

**Lutheran World Relief-USAID Funded
Rehabilitation Of Liberia Food Production Capacity
Grant # 669-CA-0099-00303**

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Quarterly Report for the period January 1 – March 31, 2001

1.0 General Overview of Project Activities

Summary

A total of 60 new CBOs were registered and received assistance during the quarter. These CBOs are involved mainly in food crop production, seed multiplication and food processing. A total of 122 hectares have already been cleared for planting. As part of a 10% harvest payback scheme for CBOs during the last planting season, 22 CBOs/farming groups have returned 1,345 kilograms of seed rice out of 1,800 kilograms of improved seed rice planted last year.

At the LWF/WS seed-multiplication site in Tubmanburg, 26 paddy plots were replanted with Wita 1&2, Kamah 1 and Rok 3 during the quarter and these medium-duration varieties were nearing harvest as the quarter ended. Three hectares of land located on the fringes of the swamp were cleared for planting of improved cassava cuttings. The Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) trails, a new approach that involves the farmer in the selection of suitable rice varieties that suits their preference, was launched during the quarter at the seed-multiplication site and in select communities. This strategy is promoted by WARDA and IITA and is intended to bridge the gap between researchers and farmers.

A five-day Livestock Management workshop was held in Nimba during the quarter. A total of 35 participants attended including field staff from LWF/WS, CAD, Ganta Rehab and leaders of 10 CBOs. It was jointly undertaken by LWF/WS and VSF – the facilitator under a cost-share arrangement.

During the quarter, a total of 95,500 out of 140,000 seedlets were raised. Nine of 13 farmers registered in January 2001 for assistance to rehabilitate their tree crop farms; a total of 3.2 hectares. In Bomi County, a total of 54 nursery beds were constructed at six nursery sites and sown with cocoa and coffee seeds. Of the 54 beds, 18 are sown with coffee and 36 with cocoa seeds.

Ten blacksmith shops were completed and production equipment and scrap materials provided to commence production of local tools. Two market buildings in Bomi and Nimba respectively were completed and will benefit 250 marketers and 4,000 beneficiaries. Construction of one VIP latrine got underway at the LWF/WS Seeds Multiplication site during the quarter and will be completed in April.

Two rice mills were given to two CBO consortia in Nimba that are engaged in rice production. Construction of the sheds to house the mills was nearing completion as the quarter came to a close. A CBO Consortium is generally comprised of two to three CBOs within close proximity. To reactivate activities surrounding the operation of a cassava mill previously given to the CBO "Trust in God", a new CBO consortium was formed to pull resources that will make the operations of the mill more efficient. The mill is being relocated to a new site and is to be come functional after its installation.

2.0 Project Achievement by Objective

2.1 Improved Seeds/Planting materials multiplication and food processing

2.1.1 CBOs engaged in seed/plant multiplication activities

The project has registered a total of 60 new CBOs for seed multiplication/production for this year. Of this number, 29 are in Tappita District, Nimba County and 31 in Bomi County. The project worked with 40 CBOs during the last year. Of this number, 26 will continue to receive training and extension services as well as new varieties of seeds and cuttings. In addition to the 60 new CBOs covered during this quarter, the 26 previously assisted CBOs will make a total of 86 CBOs/farming groups that will be supported in crop year 2001.

A total of 122 hectares (82 in Bomi and 40 in Nimba) are targeted for production of improved seeds and vegetative planting materials by 60 CBOs in this year. Of this number, 83 hectares have already been brushed and are ready for planting.

Two farming groups in Tappita District received yams for multiplication during last year. A total of 2,031 kilograms of yam tubers were harvested and a portion of this harvest will be multiplied by other CBOs and farming groups this year.

During the quarter, a total of 1,345 kilograms out of 1,800 kilograms seed rice were collected from 22 CBOs/farming groups who received improved seed rice last year for multiplication. The remaining 445 kilograms are expected to be collected in April from swamp farmers who were still harvesting as of the end of March 2001.

