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The Shea Project

FOR LOCAL CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT,
PILOT PHASE (JULY 1995 - JUNE 1997)

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COVOL UGANDA

The Shea Project for Local Conservation and Development

PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Project Period: July 1, 1995- October 30, 1996

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FOREWORD

The USAID-funded phase of the Shea Project pilot began July 1, 1995. Due to a series of funding delays, and consequential delays in the procurement of vehicles and other necessary project equipment, the project began full implementation of the pilot under serious cash and logistical constraints. On August 21, 1995 COVOL's long awaited Cooperative Agreement was signed with USAID, making the project official. However, procurement and consolidation of major project infrastructure could not begin until late September, after the arrival of COVOL's first Capital Advance from USAID. The Shea Project was not completely operational until delivery of the newly purchased project vehicles in late December, which were delayed for three months due to port closure for the Tanzanian election and customs clearance in Uganda.

The following evaluation report will include project activities current through October 1996, in order to adequately capture the actual scope of the project's first year's progress. The reader should keep in mind that the period covered in this evaluation reflects in actuality only ten months of fully operational project activity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Shea Project for Local Conservation and Development was initially conceived as a pilot project in order to assess long-term project viability with regard to local participation, and the successful introduction and adoption of improved technologies for processing shea-butter. The following evaluation demonstrates that the project has achieved its desired goals and objectives for the first cycle of the project phase. While the pilot reveals some of the immediate benefits and potential of the credit and technology components of the project, COVOL recognizes that the more direct conservation oriented goals will require a more regional and long-term effort in order to be realized. However, high levels of participation in the credit program, and high performance of the COVOL/UST bridge press provide a foundation for the Shea Project from which to expand conservation oriented activities. Project participants receiving significant benefits from credit and technology are likely to remain a captive audience for environmental education efforts and participants for community action plans.

Based on the information gathered in the mid-term evaluation, COVOL is now in the process of designing an expansion phase for the Shea Project to begin July 1996 through June 1999. The proposal for the project extension will be submitted to the Grants Management Unit in November 1996.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITY: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and ACHIEVEMENTS

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Shea Project is an integrated, long-term effort to reinforce a local economy linked to conservation of savanna woodland in collaboration with community based organizations. The primary goal of the Shea Project is to prevent environmental degradation before it occurs, preserving the ecological integrity of an economically marginal area through sustainable management of local resources. A major focus of the Shea Project concerns the role of non-destructive products of the savanna woodland, including the food-oil shea-butter, a product of the shea-butter tree, *Butyrospermum paradoxum* ssp. *niloticum* . The economy of shea products is fundamentally linked to female income and household food security.

Butyrospermum savanna woodland is under increasing pressure in northern Uganda where charcoal burning threatens mature trees, and agricultural practices may prevent regeneration of the species. The importance of shea-butter and other non-wood products of *Butyrospermum* woodland is considerable within the regional economy. Factors which promote destructive use of the species are mostly economic in nature, the incentive being short-term gain from the destructive use of a natural resource.

COVOL hopes to achieve its conservation- related goals through an integrated development approach. Improved technologies for shea-butter processing, and access to foreign markets for shea products can provide tangible economic incentives for local conservation of *Butyrospermum* woodland. COVOL's credit component encourages a broader range of income generating activities for both men and women which hopefully may discourage some from charcoal burning. Environmental education and the establishment of tree nurseries promotes both community awareness of environmental issues and provides a

means for organizing community members for environmental monitoring and local institution building.

2.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

COVOL has concentrated on four main objectives for the project's first year of activity.

1. Technological Innovation for shea-butter processing in order to:
   - Maximize efficiency of production
   - Reduce time demands on female labor and to make processing easier
   - Reduce fuelwood imputs necessary for processing, i.e. roasting
   - Improve quality of shea-products, i.e. less perishable
   - Expand the range of shea products/ develop market linkages for local producers
2. Environmental Education
   - Promotion of early burning to protect shea harvest
   - Protection of young trees for species regeneration
   - Nursery training and establishment
   - Radio announcements and posters to promote early burning
   - Group workshops and community meetings
3. Institutional Support and Extension for farming groups
   - Nursery establishment
   - Training and workshops
   - Technology demonstrations and training
4. Rural Credit Program for micro-enterprise development
   - Loan training and savings workshops
   - Credit for livelihoods
   - Credit for technology

2.2 TECHNOLOGY FOR CONSERVATION COMPONENT

At the time COVOL first submitted the Shea Project proposal to USAID, a variety of technological innovations from West Africa were considered for introduction in the pilot project. COVOL first fabricated a press design developed by the Belgian NGO UNATA and the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute, which was being produced in Burkina Faso. In September of 1994, SAIMMCO completed the first prototype, after nine months of being in production at the Soroti workshop. Upon delivery of the press, it was immediately apparent that SAIMMCO had made a major error in the fabrication of the oil cage. The holes that enable the oil to escape from the press cage were incorrectly drilled from the outside-in, rather than from the inside-out. COVOL was unable to test this prototype, but based on initial observations of the defective press, it was decided that COVOL would visit West Africa in order to observe some of the most current shea processing technologies.

West Africa Visit

Eliot Masters, COVOL's Project Coordinator, traveled to Ghana and Burkina Faso in October 1995 immediately after receiving the first installment of the USAID funding. While in Koudougou, Burkina Faso, the coordinator visited the SNV Project Karite (Shea Project), where he was shown the latest version of the UNATA/SNV. However, COVOL was not impressed with the newer Burkinabe design, due to its limited capacity of only 3 kilograms, and extremely high cost of US $1,500.

During a visit to the Intermediate Technology Transfer Unit (ITTU) in Tamale, Ghana, the coordinator was shown another recent design for a hand-operated oil press, based on an adapted palm-oil press design. In comparison to the UNATA/SNV design, the 'bridge press' design was easier to make and to use, it cost less than US $500.00, and had a pressing capacity of about 15 kilograms of shea-nut. Based on positive evaluations by women's groups from around Tamale, COVOL decided to test the oil press in Uganda. Since the design was so new, and still in the process of being assessed by the ITTU and the University of Science and Technology (UST), Kumasi, technical drawings were not yet available. In order to test the technology during the next shea season, COVOL decided to bring two technology consultants from the ITTU and UST to Uganda in order assist

SAIMMCO in the fabrication of an oil press, modeled on the adapted palm-oil press design.

