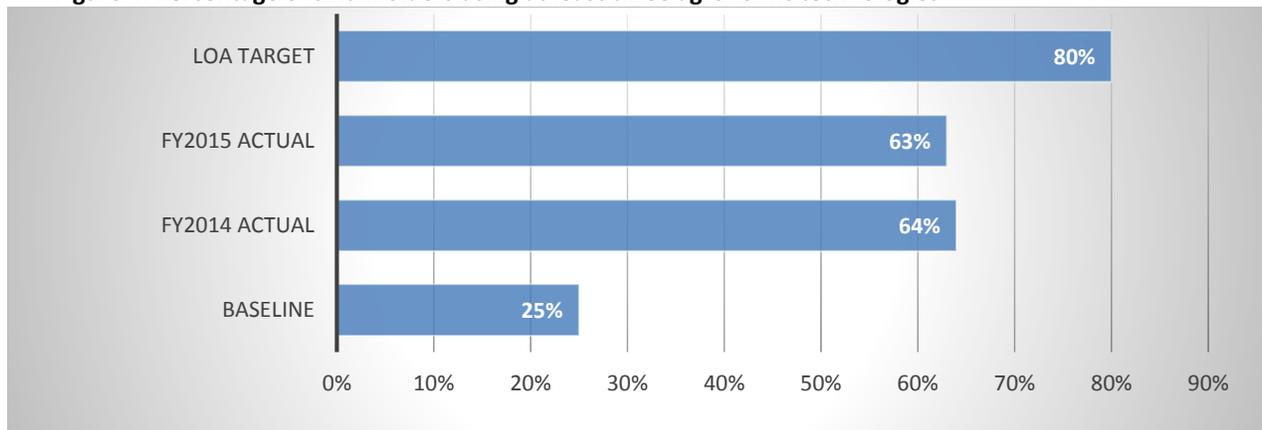
In FY15, many smallholder farmers within the program area resumed active work on their fields following gradual improvement in the EVD situation across the country. The LAUNCH team continued to work with smaller groups of 10–15 persons using field-based participatory training methodologies. The training included topics on improved farm management best practices, post-harvest and marketing techniques. The strategy for engaging farmers in smaller numbers was in compliance with the national protocol on the prevention of EVD. Follow-up support and trainings provided to program participants continue to show increased levels of technology replication by smallholder farmers. The annual survey shows that the percentage of program participants using at least three improved technologies continues to increase; at the completion of the project year, the figure reached 63% despite the devastation caused by the Ebola virus disease outbreak on farming activities within the program area as shown in figure four (4) below. The LAUNCH team continues to intensify its efforts to ensure that more smallholder farmers adopt improved farm management practices introduced by the program in order to achieve the LOA target of 80%.



Figure 3: Farmers discussing the effects of insect pest infestation on crops during a training session on integrated pest management (IPM)

Meanwhile, one remarkable innovation demonstrated by many farmer groups in FY15 was the establishment of new demonstration plots on their own in addition to the initial plots established through technical support from LAUNCH. These new demonstration plots were established for practical learning exercises on new crop varieties in addition to those demonstrated during the inception of the farmer groups. A total of 105 new demonstration plots were established by 105 farmer groups with technical support from community lead farmers who were periodically backstopped by LAUNCH Agriculture Extension Agents. This brings the total number of demonstration plots established from the onset of the intervention up to FY 2015 to 708, exceeding the LOA target of 360. The LAUNCH team envisions that this innovation/adoption of the demonstration plot approach (beyond just the production techniques introduced by LAUNCH) can ultimately lead to the continued adoption of improved agronomic technologies among smallholder farmers and their wider communities even after the end of the program.

Figure 4: Percentage of smallholders using at least three agronomic technologies



Sub-IR 1.1.2: Improved Smallholder Access to Agricultural Inputs

The LAUNCH program completed the cycle of input distribution to smallholder farmers in FY14 but some participants lost access to seeds and tools from their own stock EVD’s effects on the local markets. This was due to losses resulting from weeds and pests, and some farmers could not extract and save enough seeds to use during subsequent planting seasons. As a means of addressing this shortfall, ACIDI/VOCA, through the USAID funded Ebola Recovery and Resilience Program (ERRP), began providing farm inputs to affected farming households within the program area through agricultural input voucher fairs. 3,718 farmers benefited from assorted tools and seeds from the pilot and scale up voucher fairs. Other farmers who were not adversely affected by the EVD outbreak continued to multiply their own seeds/planting materials using appropriate seed multiplication and storage techniques introduced by the program. Overall, the provision of improved seeds/planting materials during previous years of the intervention coupled with the knowledge of seed multiplication and preservation techniques by participants have enabled LAUNCH participants to have access to seeds/planting materials and decreased dependence on external support.

IR 1.2: Increased Rural Household Livelihood Opportunities

In FY15, the program commenced scaling-up poultry farming with the training of 150 new poultry farmers. The trainings covered construction of poultry shelters using local materials, the importance of proper poultry care and vaccination, and the production of poultry feed from local materials. Participants were selected from care groups supported under SO2. During the trainings lead mothers were encouraged to continue sensitizing pregnant and lactating women to feed their children under two eggs in order to improve their protein consumption and to reduce malnutrition. Upon completion of the trainings, each participant received a set of starter kits comprising of 10 pullets and one improved breed cockerel along with a starter veterinary medicine kit and disinfectant. The EVD epidemic delayed the procurement of the poultry and the starter kits. However, LAUNCH commenced the procurement and delivery of the in-kind starter kits to the 150 participants who have already been trained. A total of 1,055 birds (88 improved breed cockerels and 967 local pullets) were delivered to 97 participants. The remaining 53 trained participants will be served and reported in the next quarter.