2.1.4 Food Processing

Two CBO consortia engaged in rice production and processing were provided two rice-processing mills. The two CBO consortia in Tappita and Lorplay in Nimba County who are to receive the processing mills commenced the construction of sheds to house the mills. The CBOs in Lorplay have completed their shed while those in Tappita have reached window level. The mill for Lorplay will be installed in April 2001.

A CBO consortium to run the cassava-processing mill was formed to replace the CBO "Trust in God" who was previously given the mill. The new consortium includes the "Trust in God" Cassava project and the Successful Women of Tubmanburg and is known

by the name "SUWATIG". This group has also put in place a management team and an advisory board. The group now awaits the installation of the cassava mill at a new location arranged for by the management team.

Two leadership and business management skills training workshops have been held for the two groups to help them get started properly. Meanwhile, two meetings have been held with members of SUWATIG and GODEKAI to discuss project policies and procedures and the roles of the consortia in managing the food processing units.

2.1.2 LWF/WS Seed Multiplication Program

The main activities at the seed-multiplication site were the maintenance of bunds and canals followed by the replanting of 26 paddy plots with Wita 1 & 2, Kamah 1, and Rok 3. Harvesting of these medium duration varieties started late March 2001.

The entire three hectares on the fringes of the swamp have been cleared and land preparation for planting of improved cassava cuttings begun. Mounds and ridges have been constructed on 0.5 hectare for cassava and yam. Meanwhile, the old cassava plots were maintained during the quarter. Planting materials of Caricass 1,2,3, & 25 and IITA 1,2 and 3 will be obtained for multiplication by farming groups.

2.1.3 Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) Trials

A new approach involving the participation of farmers in the selection of suitable rice varieties that satisfy their preferences has been launched. This new approach is called the Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS). The PVS trials provide the farmers the opportunity, on their own lands, to participate in the screening of rice varieties and making final selection based on their own criteria.

The PVS as an extension strategy is being promoted by WARDA and IITA to reduce the gap between research and the farming community. The trials are exposed to farmers at three stages: at late tillering, reproductive and post harvest stages. Farmers are brought in to observe, set criteria and make selection of what they feel are the most outstanding varieties based on their own criteria.

A total of 96 mini-trial plots have been planted with 20 high-yielding lowland rice varieties in three replicates in a randomized block system.

Two upland sites (1.3 hectares) have been identified in Bola and Maloma in Bomi County for the upland rice trials. Two additional sites are to be selected in Tappita District, Nimba County.

2.2 Livestock Multiplication

A livestock management workshop jointly sponsored by LWF/WS and (VSF) Veterinaires Sans Frontiere was held for 35 participants including field staff from LWF/WS, CAD, Ganta Rehab and leaders of 10 CBOs. The workshop lasted for five

days (March 19 – 23) and was held in Tappita, Nimba County. The purpose of the livestock management workshop was to assist participants develop a practical and more realistic strategy to livestock production and management. A similar workshop is scheduled for April 9 – 13, 2001 for participants in Bomi County.

Meanwhile, awareness meetings were held during the quarter in 35 communities (25 in Bomi and 10 in Nimba) to set the pace for the selection of beneficiary communities. With five families to be selected earmarked in each community, 175 farmers will receive animals for multiplication.

2.3 Tree crop Rehabilitation and Establishment of Nurseries

2.3.1 Tree crop Rehabilitation

Nine of the 13 farmers who registered in January 2001 for assistance to rehabilitate their tree crop farms under brushed a total of 3.2 hectares of their farms. They now await tools for shade reduction and pruning following which there will be replacement of missing trees. There was no request for tree crop rehabilitation in Bomi County.

2.3.2 Nursery Establishment

In Bomi County, a total of 54 nursery beds were constructed at six nursery sites and sown with cocoa and coffee seeds. Of the 54 beds, 18 are sown with coffee and 36 with cocoa seeds.

