



Mid-term Evaluation of the Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Guyana, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti

Kerry Zaleski

University of Wisconsin-Extension

Cooperative Extension

Program Development and Evaluation

432 N. Lake Street, Room 613

Madison, WI 53706

March 15, 2011

Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation goes to the Farmer-to-Farmer program participants in each country, who were willing to take time out of their busy farming and work schedules to talk with us about their experiences. A special thank you to the following for their help with data collection in the field:

Guyana: Michelle Washington, Earlla Nelson and Ryan Nedd

Dominican Republic: Franklin Callas, Naomi Ottis, and Samuel Pratsch

Nicaragua: Lester Jose Castrillo Reyes, Sabas Geronimo Olivar Sequeira, and Samuel Pratsch

Haiti: Oles Bazille, Josemine Pierre, Paquie and Jennifer Kushner

Finally, many thanks to the hard-working and dedicated Farmer-to-Farmer in-country staff who drive the success of the program each and every day. Your resilience to challenges and ability to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders while remaining committed and passionate about improving people's lives in your respective countries is admirable, appreciated and recognized. You are:

Guyana

Kelvin Craig, Country Coordinator

Shaun Francis, Field Officer

Haiti

Benito Migny Jasmin, Country Coordinator

Anderson Pierre, Field Officer

Gerald Michael Joseph, Field Officer

Nicaragua

Dr. Ronald Blandon B., Country Coordinator

Daniel Ingram, Field Officer

Dominican Republic

Dr. Rafael Ledesma, Country Coordinator

Juan Villar, Field Officer

Table of Contents

Program Information	iii
Glossary.....	iv
Acronyms.....	v
Executive Summary.....	vi
I. Introduction	1
II. Purpose of Evaluation	1
III. Findings	3
A. Guyana	3
B. Dominican Republic	8
C. Nicaragua	14
D. Haiti.....	21
IV. Recommendations	28
V. Conclusions	30
VI. Dissemination of results.....	31
APPENDIX 1: Evaluation Questions.....	34
APPENDIX 2: Bibliography.....	33
APPENDIX 3: Interviews.....	34
APPENDIX 4: Interview Questions.....	35
APPENDIX 5: Focus Groups.....	38
APPENDIX 6: Focus Group Discussion Guiding Questions.....	39
APPENDIX 7: Guyana Program Host Relational Map and Logic Model.....	40
APPENDIX 8: Dominican Republic Host Relational Map and Logic Model.....	41
APPENDIX 9: Nicaragua Host Relational Map and Logic Model.....	42

Program Information

Program Name

John Ogonowski Farmer-to-Farmer Program

Program Goals

1. To generate rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector
2. To increase the American public's understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the US and US development programs

RFA Number

M-OAA-EGAT-605

Life of the program

October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013

Implementing Organization

Partners of the Americas

1424 K Street, NW, #700

Washington, DC 20005

Sub-Contracts

J.E. Austin and Associates

University of Wisconsin-Extension

TSC Systems Ltd.

Project Funding

United States Agency for International Development

Office of Economic Growth and Agricultural Development

USAID Cooperative Agreement (EDH-A-00-03-00020-00)

Washington, D.C.

GLOSSARY

Country Farmer-to-Farmer Program: The Recipient's Farmer-to-Farmer activities in a specific country

Core Country: A country with one or more country Farmer-to-Farmer projects

Country Farmer-to-Farmer Project: The recipients' Farmer-to-Farmer activities in a country focused on a specific sub-sector

Data collection plans: A framework for specifying details of what data will be collected: how, when and by whom

Farmer-to-Farmer Program: The overall Farmer-to-Farmer program administered by USAID

Flexible Assignment: A volunteer assignment undertaken outside of a Country Farmer-to-Farmer Project

Host: a local institution or person receiving assistance from one or more Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers as a focus of the volunteer's work. The type of assistance can range from advice about a new technology to use on a farm, to new information presented in seminar format. Examples include an individual farmer, a cooperative, a bank, an agribusiness, or a department in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Host Project: May be used to refer to all of a Recipient's Farmer-to-Farmer activities with one host

Host Relational Maps: A visual illustration of the levels of volunteer technical assistance to FTF hosts at points of intended change

Partner: An institution, project or program with which a Farmer-to-Farmer Recipient works in a country to plan and implement Country Farmer-to-Farmer Projects

Project Objective Logic Models: A way to describe the theory of change; the relationships between resources invested, activities, participation and intended outcomes

Recipient Farmer-to-Farmer program: The program administered by an individual Recipient of funding from USAID. Partners of the Americas is the Recipient of FTF program funding for Guyana, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti for the program period October 1, 2008-September 30, 2013.