In order to ensure that participants have uninterrupted access to veterinary services and supplies, 36 community animal health workers (CAHWs) were trained in small livestock health management practices, administration of vaccines and veterinary drugs and as well as business management skill development. These 36 CAHWs are part of 72 CAHWs targeted for trainings and to be provided in-kind starter kits during the life of the program. The starter kit for each CAHW contains essential poultry vaccines, veterinary drugs and supplies that are managed on a user fees model. The revenue generated from the kits are used by the CAHWs to replenish the kits, and a small fee is charged for their services.



Figure 5: Poultry participants with improved breed cockerels delivered by LAUNCH

Sub-IR 1.2.1: Increased Market Linkages

LAUNCH Farming as a Business (FaaB) and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH) Specialists continued to facilitate awareness meetings and trainings for LAUNCH farmers on business management skills development including farm business planning, record keeping, bulk marketing, profit and loss analysis and linkage creation among market actors. The LAUNCH team also facilitated a two-day follow-up workshop with value chain actors within the program area and reviewed the action plan developed in July 2014. The workshop brought together major actors including input dealers, buyers and sellers of farm produce, processors and fabricators of local agro-processing equipment. Many of the workshop participants cited ongoing market information sharing, coordination among peers and other market actors as key achievements from the 2014 work plan. Key information shared during the workshop included the dissemination of market information to producers by buyers on market demand for produce, information on the types of producers, quantities of inputs available for sale, and the marketing and procurement of



Figure 6: Value chain actors deliberating on how to strengthen market linkages within the program area.

bulk farm produce by both sellers and producers. Participants also mentioned access to financial resources as one benefit they have started reaping from linkages established with community savings and credit groups and private money lenders.

During FY15, 105 farmer groups were linked to markets and were able to sell approximately 57 MT of their farm produce through bulk marketing and individual sales, with a total market value of US \$14,188. The annual survey also found that 82% of SO1 participants reported selling agricultural produce in the last harvest compared to 78% in FY 2014. However, only 11% reported engaging in bulk marketing; this figure is 8 points above the baseline of 3%, yet below the LOA target of 25%. This low performance was mainly due to the EVD outbreak, during which group gatherings were restricted. Farmers mainly sold their crops individually, so bulk marketing was limited. With the end of EVD, the LAUNCH team will continue to strengthen marketing activities and has prioritized bulk marketing in order meet the LOA target.

Road Rehabilitation

During this quarter, road rehabilitation work on 7.5 kilometers of farm to market roads were completed.

Following the main roadwork, the construction was certified by an independent engineer. The completed roads facilitate access to markets and other basic social services including health care and education for the local community. Additionally, 9 kilometers of roads were manually rehabilitated by 813 community residents (75 female and 738 male) in areas with critical farm to market roads. This was done through volunteer community residents who were mobilized by program staff. The manual rehabilitation work included side brushing of road shoulders, filling potholes, digging drainage ditches to control erosion, and removal of stones obstructing vehicle movement.



Figure 7: A completed double barrel box culvert linking participants to market and other basic services in Nimba County

The LAUNCH team plans to build off of the successful completed road rehabilitation work by rehabilitating 31 additional kilometers of roads (13 kilometers in Bong and 18 kilometers in Nimba), including the construction of critical culvert crossings as needed. ACDI/VOCA plans to manually rehabilitate an additional 522 kilometers of roads (207 kilometers in Bong and 315 kilometers in Nimba) through the Ebola Recovery and Resilience Program (ERRP) using a cash for work scheme. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works, the roads have been identified and approved by the Ministry for rehabilitation in both counties.

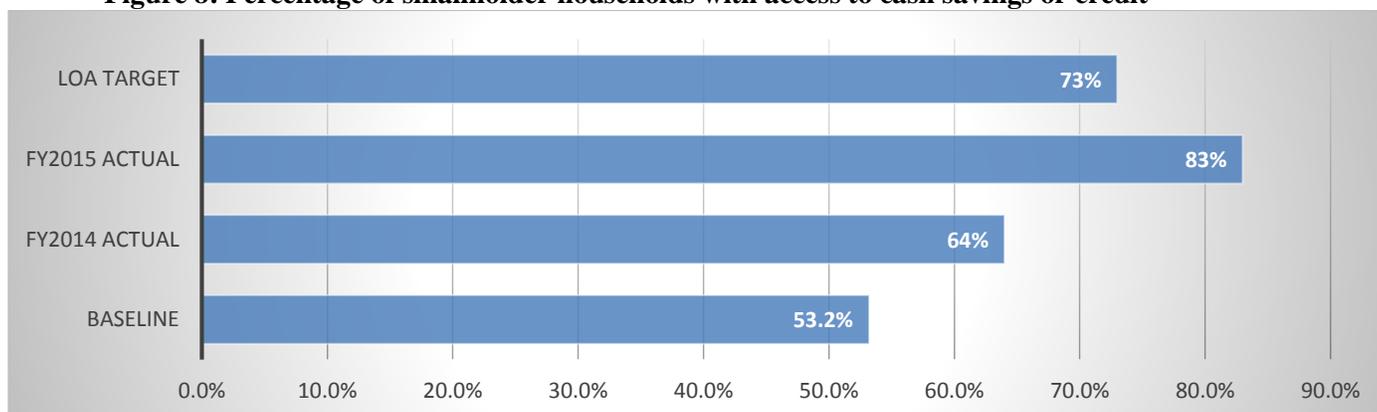
Sub-IR 1.2.2: Improved Smallholder Access to Financial Resources

In FY15, LAUNCH Farming as a Business (FaaB) specialists and other field staff continued to conduct awareness meetings and trainings for program participants on financial resource mobilization mainly through domestic productive activities and savings and credit schemes. Technical support was provided to 61 savings and credit groups that provide access to financial resources for program participants within the program's implementation area. The technical support provided to the 61 savings and credit groups

included regular follow-up and training of their management committees on savings and credit methodology, leadership development and business management.