Technical Consultancy

In January of 1996, Sheini Abu-Bakr, Director of the ITTU Tamale and Peter Donkor of the University of Science and Technology (UST) Kumasi visited Uganda as technical consultants to the Shea Project. During their two weeks of working with COVOL and SAIMMCO, a prototype press was constructed at the Soroti workshop, and was field tested by the Adumara Kuk Duru and Opeto Tworo groups in Amoyai, Okwang Subcounty. After six years of searching for an appropriate village level technology for shea-butter processing, COVOL finally found a design that worked.

The COVOL Shea Press

The first production run of ten bridge presses was completed by SAIMMCO in March. Five were immediately purchased by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) for installation in Kajo Keji county, southern Sudan. In Kajo Keji, NPA administers 30,000 displaced southern Sudanese, who consume about 44 metric tons of relief food-oil each year. Through introduction of the COVOL shea-press, NPA plans to process 22 tons of shea-butter per year, cutting relief oil inputs in half. In October, COVOL planned to begin technical training for NPA, but the visit was postponed due to insecurity in southern Sudan.

Two additional presses from the first run were also bought for use in southern Sudan by JB Drilling, a private company based in Akot, Lakes District. JB Drilling and the NGO MEDIC, with assistance from COVOL staff, will organize production of shea-butter as a commercial food oil.

The remaining three presses from the first production run were installed at COVOL's Adwari field office for technology demonstrations and training. Also installed was a 8 horsepower diesel-powered plate grinder to maximize production capacity.

By the end of August, production data from the Adumara Kuk Duru press log book was very impressive, convincing COVOL staff that the oil-press technology was a viable

innovation in itself, even without the grinding unit. The Adumara press was used 330 times in a five month period, processing a total of 2021 kg of shea-nut into 750 liters of shea-butter. In May alone, 872 kg of shea-nut were processed into 341 liters of shea-butter. (Keep in mind that the 1996 shea yield is considered to be below average by local standards, so it is reasonable to believe production can be higher in better yield years.) Over 52 individuals used the press during the trial period. The group will purchase the press in January.

GRINDING TECHNOLOGY

In Ghana, the plate grinder, or 'maize mill' as it is often called, is commonly available. Based on a simple British design dating back to the Industrial Revolution, the plate grinder is massed-produced in India for grinding a variety of grains. Unlike the larger and more expensive hammer mill, the plate grinder is highly versatile, and affordable for small-scale production.

Plate grinders have been built by the ITTUs of Ghana for nearly 10 years; they are simpler and more durable than the Indian models. After trying unsuccessfully to locate a plate grinder in East Africa, project coordinator Eliot Masters returned to Ghana to obtain detailed technical drawings and critical components of the Ghanaian plate grinder from Peter Donkor of UST and the Kumasi ITTU. Unfortunately due either to inability or lack of interest, SAIMMCO has been unable to complete the prototype grinder it began in March. They did, however, assist COVOL in locating a used Indian grinder for purchase in Uganda, but at very high price. COVOL bought the grinder in order to continue with technology trials and demonstrations. Shortly after locating the Indian grinder, COVOL ordered three additional grinders from India, however, these grinders have not yet arrived in Mombasa, though their promised delivery was September 20, 1996.

Final Technical Evaluation

The COVOL/UST press design is superior to all previous technologies for shea-butter production tested in West Africa. Comparisons with the GTZ and KIT/UNATA designs clearly demonstrate both the technical and economic advantages of the COVOL hand-press.

Production Comparison of Press Designs

Press Design:	GTZ	KIT/UNATA	UST/COVOL
Extraction Rate: (single pressing)	28%	32.5%	**36%** *
Press Capacity:	5 kg	5 kg	**15 kg**
Uganda Cost:	(n.a.)	$850	**$400**
Sources:	1	2	3

Sources:

1. Plote-Kranz and Spenk 1987. Developpement de Nouvelles Technologies de Production de Buerre de Karite dans les Villages au Mali (Eschborn, Germany: GTZ)

2. SNV 1991. Manuel Conservation et Transformation de Karite (Version Provisoire) Koudougou, Burkina Faso: SNV

3. COVOL 1996 (unpublished).

* (n = 330).

During the evaluation period in September and August, extensive trials were conducted by COVOL to test production capacity of the press and grinder package. Production figures for the press are based on a sample of 330 field trials. Figures for the press and grinder combined are based on data from approximately 50 COVOL trials.

- The hand-press alone has a production capacity of 0.37 liters of oil produced per kg of nuts processed. An average batch size of 10 kg will yield approximately 3.7 liters. One full batch can be processed in about two hours. **Labor saved is 6 1/2 hours.**

- The press and grinder combined has a production capacity of 0.3 liters of oil per kg of nuts. An average batch size of 10 kg will yield approximately 3 liters of oil in just under one hour.
  Labor saved is 7 1/2 hours.

- Fuelwood inputs for processing has been **reduced by approximately 80%** compared to traditional processing methods.

When the press and grinder package are used in combination, over 71/2 hours of labor are saved when compared to traditional processing methods for processing an equivalent volume of shea-butter. The press when used without the grinder yields a slightly higher amount of shea-butter per pressing. Although the traditional pounding method is very difficult physical work, it is slightly more efficient in terms of oil extraction when compared to the grinder. Results from our field trials show that the hand-press is still a viable technology without the added benefit of the grinding unit, saving a significant 6 1/2 hours of processing time when compared to the traditional method.

Marketing Program

The hand-press produces a cleaner, less perishable, and sweeter oil product compared to the traditionally processed shea-butter. COVOL does not expect to completely displace local processors or the traditional product by introducing the hand-press technology, because the improved shea-butter is a superior product, and buyers have demonstrated they will pay a substantially higher market price for it.

COVOL has already taken the first steps in establishing marketing linkages with US-based cosmetic companies. An order for 20 kilos of highly processed, cosmetic-grade shea-

butter will be shipped by the end of October to the California-based cosmetic firm, Body Time. If the first order sells well, COVOL plans to train women's groups to process this cosmetic-grade, 'cold press' shea-butter. Most cosmetic-grade shea-butter is processed in Europe and the US. However, Ghana has just recently started processing value-added cosmetic-grade oil for export. COVOL would like to set up marketing structures for local producers to export refined shea-butter.