Theory of Change: Theory of how an initiative or program leads to desired results/intended outcomes

ACRONYMS

CASRI: Caribbean and Africa Self-Reliance International
CHF: Canadian Hunger Foundation / Partners in Rural Development
CRS: Catholic Relief Services
DR: Dominican Republic
EMPRETEC: Emprendedores (Entrepreneurs) / Tecnología (Technology)
FAO: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FTF: Farmer-to-Farmer Program
F2Fnet: Farmer-to-Farmer management information system, designed and implemented by POA
GAP: Good Agricultural Practices
GMC: Guyana Marketing Corporation
GMPs: Good Manufacturing Practices
GTIS: Guyana Trade and Investment Support
HAACP: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
KTBH: Kenya Top Bar Hive
IDB: Interamerican Development Bank
IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
IPED: Institute of Private Enterprise Development
IPM: Integrated Pest Management
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA: Ministry of Agriculture
NAAG: National Aquaculture Association of Guyana
NAREI: National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute
NGO: Non-governmental organization
PDE: Program Development and Evaluation
POA: Partners of the Americas
READ: Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
UWEX: University of Wisconsin-Extension

Executive Summary

Purpose

A mid-term review of the Farmer-to-Farmer program, implemented by Partners of the Americas in Guyana, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti, was carried out between December 2010 and March 2011 in order to provide feedback on progress and support program improvements for the remainder of the program life cycle.

Description of Program

The Farmer-to-Farmer Program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is a five year program aimed at generating rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector, with a secondary goal of increasing the American public's understanding of international development issues, as well as enhancing the international understanding of US development programs. The program is being implemented by Partners of the Americas in the four countries listed above for the current program period: October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013. USAID measures FTF program impacts under four broad areas: Economic growth (increasing productivity and profitability); Environmental Conservation; Access to Financial Service and Organizational Development. Each country project has also developed context specific intended outcomes to help measure progress relevant to their specific focus areas.

Evaluation Questions

Key evaluation questions for each country program include: 1. Describe the program in each country; 2. Management: What is working well and not so well in terms of the way the program is managed?; 3. Delivery: What is working well and not so well in terms of the way the program is delivered?; and 4. What is the progress towards intended outcomes since October 2008?

Overall Findings and Key Recommendations

Program Descriptions: Most programs are on track with the primary activities described in their project strategies with some minor deviations in order to respect changing circumstances. All programs are designed to target various stages of respective value chains in alignment with USAID mission projects. Some challenges include trying to fit short term assignments into other project work plans. The need to develop strategic alliances with other programs was highlighted in order to strengthen linkages along the value chain. Hosts that receive infrastructure investments and regular technical support from other projects (e.g. GTIS in Guyana, USAID-RED in Dominican Republic) seem to be the most successful in getting products to market. Working to strengthen institutional and technical capacity of cooperatives that focus on all levels of the value chain (e.g. Lacteos Nicarao in Nicaragua), and working through larger, central organizations that provide consistent support to hosts (e.g. Makouti in Haiti) are also promising approaches.

Recommendation: Review project strategies to address evident gaps in respective value chains (e.g. production, post-harvest handling, processing, marketing and commercialization) and plans for developing collaborative partnerships with existing programs in order to link volunteer assignments to on-going efforts in each country.

Management and Delivery: FTF field staff have been providing the necessary support to volunteers throughout their assignments, allowing them to carry out scopes of work, as well as gain a cultural appreciation of the respective countries. Staff have built strong community relationships built on trust and respect, and have helped improve leveraging and networking among different stakeholders through their connections with FTF. Opportunities for learning and sharing between countries have been invaluable to program improvement and recognition purposes.

Generally speaking, hosts have been very satisfied with the level of expertise volunteers provide as well as their practical approach. High value is placed on continued relationships after volunteers leave, including on-going material donations and linkages to funding. Repeat volunteers are considered to be more effective and efficient in carrying out their assignments than new volunteers due to their pre-existing understanding of the context (cultural, socio-economical, and logistical). Recommendations from repeat volunteers also appear to be more sustainable due their previous assessments of what does and does not work. Leaving adequate time for debriefing at the end of volunteer assignments can help ensure recommendations are relevant and understood by FTF staff, hosts and partners.