As a result of the intensive awareness campaign, follow-up support and trainings provided to program participants on the importance of financial resource mobilization and savings, there is evidence that most program participants now have increased access to savings or credit than in previous years. Per figure 8 below, the annual survey found that 83% of SO1 participants reported having access to cash savings or credit through informal and formal networks (e.g. microfinance organizations and savings groups) in FY15, constituting a significant increase from 64% in FY14 and surpassing the LOA target of 73%.

Figure 8: Percentage of smallholder households with access to cash savings or credit



According to table nine (9), below 54 of the 61 savings and credit groups facilitated by the program loaned out LR \$1,728,239 or (US \$20,332) at interest rates ranging from 15-20% to group members and community residents seeking financial resources to engage in productive activities including the procurement of improved planting materials and payment of labor to expand their fields (see table below). These funds were mobilized through savings accumulated by 1,851 members (679 males and 1,172 females) from 54 savings and credit groups out of the 61 groups being facilitated by LAUNCH. The remaining savings and credit groups could not make savings or give out loans due to limited available farm produce that would have allowed them to access markets and generate income. This was primarily due the reduced harvests following, and resulting from, the EVD crisis at the end of the last season as well as savings and credit group members' engagement with the development of new fields for the current cropping season. However, some these affected savings and credit groups will be supported through the ERRP cash transfer program during the second quarter of FY16. This would facilitate the resumption of productive activities that would enable them to generate income and resume saving and payback their loans.

Figure 9: Total Savings, Loans given out and interest generated by Savings Groups

County	No. saving Groups	Membership			Amt saved (LD)	Amt Loaned Out (LD)	Amount Loaned out (US)	Interest (LD)	Interest in US	Amount Generated (Savings + Interest) LD
		M	F	Total						
Bong	23	344	604	948	596,170	460,065	5,413	92,013	1,083	688,183
Nimba	31	335	568	903	294,890	1,268,174	14,919	253,635	2,984	548,525
Total	54	679	1172	1851	891,060	1,728,239	20,332	345,648	4,067	1,236,708

Note: The exchange rate of US\$ to LR\$ is 1:85

Post-Harvest Handling

In FY15, LAUNCH post-harvest handling specialists (PHH) and Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) trained and supported 1,010 smallholder farmers (475 males and 535 females) in post-harvest handling and loss prevention with specific emphasis on produce harvest and storage, seed extraction and storage, the threshing method, scaffold and kitchen erection, causes of PHH losses, construction of solar dryers and the installation of rat guards. Please see Figure 10 for a detailed breakdown.

Figure 10: Number of Participants trained by Sector in FY15

S/N	Program Category	Participant				
		Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
1.	Lead farmer TOT	268	82	350	77%	23%
2.	Training in farming as a Business	179	76	255	70%	30%
3.	Training in poultry production	0	150	150	0	100%
4.	Training in Post-harvest Handling	475	535	1,010	48%	52%
5.	Training in savings and credit methodology	175	174	349	50%	50%
Total		1,097	1,017	2,114	49 %	51%

The seed extraction and protection techniques sessions were emphasized in order to ensure that participants have the appropriate knowledge and skills to gather and preserve viable seeds for future use.

Additionally, LAUNCH provided follow-up support to participants on their group and individual farms to ensure proper application of learning from the trainings and technical assistance. As demonstrated in Figure 11 below, a total of 57,012 kilograms of assorted vegetables, lowland rice and roots/tubers were harvested by 105 farmer groups. These agricultural produce were handled appropriately up to the point of sale or consumption at household level, including timely harvesting, sorting, packaging, storage and timely sale, and processing of produce. During the project year, the sale of these assorted vegetables amounted to LR \$ 1,633,315 (US \$19,215.470).

Figure 11: Harvest Data from 105 farmer groups during FY15

Bong							
Crop Type	# of FGs	Membership		Yield (kg)	Qty sold (kg)	Sale Amount (LD)	Sales Amount in US
		Male	Female				
Bitter balls	1	12	14	453	453	434,705	5,114
Cassava	6	71	92	1,830	1,830	17,280	203
Corn	6	56	79	1,647	1,525	36,950	434
Rice	1	8	7	305	305	9,240	108
Vegetables	5	48	59	1,188	1,123	33,825	397
Sub-Total	19	195	251	5,423	5,236	\$532,000	\$6,256
Nimba							
Bitter balls	14	134	178	17,826	16,321	201,625	2,372
Cassava	22	222	263	17,893	16,752	172,110	2,024
Corn	6	65	81	855	855	10,240	1,204
Rice	6	59	86	4,963	4,354	122,450	1,440
Vegetables	38	321	369	10,052	9,187	594,890	6,998
Sub-total	86	801	977	51,589	47,469	1,101,315	14,038
Overall Total	105	996	1,228	57,012	52,705	1,633,315	\$19,215,470

Note: The exchange rate of USD to LD is 1:85

Four farmer groups that were selected to develop agro-processing enterprises for rice and cassava are on the verge of completing construction work on four processing facilities (two for rice and two for cassava). The farmer groups are using locally sourced construction materials as well as other imported materials including cement, roofing sheets and assorted wire nails provided by the LAUNCH program. Construction and procurement of processing equipment is expected to be completed during the first quarter of FY16. The management committees and private entrepreneurs who will manage the enterprises have been formed and trained on farmer organization development, leadership development and procedures and processes for formalizing local enterprises. Upon completion of the construction work and procurement of the processing equipment, an in-depth business management and machine operation and maintenance training will be provided by a consultant to the private entrepreneurs and their operators. LAUNCH will also facilitate the formal registration of the enterprises with the government. The private entrepreneurs will manage the enterprises on behalf of the farmer groups, formalized through memoranda of understanding facilitated by LAUNCH and witnessed by local authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture's local office. This intervention will provide the participant farmer groups and their wider communities with the opportunity to make improvements to profitable products with which smallholder farmers and local consumers are already familiar.