Technology Component Results and Constraints

The Technology for Conservation component of the Shea Project has been highly successful, due in part to COVOL's West African contacts, and in part to the fortunate timing of the development of the bridge-press design in Ghana. The Shea Project is the first development project to introduce the new shea-processing technology anywhere on the African continent, and the initial results are highly encouraging, with potential productivity much higher than that of previous designs introduced in the West African shea zone.

COVOL however, has experienced numerous frustrations in trying to get the technology component off the ground, and such factors beyond the project's control have undoubtedly prevented the project in achieving its set goals for the first project year- most significant is failing to disseminate presses to long-awaiting project participants in time for the 1996 shea season.

Constraints on the first year of the Technology for Conservation Program were as follows:

1. Late Funding- project funds were not received until the end of the third month of implementation, delaying the West Africa visit and the subsequent technology consultancy.

2. Lack of initiative by the SAIMMCO workshop in completing all work to date. Much time and fuel was needlessly wasted by the coordinator in driving the accurately, the lack thereof) on each of the jobs contracted to SAIMMCO.

   Though availability of materials from Mbale, Kampala, or Nairobi led to some delays, these were compounded by faulty management as other jobs were given priority over the (more challenging) COVOL technology orders.

   The first press production runs were completed one month late, so COVOL was able to test trial four presses during the 1996 shea season. The second order, however, was delayed three months, resulting in serious delays in technology

distribution, much to the frustration of participating groups, as well as project management.

Technology Component: Year Two

The second year of the Shea Project has begun with a strong focus on technology. Ten groups have been approved to purchase a press through the Credit for Technology program, and are expected to receive their presses before the end of October. Ten additional groups will receive presses as soon as the SAIMMCO order is complete. Groups will be required to put down a 25% deposit of 100,00/= shillings (US $ 100.00) towards the total cost of 400,00/= shillings. The loans will be paid back with three payments over a four month period.

From mid-October 1996, COVOL will begin its work in Sudan in cooperation with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and community-based projects in Kajo Keji, Akot, and Cukardum. A total of 25 presses and five grinding units will be installed in the three Sudan program areas. Security permitting, COVOL will conduct technology training for displaced persons and NPA's community development personnel. COVOL will guarantee all presses for durable parts, and provide training support for up to one year.

Technical Issues

COVOL has experienced several small wear-related problems with the plate grinder. Given that the problems occurred after a relatively short period of use, COVOL has decided to further evaluate the performance of the grinders before they are made available through the project. The grinders also require more maintenance than was initially expected. In order to pass on the benefits of the plate grinder, without passing on significant risk to groups, COVOL will maintain ownership of the grinders, but will make them available to groups which purchase presses for a small per use fee. A total of three grinders will be made available, one in each subcounty. Hopefully, after further mechanical and economic assessment, COVOL will be able to offer the grinders for sale to groups, and to individual owners. Since the grinders are a substantial investment, and require regular repairs and maintenance, groups will need to organize a management plan before being able to purchase a grinder.

Technology Training

COVOL has designed a technology workshop that covers all aspects of press operation, group management of press use, press maintenance, and record keeping. Training has already begun to help facilitate prompt delivery of the presses as soon as they are finished by SAIMMCO, which is expected by the end of October. To date, COVOL has conducted 26 technology demonstration workshops reaching a total of 556 attendees, 324 of which were women.

Gender and Technology

The primary goal of the Shea Project is to raise the incomes of rural women and to make their work easier, especially with regard to shea-butter processing which is vital to household economic security. Extensive gender analysis was undertaken during the initial project feasibility study in 1994, and again in August-September 1995. COVOL has made it a regular policy to monitor gender relations and to provide gender training workshops for all project participants, male and female. Based on extensive participatory assessment, COVOL did not anticipate a 'male takeover' of the oil press. Because shea-butter processing is considered 'women's work' and requires a significant level of skill and hard physical labor, only in rare circumstances do men process shea-butter by traditional methods.

Men did however show an interest in shea-processing as soon as the grinder machine was demonstrated. During the initial planning phase of the project, COVOL did not expect the hand-press to attract much male attention, because processing still required pounding, which is women's work. COVOL was again somewhat surprised to find that men were processing in equal numbers with women with the Adumara Kuk Duru press- even without access to a grinding unit. Men claim to pound their own nuts, and women assert this to be true. While the women of Adumara Kuk Duru insist that the press has caused no conflicts between men and women, COVOL staff will continue to monitor the issue.

COVOL is currently investigating the gender dynamics of press use. At present, there are not enough presses in the field to know for certain whether male processing will be a trend,

and/or if male processing will cause significant conflict for women. As a precaution, COVOL staff are conducting extra gender workshops, and establishing strict rules for male use of the press. Women are also receiving special training in order to handle the technology with confidence.

In conclusion, COVOL plans to have a more complete picture of how the project will be administered during the expansion phase, after monitoring and evaluation of the 1997 shea season. For the time being, interest and participation in the project remain high, and overall results have been very positive.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COMPONENT

Environmental education will continue during year two of the pilot with the promotion of early-burning and conservation of woodland resources. These topics will continue to be addressed through posters, radio announcements, and group meetings. Visits to primary and secondary schools will also be added to the program this year.

COVOL's early-burning campaign has been widely successful in the project area. According to the Adoption Rate Survey, 55% of contact respondents claim to practice early-burning, and of non-contact respondents 27.5% practice early burning. Although 50-60 % of farmers were aware of the benefits of early-burning prior to the Shea Project, it appears that approximately 26-56% of farmers surveyed in Adwari and Orum subcounties have changed their behavior from 1994 to 1995 in favor of early burning, as a result of COVOL's message. A more comprehensive Adoption Rate Survey will be carried out in February 1997 to monitor the 1996 season.

Local structures for resource management and environmental monitoring are beginning to emerge. Several groups from Adwari now report the burning of trees for charcoal at the parish-level. Through its partner groups, the District Forest Officer (DFO) and forestry staff, COVOL will facilitate community meetings to build consensus on local environmental issues such as charcoal burning.

During COVOL's first steering committee meeting on September 19, 1996, discussions with the DFO were initiated to draft an action plan for Lira District. It was reported by the DFO that the last work plan for Lira District (then Lango District) was drafted in 1972, and

at present there is no work plan in place. Mr. Mabuya recognized the importance of COVOL's efforts to stop charcoal burning and credited the project for bringing "some bit of sanity to Otuke", but he also acknowledged that the project can not truly tackle the larger conservation issues without the assistance and support of local government. The DFO agreed to work with COVOL in establishing a total county wide ban on burning shea trees.