In terms of program improvement, hosts expressed the need for more time with volunteers, more advance notice, consistency between assignments and follow-up support after the volunteer leaves. Partners would like assignments to fit better into their own operational work plans. Some recommendations have not been adopted by hosts due to lack of required resources or financial means. Volunteers receive an extensive orientation packet prior to deployment, including prolific trip reports from previous assignments but many do not have time to read them. Ambiguity about who is considered a FTF 'host' has also caused some confusion in reporting and tracking recommendations. Field staff have limited time for quality and systematic monitoring and evaluation and technical assistance to hosts due to demanding logistical coordination responsibilities during volunteer visits. Finally, many hosts in DR, Nicaragua and Haiti find it challenging to work with volunteers without local language skills.

Specific recommendations for program management and delivery:

- Develop volunteer scopes of work around building strategic alliances and partnerships with existing programs and strengthening linkages across value chains; collaborate and pair volunteer assignments with existing efforts and programs with infrastructure investments and loan opportunities
- Include a list of host names, brief profile information and concise summary of previous volunteer assignments in volunteer orientation packets; encourage volunteers to communicate with previous volunteers prior to deployment
- Involve producers in the development of scopes of work to ensure they are based on need, fit into their work plans and are aligned with intended outcomes
- Develop scopes of work to allow volunteers to have more focused time with fewer number of hosts
- Block out time at the end of each volunteer visit for writing up reports and debriefing
- Make time in Field Officer schedules for translating and articulating volunteer recommendations in the appropriate language and level of understanding of each host (this may require a verbal explanation of each recommendation for non-literate hosts)
- Review roles and responsibilities of in-country staff to ensure adequate follow-up is made to hosts and quality monitoring and evaluation data is collected, analyzed and used
- Develop a system to explore why recommendations are not adopted or adapted and work with partners to devise an action plan to address the issues
- Communicate to volunteers the importance of providing relevant recommendations: Are required resources available and affordable? Do hosts have the technical capacity to adopt or adapt the recommendations? Do hosts understand what to expect from adopting the recommendation?
- Continue efforts to recruit volunteers with appropriate language skills (Spanish for DR and Nicaragua, Kreyol or French for Haiti) to avoid misinterpretation and translation difficulties and ensure the right technical vocabulary required for knowledge and skill transfer is used

Gender: A few projects involve more women producers than others, likely due to partnerships with organizations that have a clear strategy for promoting gender equity (e.g. ADESJO and Sur Futuro in DR). None of the FTF country

programs have a written strategy or system for measuring how specific projects might impact men and women differently. The Haiti team has recently added 'increased participation of women' as an indicator of progress in their M&E system, and the Nicaragua team recently hired a female Field Officer specialized in gender and social development for the new horticulture program. All countries expressed an interest in receiving support in assessing gender equality relevant to each project area. **Recommendation:** Recruit volunteers to facilitate local-level gender analyses with staff, partners and hosts for all projects and develop a strategy for enhancing and measuring positive gender impacts.

Environment: FTF in-country staff are conscious about considering the implications of all FTF program activities on the environment and volunteers receive a copy of the USAID environmental guidelines prior to their deployment. There have been a number of trainings by volunteers in areas of composting, IPM and safe use of chemicals (pesticides, herbicides). Observations and inquiries made during site visits revealed that chemical application is often done by people who are not typically involved in FTF activities (e.g. farm laborers). A number of environmental health concerns have been raised in volunteer trip reports in almost every country and although not directly related to FTF activities, they do require attention as they threaten the safety of FTF hosts as well as members of their surrounding communities. **Recommendations:** Ensure all people involved in every stage of agricultural processes participate in relevant trainings; Identify and utilize appropriate country protocols for reporting environmental and public health concerns; review what actions each country program takes to mitigate environmental problems and how they can promote stewardship and appropriate and sustainable management practices; monitor and assess these practices on a regular basis to ensure environmental standards are consistently upheld.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The main challenges in collecting baseline and impact data tend to be around questions about annual income. The personal nature of the question makes people uncomfortable, and at the same time, FTF staff do not think income is an elemental measure of economic well being. The accuracy of this data is also questionable due to limited record keeping as well as perceived gains or skepticism about the purpose of the question. Asking questions about the use of income does not seem to be problematic; hosts report spending money on new commodities, medical and educational expenses and being able to hire staff. Such indicators seem to be more relevant and would likely portray a more accurate picture of economic growth than annual income. Most Field Officers feel that M&E is an onerous task, as the bulk of their responsibilities lie in logistical coordination of volunteer assignments. **Recommendations:** Review and revise the roles and responsibilities of Field Officers to ensure quality data is collected, analyzed and used in a timely manner; Carry out a rigorous analysis of the entire M&E system to explore and address existing problems, including the functionality of F2Fnet. This is essential to being able to effectively demonstrate achievements by the final program evaluation in 2013.