III. SO2: Reduced Chronic Malnutrition of Vulnerable Women and Children under Five

The LAUNCH team continued to implement program activities in FY15 to address chronic malnutrition through two intermediate results: IR 2.1 Improved Nutrition, Feeding and Care Practices among Pregnant and Lactating Women and Children Under Two; and IR 2.2 Improved Prevention and Treatment of Maternal and Child Illnesses. The EVD outbreak in Liberia impacted LAUNCH program activities, especially during the first three months of the reporting period, when the severity of the outbreak coupled with restrictions on movement and limitations on gatherings required a shift in focus and strategy. During this period, program activities were geared toward the control of the outbreak and community level groups such as the Disaster Management Committees (DMCs), Community Health Committees (CHCs), Care Groups and lead mothers, gCHVs, as well as community leadership put in great effort to raise awareness, teach appropriate behaviors, and reinforce the messages needed to keep their communities healthy and safe. The LAUNCH team is extremely proud to report that through this community led effort all LAUNCH communities were able to effectively prevent and control the EVD outbreak in the vast majority of our communities.

Throughout the outbreak, the LAUNCH program's main platform for SO2-related behavior change (known as Care Groups) continued operating, but on a reduced scale. A total of 158 Care Groups remained active by finding alternative methods of meeting (namely in smaller groups and at the household level) even through the state of emergency when large group gatherings were banned. Lead mothers educated their neighborhood groups about Ebola prevention, mitigation, and treatment to dispel rumors and myths about the disease as well as to ensure that the needs of LAUNCH participant children in their first 1,000 days of life were still met. These 158 Care Groups reached approximately 21,008 PLW and children with education about improving nutrition, health, and hygiene/sanitation. Overall, the Care Group model has also been well received by community members. Focus group discussions held during the LAUNCH 2015 Annual Survey showed that women expressed satisfaction in the mutual support they received from the group and in the positive results the lessons and new practices were having on the health of their families. Lead Mothers expressed their desire to stay in the groups after their children had "graduated" because they felt proud of the recognition they received from husbands and peers in their roles as community leaders.

IR2.1 Improved Nutrition, Feeding & Care Practices among Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) & Children under Two

In FY15, in response to the finding of the FY14 annual survey and the limited progress on exclusive breastfeeding indicators, LAUNCH put a strong emphasis on repetition and re-enforcement of messages and support for exclusive breastfeeding with household mothers. Lead mothers, gCHVs, CHCs, health workers, and LAUNCH staff coordinated to promote exclusive breastfeeding in all program communities. Additional messages on exclusive breastfeeding were shared during the Ebola outbreak. According to data from the annual survey, approximately 93% of infants were exclusively breastfed in FY15 – far exceeding the program target of 60% for exclusive breastfeeding.

In FY15 the proportion of infants 6-23 months who received a minimum acceptable diet was 13%, far below the target of 30%, which was a decrease over FY14 rate of 27%. These low numbers likely reflect the food security strains brought on by the Ebola outbreak which led to a decrease in food crop production, especially vegetables and legumes, as well as minimized access to markets. During the outbreak households relied heavily on readily available food crops - predominantly carbohydrate based

foods and palm oil. The consumption of “bush meat” as the main source of animal protein for most households significantly declined due to the ban on bush meat consumption during the EVD outbreak. A nutrition survey in September of 2015 in LAUNCH’s target area revealed that 2% of children under two were acutely malnourished and 5.4% of children under two were at risk of acute malnutrition.¹ All malnourished children identified were referred to the nearest outpatient or inpatient therapeutic center for assessment counseling and case management. Results from the survey are presented in the table below.

Figure 12: Nutrition Survey in LAUNCH Areas

Category	Cut-off points	Number of children under two	Percent
Red	0 – 11.5cm	104	2%
Yellow	11.5 cm - 12.5 cm	270	5.4%
Green	from 12.5 cm	4710	92.6
Total		5084	100

At the end of the first quarter of FY15, 3,283 PLW and 10,611 children under two years received food rations. Food rations ended in December 2014. As food rations ended, LAUNCH promoted the local production of weaning foods using available food crops, a key component of the program’s sustainability strategy. Household mothers, lead mothers and traditional trained midwives (TTMs) were trained in the preparation of a highly nutritious weaning food (i.e. porridge) made from local foods, namely: dry bony fish, oil, eddoes (cocoyam), plantain or rice flour, benny (sesame) seed, peanuts and maggi cube (to provide mineral salts and flavor). A total of 10,167 lead mothers, household mothers and trained traditional midwives (TTMs), received training in FY15. These locally prepared foods have been extremely well received by participants. Lead mothers and TTMs will continue to reinforce training and messaging on these nutritious local weaning foods.