2.4 EXTENSION AND TRAINING COMPONENT

Under the Extension and Training component, basic workshops and training have been provided to participating groups in the areas of agriculture, and nursery management/ afforestation. As part of COVOL's Environmental Education program, COVOL has focused most of its extension efforts on the promotion of tree nurseries.

In order to increase group interest in nurseries, training workshops were conducted to raise awareness on the benefits of tree nurseries and the importance of afforestation. Although the nursery component has fallen short of COVOL's original goals due to an initial lack of interest, groups have expressed a greater interest in nurseries in the past few months.

In January 1996, eight groups were selected to begin nursery construction and the planting of seeds. Due to the lack of available seeds for purchase in Uganda, COVOL initiated a local seed purchase program. Markhamia (Sambia), rough lemon (Citrus), Acacia, Khaya, and Tangerine were collected locally. Gmelina seeds were collected from the Agwata Forest reserve, and Moringa and Neem were bought in Nairobi.

Poor germination rates were due in part to improper care of seeds during collection and drying, and in part to group management. However despite these setbacks, a total of 6,459 seedlings survived planting out to group managed fields, or homes of individual group members. A breakdown of species survival and site information is provided in the appendix.

Interest in nursery expansion is increasing, as participating groups are now beginning to sell seedlings. COVOL plans to give groups additional nursery management training in order to promote nurseries as income generating projects and to increase production of seedlings. Efforts are being made to purchase sufficient quantity of seeds before the next

planting season in order to reach a goal of 20,000 seedlings planted out by the end of June 1997. The District Forest Office has agreed to assist COVOL in reaching this goal.

COVOL has also begun to promote group managed vegetable gardens through horticultural extension. Three groups have planted tomato, onion, cabbage, and eggplant as a group income generating project. Interest in horticulture is very high among groups. COVOL plans to provide seeds for sale to groups in the coming year in order to expand vegetable crop production.

2.5 RURAL CREDIT COMPONENT

COVOL originally began its credit program to facilitate technology adoption. Prior to the Shea Project, project beneficiaries had no experience with managing credit. In 1993, COVOL began credit training workshops and dispersed its first loans in order to prepare groups for the larger technology loans.

Over 50 groups are currently participating in the program. Since the start of the program, COVOL's credit officer and assistant have conducted a total of 175 credit training workshops in Adwari, Okwang, Orum and Olilim subcounties. Women make up 66% of the program's participants. To date COVOL has made over 1,510 loans to individual group members with a repayment rate of 99.8%. The success of COVOL's credit program clearly demonstrates that rural credit programs can work with proper administration and loan training. In the context of northern Uganda, COVOL's repayment rate is unprecedented.

The credit program has significantly raised the incomes of project beneficiaries. Over 250 in-depth case studies have been collected in order to document income-generating activities, economic coping strategies, loan profits, and project impact on household food security.

Case studies illustrate the complexity of economic behavior within a given loan cycle. Borrowers typically use loan funds to carry out one or more income-generating activities several times within a given cycle. Although the level of entrepreneurial skill varies widely amongst borrowers, many activities yield profits between 150-300%. Although some of the initial loans were relatively small, profits generated are significant in terms of annual

household cash income. (Accurate census information of this kind does not exist; however, COVOL puts an approximate estimate on annual household income at US $100)

Based on the mid-term evaluation and feedback from project beneficiaries during the pre-steering committee and steering committee meetings, COVOL has increased the size of individual loans up to 40,000/= per individual, and has extended the payment period to six months in order to promote longer-term investments in agriculture and trading activities of a seasonal nature. Larger loans have been proven to raise household incomes dramatically. COVOL will release a full credit program report by the end of the year. A loan activity list and summary of the credit program's methodology are included in the appendix.

The following benefits of the credit program have been observed:

- Households are more food secure during the hungry season
- Women keep more of their home-grown produce for household consumption now that they have alternative means of cash income
- Women can better manage household cash needs and afford basic household expenditures
- School fees can now be paid more easily- many beneficiaries claim their children would not be in school at all if not for the credit program.
- Men and women farmers are using loan profits to increase and diversify agricultural production by having cash on hand to hire labor during peak labor periods, for opening new fields, and for purchasing seed.
- Men use loan profits to replenish livestock and to save money for bridewealth- both extremely important economically and culturally since the loss of cattle due to cattle raiding (1985-1990)
- Households now have savings to fall back on during the hungry season, or in times of need.

Groups receive four credit training workshops and must fulfill the project's prerequisite requirements before they can qualify for a loan . Group members are vetted by group loan committees for participation in the rural credit program.

Male participation in the credit program has steadily increased from 10% in July 1995 to 50% in July of 1996. While an increase in female income is more likely to benefit maintenance of the household and food security, male participants have used loan profits to

replenish livestock and intensify agricultural production. COVOL's credit program enables a broader range of income- generating activities for men, which hopefully may discourage some charcoal burning. Male participation is crucial in achieving the project's conservation-oriented goals because men are primarily responsible for clearing of agricultural land and early (protective) burning, and because it is most often men who profit from the conversion of local trees into charcoal. By benefiting from the credit program, men hopefully will become more willing partners in conservation efforts.

COVOL will continue to provide credit for income generating activities in addition to credit for technology purchase during the second year of the project.

2.6 APPLIED RESEARCH

Biodiversity Plots

In June of 1995, COVOL conducted a biodiversity survey as part of its baseline assessment of Otuke county. A total of forty plots of woodland were selected for analysis- 10 each from Adwari, Adwari North, Orum , and Okwang for geographical representation.

Random plots of a 17.5 meter radius were measured to mark 100 square meter circular plots. All major woody shrub and tree species in the plot were identified, counted, and classified according to five size classifications. After analysis, this data is expected to give some indication of woodland species diversity, and which key species are most impacted by human use. One practical application of this research is the identification of the indigenous tree *odugu* (*Combretum binderanum*) a tree prized by charcoal burners, and attractive to COVOL because it is fast growing. COVOL plans to introduce the planting of *odugu* in the project tree nurseries.