Conclusions

Based on the evidence available, all four projects appear to be moving in the right direction towards achieving their project-specific intended outcomes as well as the broader impacts of economic growth, environmental conservation, accessing financial services and strengthening agricultural sector institutions. As a result of FTF trainings, workshops and hands on support, hosts have increased knowledge, skill and confidence levels, and made improvements in practices that have led to both intended and unintended outcomes. Many hosts expressed benefits in terms of empowerment, pride and improved overall well being – often just by having an opportunity to participate in FTF activities and learn new skills that offer the potential to succeed. Improvements in practices have led to better quality products, higher production rates, and increased sales. Money from sales has been used for education and medical expenses, purchasing new commodities, and reinvesting back into businesses. Individuals and families have been able to provide more nutritional food for their families and increase their household savings. Communities have a strengthened sense of cohesion and improved food security. Organizations have improved their record keeping, organizational skills,

management plans and M&E capacity to better track their progress. Universities have increased access to resources and information and are better equipped to team up with cooperatives and disseminate best practices to communities. It is important to honor the day to day efforts of the in-country staff, the work of other programs, and the collaboration and networking that takes place between FTF and other actors, all of which have contributed to progress made to date. Continuing to improve the M&E system and strengthen linkages across value chains will help country projects demonstrate their achievements and contribute to the goal of generating rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector in their respective countries by 2013.

I. Introduction

The John Ogonowski Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, aims to reduce poverty and stimulate sustainable and broad-based economic growth in over 20 core countries around the world. The program's secondary goal is to increase the American public's understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the US and US development programs. Since its inception in 1985, the program has evolved, placing more emphasis on economic impacts and achieving measurable results by concentrating volunteer assignments in specific geographic areas, commodity programs and service sectors at different stages of various agricultural value chains, including: production, post-harvest handling, processing, and marketing. Volunteers typically work with medium and small agro-enterprises, cooperatives, individual producers, agricultural extension and research agencies, and financial institution, providing technical assistance and recommendations for improvements in practices. USAID measures impact of FTF under four broad areas: Economic growth (increasing productivity and profitability); Environmental Conservation; Access to Financial Service and Organizational Development. Each country project has also developed context-specific intended outcomes to help measure progress relevant to their specific focus areas.

II. Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this review is to provide feedback on progress from October 2008 to March 2011, and support program improvement of the Farmer-to-Farmer program in Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Guyana and Haiti.

Research Design and Methodology

As a first step in the evaluation process, feedback was sought from key stakeholders (POA DC and in-country staff) on what they wanted to learn from the evaluation. Their responses were used to develop the evaluation questions and specific questions for data collection instruments, including focus group discussion and interview questions.

Evaluation questions were agreed upon by UWEX and POA DC staff based on results from the stakeholder feedback exercise, as well as previous USAID Farmer-to-Famer program reviews. The evaluation questions have been grouped into four broad areas: Describe the program in each country; Management: what is working/not working well?; Delivery: what is working/not working well?; Preliminary Outcomes: where is the program in terms of progress towards intended outcomes from October 1, 2008 to present? (See Appendix 1: Evaluation Questions). Volunteer outreach activities intended to meet the secondary goal will be reported separately by Partners of the Americas.

This review was carried out between December 2010 and March 2011 using a mixed-method design. Data collection methods were mainly qualitative and included a combination of interviews (See Appendices 3&4), focus group discussions (See Appendices 5&6), observations, testimonials and document review. Sources of information included FTF staff, a selection of hosts representing different stages of the value chain (individual farmers, processors, private business owners, cooperative members, university faculty and students), family members of hosts, farm laborers, partners, and volunteer trip reports. Content analysis of the various instruments was done to summarize key findings per country, as well as overall conclusions and recommendations. NVivo software was used to code and cluster key information from volunteer reports. Focus group discussions were facilitated in each country by a moderator and locally

recruited note takers. Debrief and analysis of focus groups was done immediately after each discussion. A tape recorder was used to ensure all pertinent information was captured. Face to face interview questions were developed for the various units of analysis, including in-country staff, partners and hosts. Translators were used for interviews and focus groups in Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Limitations of study

- F2Fnet, a system for quantifying baseline and impact survey results, was not available for data analysis during the time this report was written as staff were busy collecting impact data in the field and not all data had been entered.
- Impossible to determine causality due to nature of program (spill-over effects, collaboration with other programs, activities taking place across value chain, no comparison group, etc.) Focus of this evaluation is on contribution rather than attribution.
- Possible inaccuracies due to interview bias and translation

The University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension advisory board for this M&E project includes: Larry Jones, PhD, Program Director, Program Development and Evaluation; Ellen Taylor-Powell, PhD, Distinguished Evaluation Specialist; Jennifer Kushner, EdD, Evaluation Specialist; Rebecca Power, Co-Director - Great Lakes Regional Water Program; and Kerry Zaleski, Monitoring and Evaluation Project Coordinator.