IR 2.2 Improved Prevention and Treatment of Maternal and Child Illnesses

The annual survey results showed an increase in vaccination rates for FY15, with 62% of children aged 12-23 months fully vaccinated (up from 54% in 2014). This increase is very significant given that during the Ebola crisis the national health system collapsed, including the national immunization system, and as a result outbreaks of measles were reported across Liberia, including in both Bong and Nimba Counties. To ensure improved vaccination rates despite this challenging context, LAUNCH worked closely with the MOH and UNICEF to conduct immunization campaigns after the decline of the Ebola outbreak.

Attendance at four or more antenatal care (ANC) visits during the last pregnancy remained constant at approximately 72% since FY13. This is quite remarkable given high levels of fear that Liberians had about visiting health facilities during the EVD outbreak. In general, the lack of a national policy to promote community-based ANC has been a hindrance to progress on this indicator throughout the life of the program. In FY15, LAUNCH began working with the MoH and communities to rebuild confidence in the health system and targeting county health teams, district health teams, officers-in-charge of health facilities, and community structures such as TTMs, lead mothers, and gCHVs to stress the importance of

¹ In support of an ACDI/VOCA Emergency Recovery and Resilience Program (ERRP), LAUNCH conducted a survey in August and September 2015 in LAUNCH’s program area. MUAC measurements were done for all children 6-23 months mobilized.

ANC visits, and the safety of accessing services at health facilities post-EVD. The LAUNCH team will also promote safe motherhood campaigns and lead Care Groups through a refresher training on the ANC module. Implementation of a new community health policy of the MOH in 2016 will provide LAUNCH a platform to implement community based ANC services in collaboration with the county and district health team

As part of LAUNCH's sustainability plan gCHVs are currently taking the lead in training and monitoring the lead mothers and household mothers as a way of fostering ownership of the program and building the capacity of gCHVs to support continuing activities at the community and household level. GCHVs are also including care group activities in their monthly reports to health facilities and the County Health Team.

Care Groups resumed more regular activities at the end of FY15, and LAUNCH reinitiated training lead mothers in Module 6: Household Prevention and Management of Childhood Illness. Training on this module stopped during the EVD outbreak. In FY16, LAUNCH will continue training gCHVs, TTMs, lead mothers, and household mothers on Module 7: Newborn Care, which is the final module for the Care Groups. In addition to completing the module rotation, LAUNCH will revisit, review and reinforce messages from modules covered pre-Ebola, such as dietary diversity.

IR2.2.1 Strengthened Clinic Response to Community Health Needs

To assess needs following the height of the Ebola crisis, LAUNCH in collaboration with the County Health Teams (CHT) conducted supportive supervisory visits to all thirteen health facilities in LAUNCH program areas in the second, third, and fourth quarters of FY15. Supportive supervision identified key gaps in knowledge, especially around essential nutrition practices. Gaps identified during supportive supervisory visits included: new health staff were not trained in essential nutrition actions (ENA); posters and messages on ENA were not available on walls of health facilities; and a lack of middle upper arm circumference (MUAC) tapes at several health facilities.² Through the collaboration with the CHTs and partners, LAUNCH ensured that new health facility staff received ENA training onsite, the CHTs provided ENA posters, and UNICEF, with support from the CHTs, provided MUAC tapes to those health facilities in need. In addition to ENA training at the health facility level, LAUNCH remained a key advocate and technical supporter of the expansion of ENA in collaboration with the MOH/Nutrition Division, UNICEF, and Rehabilitating Basic Health Services (prior to its completion in early 2016), and the Food and Enterprise Development project through support to the training of master trainers in Nimba and the development of ENA materials for farmer groups.

IR2.2.2 Improved Community Mobilization for Health

To set up a community based surveillance system in the project area, using the lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak, LAUNCH trained 763 CHC members, 183 gCHVs, 198 TTMs, 65 traditional healers, and 22 health workers on integrated disease surveillance and reporting. CHTs led trainings to build the capacity of 149 community structures in three districts to identify, report and refer reportable diseases to their catchment clinics. During monitoring visits, gCHVs and TTMs expressed satisfaction with the

² During the Ebola outbreak, the Ministry of Health (MOH) implemented a one MUAC tape per child policy, which led to the depletion of MUAC tapes in health facilities.

knowledge they were gaining. For example, a gCHV from Wee Gbehayi Mah District in Nimba reported that, because of the training he received, he was able to identify an outbreak of chicken pox in his community and referred all affected people to the health facility. In FY16 LAUNCH will continue to train gCHVs, CHCs, TTMs, traditional healers, and health staff in the remaining three districts of the project on integrated disease surveillance and reporting.

In FY15, LAUNCH conducted a training of trainers' workshop on leadership and development in both Bong and Nimba. Health workers from local health facilities, including officers-in-charge, in the project area, district commissioners, school principals, agricultural extension agents, and LAUNCH staff all participated in the activity. In FY16, LAUNCH will train community level structures including community health committees, PTAs and community leaders on leadership development and management. During the Ebola outbreak, the LAUNCH team and communities themselves were able to see the importance of strong leadership and robust community groups and structures.