Field Plots

In addition to the biodiversity plots, COVOL surveyed 40 agricultural fields in the project area to get an indication of tree conservation and regeneration on land currently under cultivation. Fields were first measured, then all trees (standing, coppiced, and stumps) were identified within the perimeter ,and classified by size. The information from the field plots provides a snapshot of the relationship between agricultural practices and woodland conservation.

Ethnobotany Survey

David Nkuuta, a young forestry worker from Jinja, joined the Shea Project as a field ethnobotanist from April through July 1996. David compiled a collection of indigenous trees, shrubs and other useful plants endemic to the savanna woodland of Otuke County (see Appendix). A full edition of the collection was presented to the Herbarium at Makerere University. Special attention was given to wild food plants and their role in food security, particularly during times of famine. David Nkuuta joins Makerere this year to begin his B.Sc. program in Forestry.

III. PROJECT CONSTRAINTS

Financial

COVOL has submitted a request to the GMU for supplementary funding for the project's second year. COVOL budgeted the position of Project Coordinator originally at 15 months based on the assumption that the position of Project Manager would be handed over to a Ugandan counterpart. COVOL fired the Project Manager in the spring of 1996, and has since been unable to hire a qualified person to take over the position. The Shea Project's current Project Administrator is also expected to leave the position at the end of her contract in December. Consequently, it is necessary to extend the Coordinator's position an additional nine months in order to guarantee proper management of the project.

COVOL Contribution

Several attempts have been made to solicit donor support for the Shea Project from sources other than USAID, including the McKnight Foundation, ODA, and the Royal Netherlands Government. Though these attempts have not yet been successful, COVOL plans to mobilize a professional fund-raiser from its new San Francisco headquarters in order to increase revenue from non-USAID sources.

Staff

The Coordinator is planning hire a local Project Manager for the expansion phase of the project period from July 1997- June 1999, contingent on USAID extension of the Action Program for the Environment and recruitment of a qualified individual. It is worthwhile to mention here that recruitment of qualified personnel is extremely difficult in northern Uganda because most educated individuals are unwilling to live in the North, or spend any significant time working under field conditions which the position requires. COVOL will nonetheless continue its efforts to hire a local Project Manager in the coming year.

Security

Another major concern of the project is the general insecurity of the north due to Kony rebel activity. The project has experienced several setbacks due to rebel activity in the project area, mainly in Okwang Subcounty. In May, project staff came dangerously close to crossing paths with rebels while making field visits and loan collections were delayed as a result of people running from the area.

On October 6th, just as the final evaluation report was being completed, Kony rebels hit Adwari Subcounty, burning the Subcounty headquarters and abducting local children from a village two kilometers away from the COVOL Adwari field office. Project staff fled the area and could not report to work for the entire week. As this report went to press, all field activities have been put on hold until the immediate security situation can be further assessed. It is unforeseeable at this time whether or not rebel activity in Lira District will continue to hamper project activities, but it remains a serious issue to contend with.

Due to the risks involved in traveling from Kampala to Lira via the Karuma/Kamdini road, travel to Lira via Soroti now takes over 6 1/2 hours. The Apac/Masindi port ferry is completely unreliable, so travel on this route is not an option.

In addition to the security concerns expressed above, Lira town is an increasingly difficult place from which to organize project activities. Telephone service was unreliable at best, but is now limited only to radio call. Regular and frequent load-shedding by UEB limits the productivity of project management considerably, as power is down on average of two or more days per week. Frequent visits to Kampala for business, and Soroti for monitoring of press production has burdened project management with a great deal of road travel in order to complete the most basic of tasks. Much travel could easily be eliminated if telephone communication, fax, or E-mail were possible from Lira town as they are in Soroti.

Since security in the north is unlikely to improve in the near, nor the communication/ power situation in Lira, project management is considering relocating the Shea Project headquarters from Lira town to Soroti, during the second phase of project implementation as COVOL plans to expand project activities to Labwor county, Kotido District, and Amuria county, Soroti District, a Soroti-based headquarters would be more centrally located for project coordination. It is likely that COVOL will move to Soroti in July if the project expansion receives funding.

IV. CONCLUSION

Viewed as a pilot, the Shea Project for Local Conservation and Development is a success. Despite significant obstacles, the project has achieved the majority of its stated objectives for the entire pilot phase during the first year of implementation. Based on the project's success, COVOL anticipates expasion into the two new districts of Kotido and Soroti. COVOL will submit a detailed budget and proposal for the project expansion to the GMU by end of November.

COVOL will also submit an external financial audit for the first project year to USAID, as specified in the Cooperative Agreement.

The Shea Project: Workplan, October 1996 - June 1997

OCTOBER

1. Larger loans go out.
2. Body Time order shipped 40 kg by October 30th.
3. Grinders in Uganda- Establish site locations and managers. Design log books.
4. NPA Training in Sudan
5. Early burning message- more posters and radio announcements. Controlled burning demonstrations
6. Begin community action plans- meet with DFO and DEC
7. Field staff to begin visual check and record keeping of early burning while making field visits.
8. Transplanting of seedlings should stop
9. Delivery of presses to groups- #10
10. Weekly school visits for conservation talk

NOVEMBER

1. Technology workshops continue
2. Establish new nurseries for construction in December. Begin local purchase of seeds.
3. Loans go out
4. Saimmco to start second batch of ten presses
5. Parish-level meetings for banning of burning shea trees

DECEMBER

1. Continue with nursery construction
2. Continue with loans and technology
3. Final orders for presses into saimmco for shea project 96-97
4. Environmental message to protect yao trees when clearing fields goes out- fliers

JANUARY

1. Technology - second batch of ten presses delivered to groups
2. The last of the six month loans go out
3. Short list final loans for January- March 1997
4. Steering committe meeting
5. Message to protect young yao trees when clearing fields goes out

FEBRUARY

1. Loans go out to groups, collection continues
2. Technology workshops continue- presses delivered to groups
3. Cold press training- Target groups for cold press production
4. Plan for environment action plan meeting in February-send invitations
5. End of February-Planting out of seedlings begin
6. Adoption Rate Survey- early burning

MARCH

1. Last loans and presses go out for 1997
2. Case studies for M&E begin- credit program and technology evaluation
3. Technology workshops target producers for cold press

APRIL

1. Monitor and train for technology
2. Loan collection continues
3. Push cold press production

MAY

Same as above

1. Advertise for project manager for Soroti office
2. Gender analysis- monitor press management of groups

JUNE

1. Same as above
2. Final loan collection
3. Collect press log books for preliminary analysis

CREDIT COMPONENT METHODOLOGY

LOAN ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive a loan from COVOL, groups must be in existence for at least one year. This prevents groups from forming for the sole purpose of receiving loan money. COVOL's Credit Officer approves new groups for loans based on strong group leadership and fulfillment of COVOL's prerequisite requirements.