The monitoring and evaluation team carried out three field visits in each country between January 1, 2009 and February 28, 2011, with a total of 12 field visits across all four countries by the time this mid-term review was conducted.

Table 1: Monitoring and evaluation field visits between January 2009 and March 2011

Country	Persons involved	Date
Haiti	Jennifer Kushner	May 16-22, 2009
Guyana	Jennifer Kushner and Ellen Taylor-Powell	May 2-10, 2009
Dominican Republic	Jennifer Kushner	September 20-26, 2009
Nicaragua	Larry Jones and Arlen Albrecht	October 4-10, 2009
Nicaragua	Kerry Zaleski	March 14-20, 2010
Guyana	Kerry Zaleski and Jennifer Kushner	April 6-12, 2010
Dominican Republic	Kerry Zaleski and Ellen Taylor-Powell	April 18-25, 2010
Haiti	Kerry Zaleski and Jennifer Kushner	August 13-20, 2010
Guyana	Kerry Zaleski	December 8-15, 2010
Dominican Republic	Kerry Zaleski, Ellen Taylor-Powell and Samuel Pratsch	January 10-18, 2011
Nicaragua	Kerry Zaleski and Samuel Pratsch	January 30- February 4, 2011
Haiti	Jennifer Kushner	February 24-March 1, 2011

In 2009, with support from the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) Program Development and Evaluation (PD&E) Department, the FTF country teams developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans for their specific projects. Plans include: 'Host Relational Maps' to identify and define the various hosts at the point of intended change; 'Project Objective Logic Models' to show the relationships between resources invested, activities, participation and intended outcomes; and data collection plans to specify details of what data will be collected: how, when and by whom. (See Appendices 7-9¹: Host relational Maps and Logic Models)

III. Findings

A. Guyana

1. Description of Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Guyana

Guyana's FTF program is focused on two project areas: Horticulture and Aquaculture. The main objective is to increase the productivity and profitability of selected non-traditional rural sub-sectors. Specific objectives include increasing productivity, production and quality, expanding and diversifying products, increasing sales. This is intended to lead to increased income and environmental preservation in the long run. The key levels of projected change, as seen in the host relational map, include: production, processing, marketing, organizational development and institutional strengthening. From October 2008 to present, the main focus of FTF activity has been on production and processing.

Mr. Kelvin Craig, FTF Country Coordinator, considers the type of assistance provided to Guyana's farming community in general as falling under six main categories: *Public Sector Agencies*: NARI, GMC and Ministry of Agriculture; *International NGOs*: CASRI; *Credit agencies*: 'IPED'-Institute of Private Enterprise Development; *Non Governmental Organizations*: EMPRETEC; NAAG; *Donor-Assisted Projects*: GTIS; READ; IDB and *International Technical Assistance Agencies*: UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture); CHF; Peace Corps; and Farmer-to-Farmer.

FTF is currently collaborating with USAID-GTIS on a drip irrigation project on Hauraruni farm. In the past, FTF has teamed up with Peace Corps on a shade house hydroponics concept. The program also provides support to the St. Stanislaus College Farm in partial exchange for office space.

2. Management: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

The FTF program in Guyana is led by a Country Coordinator, Mr. Kelvin Craig, who works part time. Mr. Craig has been with the FTF program since 2001. He holds a post graduate degree in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University and has 34 years experience in the field. The program has had one Field Officer, Shaun Francis, who started working with FTF as an intern in 1998 and has been with the program ever since. Shaun's role as Field Officer involves identifying hosts, developing scopes of work, and following up on volunteer recommendations. He aims to visit hosts at least once per month, providing technical assistance to farmers and seeking assistance from other sources like NARI if he does not have the answers. The other part of his job is focused on logistical coordination. Apart from volunteer work with hosts, he also spends some of his time arranging sightseeing tours to places such as Kaieteur Falls, Baganara river resort, visiting the zoo and taking volunteers to restaurants. Shaun said it is much easier when teams of 2-3 volunteers come together, as they can venture out on their own. He mentioned more than once that, "Sometimes I feel as though I could do with an extra pair of hands". Mr. Craig says the main part of his work is developing assignments. He communicates with other

¹ Haiti is still in the process of developing respective logic models and host relational maps for their Country Projects

partners such as IPED about their future needs and how FTF can help fill their requests. He often provides essential background information about the agricultural context in Guyana to volunteers. Mr. Craig feels that they need to be more mainstreamed with key agencies in a collaborative way in order to link volunteer activities to other work going on in the country. He talked about the importance of developing “strategic alliances”, which is something he is working on. Both field staff reported the “timing” of volunteer assignments to be tricky, as it does not always coincide with the availability of hosts or partners.