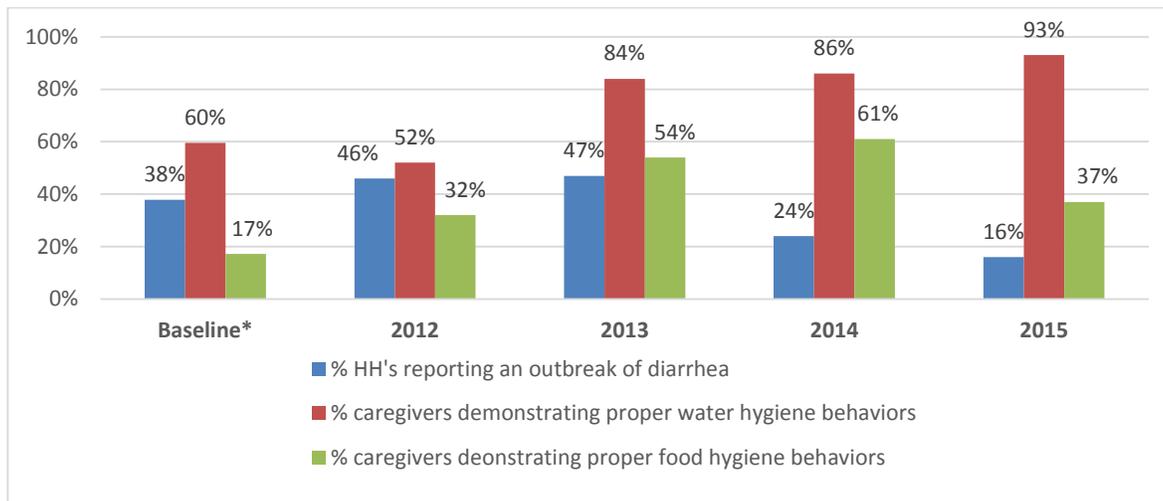
IR2.3 Improved Water & Sanitation Practices

In FY15, LAUNCH achieved target of less than 20% prevalence in the diarrheal rates in participant communities, reaching a rate of 16% in LAUNCH program participants. The percentage of households reporting an outbreak of diarrhea in the past two weeks decreased dramatically showing a drop from 24% in FY14 to 16% during this reporting period.

LAUNCH also surpassed its target for proper water hygiene behaviors of 90%, increasing from 86% reported in the annual survey of 2014, to 93% in 2015. In FY15, LAUNCH led campaigns to promote hand washing as part of EVD infection prevention and control efforts, training a total of 509 market women, 1,980 lead mothers and reached 28,933 household mothers with messages on hand washing.

It is believed that the decrease in food hygiene practices, based on when the respondent reported washing their hands, is a result of the change in prioritizing times when hands should be washed. In the past annual surveys a respondent reporting any three of the five key times to wash hands was counted as proper food hygiene behaviors, in FY15 the respondent had to report three specific key times (before preparing food, before feeding the baby and before preparing baby's food) in order to be counted as proper food hygiene behavior.

Figure 13. Water and food hygiene behaviors and reported diarrhea outbreaks in Care Group households.



Note: Baseline was measured as the total number of households reporting family cases of outbreak diarrhea out of the total number of households surveyed. For years 2012-2015, percent with diarrhea are reported from the total number households participating in Care Groups.

LAUNCH also provided training to school officials and PTAs on infection prevention and control, and facilitated PTAs assuming lead roles in ensuring adequate infection prevention and control practices in their respective schools. In addition to promoting behavior change, LAUNCH also supported the construction of tippy taps and hand washing stations in all participant communities and schools.

After the Ebola outbreak, LAUNCH initiated, in full force, WASH activities focused on household hygiene and sanitation such as the construction/repair/rehabilitation of wells, construction of institutional latrines, and the expansion of community-led total sanitation. During FY15 twelve (12) new wells were constructed and twenty two (22) rehabilitated in both Bong and Nimba, reaching an estimated number of 8500 people. Community WASH committees continued to play a vital role in the maintenance of wells. In FY15, 119 CWC members (39% being women) from 17 communities were trained in their roles and responsibilities. In addition 34 pump mechanics from these communities were trained on the repair and maintenance of the wells by the technical staff of the offices of the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) in each county. With LAUNCH's collaboration, the MoPW at the county level is providing ongoing technical support to the pump mechanics and CWCs in the communities. As LAUNCH begins the transitioning of project activities over the final year of the project, the MoPW has been included in the overall supervision of the repair of 22 broken wells in both counties in FY15.

Through LAUNCH support, 16 institutional latrines were constructed in Bong and Nimba in 13 schools, and at one (1) public location. Following the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in FY14, the implementation of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) was suspended. The full resumption of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) in the project area post Ebola has resulted in the digging of 83 total pits dug by households with 20 latrines completed and in use during the reporting period.

IV. SO3: Improved Education Opportunities for Children and Youth

In Bong and Nimba counties, LAUNCH directly supports 80 primary schools - collaborating with the schools' administration, communities, teachers, school principals, and parent and teacher associations (PTAs) to promote improvements in quality education. In the last quarter of FY14 and throughout FY15, regular project activities were disrupted by the outbreak of EVD. The declaration of a 90-day national

State of Emergency on August 4th, 2014 closed all schools indefinitely and resulted in teachers and administrators returning to their home communities, usually outside the project area. While schools did reopen in March 2015 they only operated for four months. Schools were soon closed again in July 2015, to pave the way for the re-setting and realigning of the school academic calendar. This government policy led to wide criticism and protests in Monrovia and sparked discussions on the state of education in Liberia.

LAUNCH adapted programming to this context by working with PTAs and teachers on Ebola preparedness, and strengthening their capacity to do school facility renovations and repairs. LAUNCH also helped prepare them for the reopening of schools, both in March and most recently in September 2015, when schools commenced the 2015/2016 academic year. In FY15 LAUNCH surpassed its target for enrollment in primary school and continuation/promotion rate. A total of 19,977 students were enrolled in school (11,012 males and 8,965 females) in FY15, with a continuation rate of 69%. Enrollment for boys and girls in FY15 were higher than for that in FY14 (which totaled 17,402: 9,538 males and 7,485 females). LAUNCH continues to support PTA leadership, along with district commissioners to organize back-to-school fairs at various project communities, strengthening teacher capacity for quality instruction, such as the preparation of lesson plans.