The project is experiencing difficulties in locating good quality cocoa pods for nurseries as the cocoa season is already over. This is due to late receipt of funds for tree crop seeds. However the project is exploring the possibility of acquiring cocoa seedlings from commercial sources for distribution to farmers. In addition, coffee seeds were procured and nursed.

In Tappita District, Nimba County, a total of 107 nursery beds were prepared at the 15 nursery sites and sown with cocoa and coffee. Forty-six (46) of the 107 beds (22 coffee beds and 24 cocoa beds) have been sown. Transplanting of coffee seedlets into nursery beds will be beginning mid April 2001.

During the quarter, a total of 95,500 out of 140,000 seedlets were raised. A total of 319 farmers (65 in Bomi and 254 in Tappita) and 21 farming groups are expected to raise 140,000 seedlings this year. (See Table 3.2 for details)

2.4 Micro Community Development Project

2.4.1 Blacksmith workshop construction

Six blacksmith workshops targeted for Tappita were completed during the quarter. Three of these workshops have been supplied scrap metals and production equipment and tools

including bellows, anvils, pliers, and hammers. The bellows supplied to the three groups in Tappita, were produced by the Sasstown blacksmith group that is also supported by this project.

Five new communities have submitted requests for blacksmith workshop facilities. The project is studying these requests.

In Bomi, four workshops were completed and supplied with scrap metals and production equipment during the quarter. All of the workshops located in (Bowein, Levkai, Sasstown and Gbo) have already begun production of farming tools.

2.4.2 Market Shed Construction

Rehabilitation of the Tappita Central Market is completed and awaiting dedication and turning over to the community. This market will serve approximately 250 marketers and 4,000 indirect beneficiaries.

Renovation works on the Mulbah Town Market (Bomi County) has been completed and ready to be turned over to the community. This now brings to two the number of market buildings rehabilitated in Bomi County.

2.4.3 Other constructions

The construction of one VIP latrine has begun at the LWF/WS Seed Multiplication site in Tubmanburg, Bomi County. The latrine has two compartments, one for males and the other for females, and is expected to be completed in April 2001.

3.0 Statistical Summary of Achievement

3.1 Achievement of CBOs engaged in Seed/Planting materials multiplication

Region	This Quarter	Target	Achieved this quarter	Remaining Ha. (Not brushed)
Bomi	31	82	49.6	26.4
Tappita	29	40	33.0	3.0
Total	60	122	82.6	29.4

3.2 Summary of farming groups raising Tree Crop Seedlings in project areas

Region	# of Groups	Total Membership	Seedlings Targeted			Seedlings on numbers beds		
			Cocoa	Coffee	Total	Cocoa	Coffee*	Total
Bomi	6	65	6,000	54,000	60,000	3,5000	50,000	53,500
Tappita	15	254	50,000	30,000	80,000	12,000	30,000	42,000
Total	21	319	56,000	84,000	140,000	15,000	80,000	95,5000

* Coffee seedlets will be transplanted into nursery bed before actual figure is noted. However, quantity of seedlets/beds is an estimate.

4.0 Administration

4.1 Staff Matters

Memoranda of Understanding with two implementing partners (CCC in Bomi and CUSD in Tappita, Nimba County) were reviewed and extended for six months beginning February 1 thru July 31, 2001.

All staff of the project had their employment contracts renewed during the quarter. The total number of employees in the project now stands at 55; 23 local agricultural extensionists contracted by project implementing partners (CCC and CUSD).

Following a three-day planning workshop in December 2000 involving a cross section of LWF/WS staff and implementing partners, an annual work plan and operational budget were submitted to the donors (LWF/WS & USAID).

4.2 LWR-USAID Team Visit

The LWR Grants Manager in Baltimore, Mr. Hugh Ivory, visited project activities in Tappita District, Nimba County and Bomi County respectively in February to monitor progress being made in project implementation. The Project Manager and the LWF/WS Information Officer accompanied Mr. Ivory on his Tappita trip. Activities inspected included food crop sites, micro-projects under construction (market sheds and blacksmith workshops), women groups and tree crop nursery sites. Mr. Ivory also held discussions with farmers regarding problems they are facing.