Staff said they look forward to a regional trip every two years, sponsored by POA, to engage with other country programs. They have found the opportunity for learning and sharing instrumental to their program planning and implementation.

Mr. Craig feels the need to strengthen the new information management system, F2Fnet, as well as develop a more systematic way to keep track of activities. He expressed an interest in having a monthly reporting format, in line with bi-annual and annual reports, to keep track of monthly activities. He does think the new M&E plan has helped him plan and implement the program more effectively. Staff seem to have the adequate resources required to do their jobs, including vehicles, lap tops, and office space. They will soon be hiring a new Administrative Assistant and because Shaun had signaled his intention to leave the project to continue his studies abroad, the program had moved swiftly to employ an assistant, Ryan Nedd, to avoid a gap in activities. Ryan has since been employed as the new Field Officer. He is a recent graduate of the University of Guyana and past graduate of the Guyana School of Agriculture and is very enthusiastic about joining the team. Shaun, who has since left, will be greatly missed by everyone. As described later in this report, his interest and involvement in the livelihoods of FTF hosts has been cherished and is considered a key factor to their success.

3. Delivery: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

So far, 20 volunteers have provided technical assistance to 10 FTF hosts in Guyana. Primary activities have included training, setting up demonstration plots, testing of soil and water, seminars, field visits, and field schools. Topics have focused on hydroponics, pesticide safety, drip irrigation, fertilization, greenhouse management, crop nursery management, entomology, plant pathology, environmental preservation and composting. The program has also facilitated discussions about the urban garbage disposal system in Georgetown.

Hosts have been selected for the most part via word of mouth. Some assignments were also developed from requests from GTIS. Shaun expressed interest in opening up more demonstration plots or field farms as a way of spreading the word about FTF to other farmers who could benefit from the program. Apparently, as it stands now, most farmers are reluctant to share what they learn from FTF with others due to competition. Almost all of the hosts we spoke to said they felt their time with volunteers was limited and that the volunteers seemed “stretched”. They also reported receiving inconsistent follow up after the volunteer left.

FTF volunteers also provide support to farmers who may have been direct beneficiaries of other projects such as the CIDA/IDB-sponsored CHF project. Farmers from the East Bank Essequibo area attended a field session on sweet potatoes run by volunteer James Garner. They visited a number of farms where Dr. Garner shared what he thought they were doing well and what needed to be changed on each farm.

Qualities of effective volunteers

Hosts were extremely pleased with the volunteer support they had received to date. Host and staff alike agreed on a number of qualities that made volunteer assignments successful, including: simple; flexible; patient; professional; interactive; encouraging; participatory; skilled to work with 'ordinary' people; open-minded; does not "direct" or "order"; good communicator; good listener; someone who does not bring "old thoughts" or out-dated approaches; and able to respond to the needs on the ground. A specific volunteer named Vance was mentioned as someone who always starts out by complimenting the host on what they are doing: *"I think you are doing a fabulous job here but you might want to try this"*. This type of approach makes the host feel proud of their work and establishes a trusting relationship. One host talked about FTF volunteers as people who can *"come down to this level"*. Mr. Craig feels that one reason volunteers are successful when they come to Guyana is that they have time to focus *"only on that"* (referring to their FTF assignment). Unlike actors who are based in Guyana, *"volunteers don't have to worry about politics, family, or other distractions for two full weeks"*. There was a request from one particular host to be trained as a trainer, so that he could better transfer the knowledge and skills he learns to the other farmers in his cooperative. Hosts were especially appreciative of Shaun (FTF Field Officer) for his steadfast support and making himself available at any time to answer questions, provide advice, and link them up with other programs and partners like IPED.

Volunteer recommendations

A number of recommendations were not adopted by hosts mainly due to lack of finances and materials that are difficult to access in Guyana (e.g. quality fertilizer). One host explained *"It's not that the recommendation wasn't good, but we couldn't finance it"*. He was referring to a recommendation given to him by a team of volunteers to change the soil in his shade gardens. He did not have enough money to afford the amount of new soil that was needed. Shaun gave an example of a recommendation made by one volunteer to put extractor fans in the ceiling of his greenhouse to remove the hot air. He explained that this was not an appropriate technology in Guyana, mainly due to costs of installing as well as operating it. Fortunately, a subsequent volunteer came and recommended putting up shade material under the roof as a more relevant alternative.