CONDITIONS:

1. Each group must form a loan committee that is responsible for nominating individuals capable of managing the requested loan funds.

2. The loan committee must be elected by the group. The committee consists of four members and a committee chairperson. The chairperson may not also be the group chairperson.

3. The loan committee must present COVOL with a list of all individuals who will receive a loan, their proposed activity, and the amount borrowed.

4. Groups assume full responsibility for members who fail to pay their loan.

5. The chairperson is responsible for payment collection from group members.

6. Borrowers must be over 18 years old, must not be employed, and be full-time residents of the village.

LOAN TRAINING:

Groups must receive at least four training workshops before they are eligible to borrow funds. Groups learn how to use loan funds properly, how to record profits, and tips on savings.

GENDER WORKSHOP AND COVOL's GENDER CONTRACT

Groups receive gender training in order to minimize male-female conflict over loan funds. Eligible male group members can receive COVOL loan money for income-generation activities they undertake themselves. Men can not make demands on female labor for their own activities. Groups failing to abide by the gender contract will become ineligible for future loans.

TERMS OF THE LOAN

1. Four month and six month loans are made available by COVOL. Interest is calculated at 21% annually.

2. Loan payments are collected monthly.

3. Penalty for late payment is 10% of the past due amount.

4. Groups must demonstrate an ability to manage small loans before becoming eligible for larger amounts.

    - 1st Loan- 10,000/=
    - 2nd Loan - 20, 000/=
    - 3rd Loan- 30, 000/=
    - 4th Loan- 40,000/=
    - 5th Loan- 50,000/=

* In the early phase of the credit program loan amounts were smaller. Loans began at 5,000/= per group member. Based on the success of the loan program, COVOL believes groups can manage higher amounts as first loans.

LIST OF INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF PROFITS
Processing shea-butter	150- 500%
Brewing	68- 360%
Selling Produce	360- 560%
Selling Fish	300%
Planting Sim Sim	100%
Rice Farming	169%
Planting Sunflower	240%
Selling Chickens	100- 120%
Selling Medicine	129%
Grinding Flour	77%
Furniture Making	100%
Selling Paraffin	70%

Nursery Management Component: Seedlings Surviving (by species and group)

	Trees surviving:								
Group:	Gmelina	Sambia	Citrus	Neem	Moringa	Acacia	Khaya	Tangerine	TOTAL
Adag Anii	76	785	-	147	293	-	-	-	**1,301**
Oboko	78	221	-	-	-	-	-	-	**299**
Owek Nyeko	136	628	-	130	259	-	67	-	**1,220**
Onot Tam	50	295	-	97	200	-	-	-	**642**
Alok Abalo A&B	68	429	-	150	290	-	-	-	**937**
Aero Nyero	73	625	47	58	187	-	98	-	**1,088**
Adumara Kuk Duru	183	387	4	44	101	13	-	57	**789**
Alango	3	137	43	-	-	-	-	-	**183**
TOTAL	667	3,507	94	626	1,330	13	165	57	**6,459**

COVOL UGANDA
THE SHEA PROJECT
STEERING COMMITTEE REVIEW
SEPTEMBER 19, 1996

COVOL's first steering committee meeting was held on September 19, 1996 in Lira at COVOL's main office. The meeting began with a review of the role and responsibilities of the steering committee and a summary of the year's progress and constraints presented by COVOL's Executive Director, Eliot Masters. The committee was then briefed on the comments and suggestions made at the pre-steering committee meeting held September 6, 1996, at COVOL's field office. The meetings were designed to involve project beneficiaries in COVOL's year-end project evaluation, and to gather feedback for the second year's work plan. COVOL would like to acknowledge our thanks to all the committee members and project beneficiaries who traveled long distances and gave up many hours of their time in order to participate in our project evaluation. The effort was well worth it in terms of gathering crucial feedback for project planning, by enabling participants to contribute to their own needs assessment. Comments and suggestions were taken very seriously, and every effort has been made to incorporate beneficiary needs into our second-year work plan.

Those present included:

COVOL STAFF

Eliot Masters, Project Coordinator
Alisa Puga, Program Officer
Anna Achen, Credit Officer

GMU REPRESENTATIVE

Isaac Kapalega, Deputy Coordinator

DISTRICT FORESTRY OFFICER

George Mabuya

ADWARI SUB-COUNTY

Margaret Olea, Chairperson Onot Tam

ORUM SUB-COUNTY

Benci Acar, Chairperson Adaganii Mother's Union

AGENDA

Introductions
1. Appointment of committee members
2. Roles and responsibilities of the steering committee
3. Presentation and comments on the project's progress to date
4. Review of the annual work plan 96-97
5. Group discussion
6. Date set for second meeting
Closing comments

FIRST YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS

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1. The Shea Project has successfully introduced and field tested the first viable **improved technology** package for processing shea-butter of its kind to East Africa. The technology package consists of a hand operated oil press that can easily be managed by two women and a diesel powered engine and grinder.

    - The press alone allows women to process up to three times more oil in one pressing than could be processed by traditional methods. Approximately 3.7 litres of oil can be produced in just over 2 hours, resulting in a labor savings of 6 1/2 hours compared to traditional methods.

    - The press and grinder when used together save an additional hour of labor of processing time. Just over 3.0 liters of oil can be produced from 10 kilograms of nuts in approximately one hour.

    - The improved processing method requires substantially less fuelwood for roasting than does the traditional method.

    - The oil produced with the new press is a superior product. It is cleaner, less perishable, and has a much sweeter taste.

2. The credit program has made 1,510 loans to individual group members. COVOL's credit program has a repayment rate of 99.8%. The credit component has significantly raised rural incomes of project beneficiaries.