A combined LWR-USAID team including the Director of USAID/Liberia, Mr. Rudolph Thomas and the USAID Agriculture Development specialist Mr. MacArthur PayBayee and Mr. Ivory of LWR long with Senior Management staff of LWF/WS visited project activities in Bomi County. The team visited food crop production sites, micro community projects, seed multiplication site in Tubmanburg, and a cassava grinder managed by a women group in Tubmanburg. The team was quite satisfied with various aspects of the project activities except for the performance of the cassava grinder, which was out of order at the time of the visit. The CBO consortium has been re-organized to run the mill.

The team also visited the project headquarters. Mr. Ivory also observed CBO leadership training session in Gbojay, Suehn/Mecca District.

4.3 Partnership Collaboration

To further the collaboration that exists among the three USAID sponsored NGOs (CRS, WVL, and LWF/WS) a one-day joint field visit was paid to WVL operational areas in Cape Mount County on March 29, 2001. A team comprised of a total of seven representatives from the three agencies mentioned above plus one from USAID and two from the American Rescue Committee (ARC), participated in the exercise. The visit was

aimed at gathering information on approaches adopted by WVL and sharing of technical experiences on projects common to the partners.

4.4 Training Activities

4.4.1 Development Education

During the quarter, six project staff, two each from LWF/WS, CCC and CUSD participated in a weeklong leadership development workshop organized by the Development Education Network Liberia (DEN-L) in Gbarnga, Bong County. The training workshop brought together 33 participants from various INGOs and government agencies and was held from February 3 to 10, 2001. Eighteen project staff have so far benefited from the workshops. The objective of the training is to develop the leadership and the managerial capacity of middle level supervisory staff responsible for directing development activities at field level.

4.4.2 CBO Capacity Building

In a continuous effort to build the capacity of community-based organization, the project carried out the 3rd in a series of leadership skills development of CBO leaders from February 12 – 17, 2001 in Gbojay, Suehn/Mecca District. Thirty-five CBO members participated in the five-day workshop. These included 25 males and 13 females representing 12 CBOs from the District. A similar workshop was held in Sasstown, Klay District, Bomi County.

A one-day leadership training workshop was held in Tubmanburg (Bomi County) for the leadership of five CBOs who are to benefit from food processing facilities. The two CBO consortia involved in the food processing are: **Cassava Processing** (formerly Trust in God and Successful Women of Tubmanburg and now called SUWATIG) and **Rice Processing** (comprised of Golahun Community Agriculture Project, Demobilized Ex-combatant Agriculture Project and Zelekai Agriculture Project). The consortium of these two groups is also known as GODEKAI.

The purpose of the workshop was to help members of the consortia understand the element of participatory leadership and management practices. The participatory approach allowing brain storming and small group discussions were used throughout the exercise. The total of 72 persons (45 males and 27 females) participated in this workshop.

4.4.3 Livestock management training

Veterinaries Sans Frontiers (VSF) facilitated a five-day livestock management workshop for field staff of LWF/WS and CUSD as well as CBO representatives and two other NGOs implementing livestock programs.

The workshop used the PRA methodology for livestock intervention and the technical aspects of livestock production. The practical issues related to livestock production were

discussed for chickens, small ruminants (sheep and goats), rabbit and pigs. Participants learned on-the-farm approaches to livestock housing, feeding and healthcare using locally available resources. They also learned how to properly treat their livestock and how to administer treatment when the animals are sick. Training manuals with well-selected visual aids to enable even illiterate farmers to participate were used during the workshop. A total of 34 persons (33 male and 1 female) attended the workshop.

4.5 Logistics

Two rice mills were provided to two CBO consortia in Tappita District during the quarter. The groups are in Lorplay and Tappita respectively. The mill installation will proceed once completion of the sheds to house the equipment is completed. Meanwhile, management training of consortium members has begun.