The majority of hosts interviewed expressed an interest in having more consistent follow-up from volunteers, as well as having the volunteer leave them with visual information (e.g. pamphlets). Some volunteers have apparently been very active in keeping in contact with FTF field staff and hosts, by sending reading material via email or arranging for shipments of other needed resources such as worms for composting.

Environmental

FTF in-country staff are aware and considerate about promoting environmental conservation and ensuring volunteer activities do not negatively affect the environment. A concern was addressed by one volunteer about possible contamination of a nearby stream on the farm of a FTF host from the application of raw chicken litter as well as a newly introduced inorganic fertilizer. The project is working to recruit a water quality expert to assess the situation and make appropriate recommendations to prevent this potential health risk. In another direction, a composting specialist volunteer spoke to businesses that generate waste, such as the cardboard packing manufacturer and hotels, to identify innovative ways to recycle and compost waste. This will likely be another area for FTF assistance in the second half of the program.

Gender

So far 10% of volunteers who worked directly with FTF hosts were women. There is currently no official strategy in place to assess, measure or enhance positive gender impacts of the program. However, the program has clearly made a difference in the lives of many women farmers, described in more detail in the next section.

4. Preliminary Outcomes: Where is the program in terms of progress towards the intended outcomes since October 2008?

So far there have been only two volunteers that have provided support to the Aquaculture project area. The Country Project Strategy document had envisaged that the GTIS project would have created a significant demand for FTF volunteers. However, this has not been the case. GTIS changed their modus operandi somewhat and now operate with longer term technical assistant experts from Israel; thereby making the drawdown of FTF volunteers redundant. In-country staff have therefore had to rethink the Guyana strategy and to form new alliances such as EMPRETEC and IPED (even though these activities fall primarily under the horticulture program area). With respect to the aquaculture assignments, two different private business owners talked about improvements they had made over the past few years. One reported increased sales as a result of improved packaging and retailing his tilapia in supermarkets, and another talked about increasing fingerling production as a result of installing a new air-lift pump and improving his breeding practices, all recommendations made by volunteer Jason Licamele.

In general, the program has shifted its focus to recruiting more horticulture hosts and volunteers. It was difficult to get quantitative numbers for improved production, as many farmers do not, or are new to, keeping track of this information. Record keeping has been one area of focus for volunteers, which should help provide more production data in terms of numbers for the end of program evaluation.

Individual farmers, farmer cooperative societies, and private business owners reported benefiting from the program in a number of ways, including: increased confidence and empowerment to run their farms; increased knowledge and improved skill sets; better team work; stronger sense of community cohesion; sense of ownership; saving time and money; increased market sales; improved record keeping; increasing production; increased household food



Figure 1: Kuru Kururu Crop and Livestock members mixing minerals for composting with support from FTF volunteer Brian Rosa

consumption; reduced safety threats due to protective equipment; reduction in crops getting burned; enterprise budgeting costing of crops; improved quality of their produce; less risk of illness from composting; and the ability to advance: *“I was able to move to the next stage in life”* -Female farmer from Marfriends Cooperative Land Society, Ltd.

Building skills in record management and monitoring and evaluation has also allowed farmers to better measure progress against their own objectives. During a focus group, a number of participants told us that receiving support form FTF has boosted their public image, making them look and feel important.

Specific volunteer activities that have contributed to this progress include: teaching farmers about the benefits composting; raising

awareness about pathogens found in chicken litter; developing plans; assessing the efficiency and sustainability of different methods for eddo production methods, piloting use of both infield and greenhouse drip irrigation systems, and introduction of bio digesters on integrated farming systems. Farmers have now started planting banks and ridges, improving pesticide management, wearing protective clothes, conducting soil testing and adding lime to soil from better chemical management. During a focus group with members of an association, farmers described their ability to identify specific diseases, the importance of using separate containers for herbicides and pesticides to avoid burning their crops, and knowing how much fertilizer to apply to their crops.

Some farmers also participated in tours of Berbice and St. Stanislaus Farm to learn about new farming practices that they can apply back home. Increased leveraging and networking has helped farmers to link up with funding agencies and other projects with referrals from Shaun. This has led to expansions of their farming practice and much wider impacts. For example, Marfriends Cooperative Land Society Ltd. was able to access a building and a tractor after strengthening their credibility through their involvement with FTF.

During this period, a group of volunteers was also successful in working with the Ministry of Agriculture to identify the cause of 'pumpkin meltdown' known as Phytophthora blight. They recommended solutions that overcame the problem as well as information on how to prevent it in the future. MOA Extension Staff were exposed to information at a wrap-up workshop and are now more capable of advising farmers accordingly.