IR3.1 Improved Quality of Primary School and Livelihoods-based Education for Youth

The LAUNCH program continues to support 80 schools in Bong and Nimba working with the Ministry of Education at the county level. Recognizing the need for continuous quality education and maintenance of standards for primary schools, LAUNCH developed a supportive supervision checklist in FY15. Due to the closure of the schools in July 2015, field testing of the tool was not possible during this reporting period. LAUNCH will, in the first quarter of FY16, field test and revise the supportive supervision tool, and train county and district education officers on supportive supervision of schools.

During the reporting period LAUNCH supported schools implemented 241 activities. These activities included school rehabilitation/repairs, school-led gardens, school health clubs and community-led clearing of shrubs and weeds around schools. Technical support to school gardens was provided by agricultural extension agents whilst LAUNCH's health and nutrition staff provided support to health clubs.

Agro-business Activities

Over the life of the LAUNCH project implementation, the Youth Livelihoods team has scaled an agro-business capacity building approach for youth that involves the delivery of agro-business training that include implementation of short-cycle group-run learning businesses. During FY15, 310 young people successfully completed this standardized three-unit training package whose cumulative and sequential completion helped young people see a viable future in agro-business. 158 youth then qualified to receive an agro-business start-up grant, which included seeds and tools for youth to sell to rural farmers, with guidance to reinvest earnings into buying new stock and expanding their business. Individual and small group coaching accompanied the grant distribution and focused on topics relevant to grantees as they began their agro-business, such as planning for investments, seeking support from others, learning from setbacks, and managing cash flow.

In FY15, the Youth Livelihoods team also piloted the distribution of a manual cassava processing machine to a high achieving IY3 youth group to determine the effectiveness of a group asset in increasing a youth group's income. Group coaching on how to manage access to and use of the machine as well as

how to effectively market machine service and products and how to respond to setbacks accompanied the pilot grant. At the end of the pilot program, the LAUNCH program found that while the machine did result in slightly increased incomes for the group, the labor required to operate the machine made the management of the machine at the group level a challenge. As another pilot would have been needed to further refine the programmatic model, the Youth Livelihoods program decided to cease distribution of additional agro-processing machines in the extension year.

With the close of the LAUNCH project in 2016, the Youth Livelihoods team will no longer be able to provide the resources and coaching support to Liberian youth participants in Bong and Nimba Counties that have been key offerings in past implementation years. To ensure that youth and youth groups that have received support and resources from the LAUNCH project continue to seize economic opportunities related to agro-business and more broadly, are able to contribute positively to their communities, the Youth Livelihoods team will implement programming in IY6 to meet this need. Several activities originally included in the FY15 detailed implementation plan that were disrupted due to the Ebola crisis, like the youth mini-summits, will be implemented in IY6 as part of this sustainability strategy.

IR3.2 Improved Management of Schools/Education Program

In FY15 LAUNCH started the roll out of sustainability plans for all 80 program schools. As noted in the Ministry of Education guidelines for the formation and functioning of PTAs in Liberia, LAUNCH trained PTA members on savings and business development in order to increase the sustainability of PTAs after project close out and to identify new avenues of funds for school development projects. A total of 402 PTA leaders were trained (28% of them were female). LAUNCH will monitor and mentor these PTAs in the first and second quarter of FY16. LAUNCH will also train PTAs on the guidelines for disbursement of accrued funds. The establishment and strengthening of PTAs in savings and management will reduce dependency on outside partners and increase the sustainability of these groups as well as local funding for school projects. LAUNCH will complement this support by training PTA members and school teachers on leadership development and management.

V. Cross-Cutting Issues

Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Warning Systems

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a cross-cutting component within the LAUNCH program and the structures and teams created through this initiative were significant assets in the response to EVD during FY4 and FY15. In the context of Ebola response DRR activities were ramped up in all 122 communities with Disaster Management Committees (DMC), and included: engagement with the district and county level government to participate in identifying sick community members and Ebola contact tracing; monitoring of hand washing stations; working with community leaders in the support and monitoring of individuals and families under isolation; providing consistent Ebola information to households; and the monitoring of non-residents of communities to ensure that they were not increasing the risk of EVD infection. Post-Ebola DMCs have resumed their regular functions, assessing their communities for risks and hazards, implementing disaster mitigation plans, and promoting awareness at their communities on disaster reduction strategies.

In FY15 the DRR team completed a hazard mapping and risk assessment of 21 LAUNCH communities in Bong and Nimba. The DMCs are working in close collaboration with the CHCs and gCHVs to carry out activities such as relocating trash disposal sites to more appropriate locations that do not pose a health threat, covering abandoned wells, and cleaning up areas of stagnant water and heavy bush. These activities, identified by community and DMC members, are managed independently by the communities,

low cost, and are key to reducing environmental health risks, including the spread of communicable diseases. LAUNCH anticipates that the role of the DMCs will continue to expand given that they have increasingly become essential agents of change by their communities as a result of their actions during the EVD crisis.

Gender

The gender team continue to coordinate with program staffs to ensure gender is mainstreamed in the program activities. During FY15, the gender team prioritized building staffs' capacity through gender mainstreaming training. These trainings included, gender awareness for staff, participant protection and gender protection issues. This capacity building has led to an increase in female participation in some meetings and trainings. The trainings include post-harvest handling and poultry keeping. In FY15 there were more women participation in training increasing from 696 in FY14 to 767 in FY15 as shown by the table below:

Women Participation in Training					
FY 2014			FY 2015		
Training Type	# of Male	# of Female	Training Type	# of Male	# of female
PHH	376	497	PHH	475	535
poultry	0	150	poultry	0	150
Lead Farmers TOT training	234	49	Lead Farmers TOT training	268	82
Total	610	696	total	743	767

Increasing women's participation in trainings is a critical strategy to mainstreaming gender and women's empowerment in LAUNCH as it ensures that women are able to access relevant information in order to maximize their yields. The program is also working to increase women's in leadership positions as well as ensure that they are empowered to speak in public and have confidence to make decisions in their leadership roles through the Lead Farmers Training of Trainers program.