    - Women are selling less of their produce now that they have alternative means of cash income

    - Households are more food secure during the hungry season

    - Men and women have greater opportunity to engage in income generating activities

    - Women can better manage the household and afford basic household items

    - School fees can now be paid more easily- many beneficiaries claim their children would not be in school at all if it were not for the credit program

    - Investments are being made in agricultural production, i.e. rice farming and sim sim production

    - Men use loan profits to replenish livestock and to save money for bride wealth- extremely important economically and culturally since the loss of cattle due to cattle raidin

    - Households now have savings to fall back on in the hungry season, or times of need

    - Men and women borrowers use profits to intensify agricultural production by having cash on hand to hire labor during peak labor periods, and for opening new land

3. The environmental component has met it goals for the first year.

    - Early burning promotion has been widely successful in our project area

    - Eight nurseries were established- with 5,000 seedlings planted. Although short of our goal substantially, we expect to meet objective target by end of second year. Interest in nurseries is high amongst groups and groups are now selling seedlings. The DFO will assist COVOL in meeting its targets by giving workshops on agro-forestry to our groups.

    - Local structures for resource management and monitoring are beginning to emerge. Groups now report the burning of shea trees at the parish level. Efforts are being made to enforce a total ban county wide. Discussions with the DFO have been initiated to draft an action plan. It was reported by the DFO that the last working plan for Lira District (Lango District) was

drafted in 1972, and at present there is no work plan in place. The Shea Project will assist the DFO in constructing a work plan for Lira in order to stop the burning of shea for charcoal. Mr. Mabuya has thanked The Shea Project for trying to stop charcoal burning, "some bit of sanity has come to Otuke as a result of the Shea Project."

4. COVOL has built capacity at the ground level.

   - Over 50 women's groups and mixed farming groups have benefited from over 597 training workshops, covering loan management and savings, income generation, group management and activities, nursery extension, and technology demonstrations.

   - Groups with no previous record of managing credit have demonstrated that rural credit programs can work.

5. COVOL has established the first overseas market linkages for the export of cosmetic-grade shea-butter, which can fetch considerably higher prices for local producers.

6. COVOL is working in collaboration with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and J.B. Drilling in S. Sudan in order to increase the production of shea-butter for refugee populations. Extension of The Shea project into Southern Sudan can reinforce sustainable use of B*utyrospermum* woodland in the regional shea zone in addition to reducing the reliance on donor food oil in some areas.

The following suggestions were presented as priority areas for the second-year work plan. However, some of these suggestions have already been addressed.

1. The credit program should increase the size of the loans and extend the payment period to six months.

2. Larger loans of up to 100,000/= should be given to groups engaging in rice production.

3. COVOL should halt expansion with new groups in order to better serve the 51 groups already participating in the credit, technology, and environment components. Budget constraints have set a limit on expansion, however COVOL has already exceeded its target of reaching 42 groups.

4. COVOL will assist in developing alternative markets for shea products. The first export of cosmetic quality shea-butter will be sent to California in October 1996. COVOL hopes to establish viable market linkages for local processors by next year.

5. COVOL will sell 20 presses before the next shea season begins in April 1997. Ten presses should be delivered by October 1996.

6. COVOL should provide seeds for nurseries earlier- before the rains next planting season.

7. Seeds and equipment should be made available for purchase by group members

8. Controlled burning workshops and nursery extension should be coordinated with the Dept. of Agriculture, the District Extension Committee, the District Forest Officer, and COVOL.

9. Prioritize the establishment of community action plans and meetings within each parish and to arrange for a regular meeting schedule to discuss environmental concerns.

10. COVOL should better organize coordination between groups and field office staff on matters of loan collections, scheduling of meeting times, and technology workshops.

GWOKO YAO

WANG LUM CON

KA IBINO GWOKO UNU TYEN YAO-WU IKOM MAC IBINO NWONGO UNO LIM ABUP, PIEN EN AYE KELO LIM IPACO ME NWONGO JAMI ACALO: CULU KWAN, ONYO OCOLO KEDEJAMI OKENE.

GWOKO YAO, GWOKO LIM - WANG LUM CON !

KOP ANGEA OYA IBOT **YAO PROJECT** I COVOL, P.O. BOX 833, LIRA.

Work in Progress: **Otuke County Ethnobotanical Survey**

David Nkuutu, Consultant

1	Acacia hockii	Okutu agwe
2	Acacia macrothysa	Okutu-atar
3	Acacia polycantha	Okutu odurukoc
4	Acacia seberiana	Okutu itiri
5	Acalypha villicaulis	Ayilayila
6	Albizia coriaria	Itek
7	Albizia schimperiana	Owak
8	Albizia zygia	Owak/abata
9	Allophyllus africanus	Nero nero awaya
10	Aloe sp.	Kalangweka
11	Anaira inermis	Ilila
12	Annonna senegalensis	Obwolo
13	Asparagus africana	Ogudo
14	Bauhinia thonningii	Ogali
15	Bauline asphodeloides	Jwolo lango
16	Berkheya spekeana	Ecuru
17	Bridelia micrantha	Oryeco
18	Bridelia scheroneura	Orweco
19	Canthium corrusum	
20	Carissa edulis	Acuga, amurodyek
21	Carpalobia alba	Elila
22	Cassine aethiopica	Imuk kulo
23	Cissus africane	Olok
24	Cissus Ibuensis	(Agaba)
25	Cissus cornifolia	(Agaba)
26	Clerodendron myricoides	Arambat
27	Clerodendron rotundifolium	Acek
28	Codyila laur	Akwirikwiri
29	Commiphora erythrea	Ayom
30	Combretum molle	Omeng
31	Combretum collinum	Imeng
32	Combretum collinum gueinzii	Iooro
33	Combretum collinum binderan	Odugu
34	Cussonia arborea	Ibucibuc
35	Cyperus sp.	Aluga
36	Cyphostema aderiicaule	Anuno
37	Dombeya mastersii	Ogali otiri (written garatiri)
38	Desmodium gangeticum	Known for medicine but no name
39	Desmodium salicifolius	Bokecwari
40	Desmodium velvtinum	Bokecwari
41	Dichrostachys cinera	Etirai
42	Euchea latidens	Imuk
43	Eryosema glomeratum	Amurogweno
44	Erythrina abyssinia	Iwilakot
45	Ficus cycomorus	Olam
46	Ficus dicronystyla	Kworo
47	Ficus mucuso	Ibule
48	Ficus otteweifolia	Colawinyo
49	Ficus sor	Oduru
50	Gardenia tarnifolia	Odwong