During the EVD crisis, LAUNCH continued to ensure that all 158 care groups received information on the importance of early identification and referral of the sick to gCHVs and health professionals, as well as in the provision of dignified and safe burials. Lead mothers continue to be the thread that enables LAUNCH to fully support the Ebola response through community education on prevention and protection, early identification and referral to ETUs, re-entry of survivors into communities, and re-establishing the link between the health facilities and communities.

On March 8 2015, LAUNCH in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Social Safety net, commemorated International Women's Day with the theme "Make it Happen!" During this celebration the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Debra Mallac, took the opportunity to meet some of the participants of the LAUNCH program.

This included participants from poultry, livelihoods, care groups/nutrition, and the PTA members of the Blapa primary school in Nimba.

VI. Challenges and Response

SO1

The limited capacity of government institutional structures for extension services and post- program monitoring and support to smallholder farmers: LAUNCH continued to expand the skills and capacity of small holder farmers and ensure their linkage to input suppliers, markets, and processing opportunities. LAUNCH continues to build the capacity of lead farmers and link them to district and county level Ministry of Agriculture staff as well as Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) to ensure links to new GOL programs and/or information. More emphasis will be placed on clustering farmers and facilitating their transition into associations, providing training on association development, bulk buying and marketing and group dynamics.

The program was implemented during Ebola and Post-Ebola period which interfered with the regular program leading to scaling down of most activities in the first and second quarters: Program staff were part of the Ebola awareness campaigns in the target Counties to ensure participants got the appropriate knowledge about EVD. The program joined national response effort and started the implementation of the Ebola Recovery and Resilient Program (ERRP) targeting communities and households affected by the EVD.

SO2 and SO3

The EVD outbreak presented a serious challenge to the LAUNCH program, as it altered operating context, and necessitated a shift in focus to address the immediate concerns of health and safety for project communities. The adaptations made by LAUNCH in response to this extraordinary event are detailed throughout the report.

Over the past five years LAUNCH has advocated for the modification of MoHSW policies that affect not only LAUNCH implementation, but improvement of child health and nutrition in local communities. The implementation and monitoring of child growth through a growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) program and the provision of ANC services at the community level have both been significant challenges for LAUNCH, as these activities are prohibited at community level and can only take place at health facilities. However, the limited capacity of health facilities means that GMP and ANC are often completely lacking in LAUNCH program areas. A new policy which seeks to introduce community health workers is expected to be rolled out in January 2016. This will provide LAUNCH with a platform to ensure consistent implementation of GMP and ANC services at the community level.

During FY15, teacher absenteeism was identified as a challenge. A major cause for this was the deletion of names of teachers from the payroll.

The Ebola crisis reached full intensity during the period in which the Youth Livelihoods team was to begin delivering the three-unit agro-business training to ten youth groups in Nimba and Bong counties. During this period, many youth groups were unable to meet for the training; at other times, youth were only comfortable meeting in small groups. The Youth Livelihoods team adapted the training to respond these challenges and to advance LAUNCH activities despite Ebola. The agro-business training was postponed until the immediacy of the Ebola crisis was past and then the trainings were delivered to small groups of 10 young people instead of the full group of 30+.

Distribution of individual agro-business grant packages to youth results from the qualification of young people who have demonstrated a strong acquisition of the key KSAs in the agro-business training. Thus, the delay in the agro-business training due to the Ebola crisis also impacted the distribution of the individual agro-business grant packages to young people in FY15. To respond to this challenge, the Youth Livelihoods team liaised closely with the LAUNCH procurement and grant teams to fast track the distribution of these grants during the second half of FY15.

VII. Lessons Learned and Successes

- Training lead farmers and involving them in the delivery of extension service to their fellow farmers has proven to offer the best alternative means of reaching out to large number of farmers in an extension program with fewer staff like the LAUNCH program.
- One key program learning from FY15 was that the Ebola crisis resulted in increased pressure on (and interest from) youth to start new gardens to feed their family. The Youth Livelihoods team recognized this opportunity to inspire youth to more intentionally pursue farming and has designed programming to respond accordingly. In FY15, the Youth Livelihoods team developed a youth garden implementation model to support youth to overcome their primary constraints of limited access to inputs and low exposure to farming techniques. The Youth Livelihoods youth garden activity seeks to increase youth's exposure to technical agriculture practices and skills while providing them with a safe space to experiment and make positive choices in an agricultural setting with a lens towards future application. The implementation of the model will take place in FY16
- The Youth Livelihoods team learned from LAUNCH young people that received individual grants under the program that coaching and support that accompanies the grants was critical in helping the young people surmount the obstacles that the Ebola crisis presented, such as the closure of markets, family pressure, and the need for household resources.

VIII. Attachments (IY5)

- A. Success Stories
- B. Lesson Learnt
- C. Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) (as per approved PREP for the FY 5)³
- D. Technical Sectors Tracking Table

³ LAUNCH Program approved DIP as per FY 15 Prep was to carry out activities only up to May 2015. This was due to the fact that LAUNCH received an extension and the DIP did not originally include these months as the previous end date was June 9, 2015. However the comments in the status column and this report reflect activities through September 2015.