29

51	Grewia mollis	Opobo
52	Harrisonia occidentalis	Akere
53	Hexalobus crispifolus	Odugu kulo
54	Hexalobus monopetalus	Odugu
55	Huslondia oppossita	Edudor
56	Hymenocardia acida	Okango
57	Hymenocardia ulmoides	Okango pii
58	Indigofera ambetacansis	Olili kulo
59	Indigofera volkensii	Awee
60	Indigofera arrecta	Itele
61	Lannea schweinforthii	Kwogo
62	Lannea schimperi	Oryoo
63	Lantana trifolia	Abelwinyo
64	Loncocarpus laxiflorus	Olwedo
65	Margaritaria discoidea	Kwoto
66	Maytenus senegalensis	Olimo kulu
67	Maytenus heterophylla	Itelka
68	Mimosa pigra	Ekodokodo
69	Mimosops kummel	Okum otoo
70	Ozoroa insignis	Onguto/ogudo
71	Protea gaguedi	No name given
72	Pachycarpus lineocatos	Acak acak
73	Pavetta crasipes	Anyango
74	Pheonix reclinata	Tit
75	Phyllunthus frolibundus	Okuto lango
76	Propsis africanus	Ibata
77	Pseudocedrella kotchstii	Eputu
78	Psorospermum febrifugun	Akwari
79	Rhamnus prinoides	Iwucuru
80	Rhoicissus tridentata	Agaba
81	Rhus vulgalis	Awacha
82	Rhus natalensis	Awaya
83	Rytignia butanguensis	Omara omara
84	Sacocepha luslatius	Ibela, (ebela)
85	Sclerocarya birrea	Ejakait, (jakait)
86	Scutia myrtina	Ekato kodo kulo
87	Securinega virosa	Ilaka, (ilakara)
88	Sena sangueana	Akwaridok
89	Sesbania sesban	Olilikulo, (olili)
90	Sterculia setigera	Obiny
91	Sesbania sesban	Olilikulo, (olili)
92	Strychnos innocua	Apuruku, Akwalakwala
93	Syzgium guinensis	Kano
94	Syzgium cordutum	Kalacer
95	Tamarindus indica	Cwao
96	Teclea noblis	Okum
97	Terminalia mollis	Opok, (popoka)
98	Terminalia dawei	Opok kwela
99	Thephorozia nana	Itele kulo
100	Veronia grantii	Okelo okelo
101	Viterallia paradoxum	Yao
102	Vitex doniana	Owelo
103	Vitex madiensis	Owelo otoo
104	Ximenia americana	Olimu
105	Zizyphus mucronata	Lango

FOOD PLANTS (traditional and famine foods)

1	Afromomum sangiunum	Ocaoo - Fruits eaten
2	Burnatii eneandra	Kelo - Roots eaten
3	Cissus sp.	Aboce - Leaves eaten
4	Cissus velutinus	Modo
5	Commelina bengalensis	Ototo - weed
6	Corchorus prilocularis	Otigo - Leaves eaten
7	Ensete ventricosum	Itodi
8	Gloriosa simplex	Yat tut
9	Gynandropsis gynandra	Akeyo - Leaves eaten
10	Hibiscus cannabinus	Amalakwang
11	Hibiscus surratensis	Amalakwang kulo
12	Hyptis spicigera	Amola
13	Lepistemon owariense	Akeng - leaves eaten
14	Phyllenthus cappilaris	Ocuku - Roots eaten
15	Physalis minimia	Kongo ogwal - Fruits eaten
16	Smilax kraussiana	Llyoi - Root underground stem eaten
17	Vanueria apilulata	Omora abera

covol Uganda

Cooperative Office For
Voluntary Organizations of Uganda

P.O. Box 6908 Kampala
P.O. Box 833 Lira

199 West Town Street
Norwich, CT 06360 U.S.A.
Fax (203) 889-9639

The Shea Project

Mr. Daniel Moore
Project Officer,
Environment/Natural Resources
USAID Kampala

19 October 1996

Dear Dan:

This memorandum is to clarify issues concerning COVOL's planned future activities in southern Sudan, and their relation to the goals and objectives of the Shea Project for Local Conservation and Development.

In March of 1996, COVOL received Mr. Owen Calvert, a visitor from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), an NGO serving displaced persons in southern Sudan. Having heard of COVOL's technology package for improved extraction and processing of shea-butter (a vital food oil in southern Sudan, as in northern Uganda), NPA was interested in the possibility of bringing COVOL's technology to their project areas in southern Sudan in order to increase production of food oil. The visit was a success.

In July, using USAID-OFDA funds, NPA purchased five COVOL/UST bridge presses to begin medium-scale shea-butter extraction and processing in three settlement camps around Kajo Keji County, Western Equatoria, where NPA serves a total of 30,000 displaced people. Of a total 44 metric tons of food oil currently imported annually, NPA plans to reduce this figure by 50% through production of 22 metric tons of shea-butter per year. In August, NPA made an additional order of 15 more COVOL/UST bridge presses, five additional for Kajo Keji, five for Akot (Lakes District) and five for Cukardum (Eastern Equatoria). MEDIC, an NGO active in Akot, has also purchased an initial two presses, currently operational in Akot.

As a follow-up to technology transfer, COVOL has been requested by both NPA and MEDIC to provide training in technology operation and maintenance. Additional input on technology management, quality control and related issues is also clearly needed in these areas of new technology introduction.

Though international linkages are explicitly called for in one of the key objectives of our project proposal and Cooperative Agreement for the Shea Project, COVOL is aware that southern Sudan lies outside our stated project area, and also that USAID development funds (including our funding from the Action Program for the Environment) cannot be used for activities in Sudan as legally defined by the US Department of State.

COVOL confirms that we will *not* use APE/USAID development funding to support any future activities in southern Sudan, nor will COVOL staff perform work in southern Sudan during work time to be reimbursed by USAID-APE.

That being stated, let me add that COVOL *will* seek outside funding to sponsor sustainable introduction of food-processing technologies to communities in southern Sudan, in line with the stated goals and objectives of the Shea Project, and the USAID Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI).

COVOL believes the link between food security and the local renewable resource base is vital to future development of stable local and regional economies, and vital to conservation of natural resources in the unprotected areas of the *Butyrospermum* savanna woodland of northern Uganda and southern Sudan.

At no time will COVOL contravene USAID or State Department regulations in its future work in southern Sudan.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot Masters
Executive Director,
COVOL