A farmer from Marfriends explained to us how he became inspired to build his own greenhouse after seeing a picture of one brought by volunteer Pete Wotowiec. Following Pete's recommendations, he converted his chicken pen into the greenhouse. He also followed detailed recommendations left by the volunteer, which has allowed him to successfully grow 'pak choi' and lettuce, and soon to be tomatoes. The farmer said he considers this volunteer his "rock of knowledge".

Members of Kuru Kururu Crops and Livestock Association (KKCLA) reported learning a great deal from volunteer James Garner on fertilization, as well as from Brian Rosa in areas of composting. Farmers talked at length about their increased understanding about why composting is important. One woman in particular explained that she is selling more of her produce at the market because people think it tastes better than crops of farmers who are not composting: *"I'm proud when people say 'we really enjoy your produce'"*. In an effort to enter the export market for eddoes, initiated by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FTF volunteers have been working with farmers in setting up a number of testing sites for inorganic fertilizer, as well as composted chicken litter, to understand the most efficient way to increase production and improve the quality. One farmer from KKCLA described the benefits of properly using waste material as compost: *"we have less trash, save money and prevent illness and disease at the same time."*

One of the biggest successes of the Hauraruni Friendly Farmers Society over the past few years has been the exporting of butternut squash as a result of a drip irrigation system introduced on their farm. This was mainly a result of the USAID- funded 'GTIS' project, managed by CARANA Corporation. The project is collaborating with Shigam, Inc., an Israeli company based in Antigua. GTIS has been providing materials, technical support, capacity building and monitoring. Mecha Peretz, the General Manager of Shigam, Inc. provides daily support to the farm in areas of drip irrigation, harvesting and packaging of the butternut squash. A FTF volunteer, Ilan Bar, provided recommendations that have contributed to the project's success : *"it was good to have a second set of eyes look at what we are doing and give his opinion. We ended up using more mono potassium phosphate and changing one of the filters as Ilan recommended"*.- *Email from Michael Kuchler, Operations Manager at CARANA.* According to Hauraruni farmers, since this program

started, their spoilage rate has dropped to 30% and they are getting 90% of what they supply for export accepted. Two farmers working directly on the project, Vivian Frederick's and Jagat Jacob, said that if it was not for Shaun (FTF Field Officer) linking them up with the GTIS program, they would "still be in the dark".

A team of three specialists: Tamara Fakhoorian, an algae specialist, Vance Haugen, a biogas specialist, and Louis Landesman, an Integrated Farmer System/Duckweed Specialist, worked together to continue the improvement of an integrated farming system being developed by the Institute of Private Enterprise Development (a POA collaborating agency). Farmers are now benefiting from the advice of the team. Some farmers are growing duckweed to feed their pigs, ducks and chickens. Other are saving over \$3000 Guyanese dollars every three weeks from money they used to spend on propane gas since they replaced it with biogas for cooking.

Potential for longer-term, unintended impacts: While visiting host Ravi Rajkumar, a honey manufacturer, Volunteer Ralph Govin observed that he was painting the insides of the large drums used for storing honey. The paint was observed to be chipping off and exposing rust marks. Since then, Ravi stopped this practice in an effort to enforce Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). Although the program is unable to measure the results of this change due to limited research capacity, the adoption of this recommendation is worth mentioning as it can serve as a proxy indicator of reduced risk of human toxicity from paint byproducts.

There are a few areas where the horticulture project has faced some challenges. For example, the shade house at Hauraruni is not functioning at the level it was hoped to be at. This is a result of a shift in focus to the butternut squash/drip irrigation project. However, program staff plan to put more emphasis on shade house production during the second half of the program.

B. Dominican Republic

1. Description of Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Dominican Republic

The FTF program in the Dominican Republic is focused on two project areas: Horticulture and Tree Crops. The main objective is to increase the productivity and profitability of small and medium scale producers and businesses in select agricultural sectors while preserving the natural resource base. Specifically, projects aim to strengthen the agricultural sector by increasing production, improving quality, securing markets, increasing incomes and enhancing organizational capacity of associations, NGOs, and universities. Shorter to mid-term outcomes are to increase knowledge and improve skills and practices in areas of production, post harvest handling, transportation and storage, identifying and linking up with markets, and improving record keeping.

2. Management: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

The FTF program in DR is led by a Country Coordinator, Rafael Ledesma, PhD. Dr. Ledesma has a doctoral degree in Agronomy from Texas A&M University and over twenty five years experience with international development programs in Dominican Republic, Central America and the English speaking Caribbean Countries. Prior to taking on his current role, he was the Director of the Department of Food Safety at the Ministry of Agriculture in DR. Dr. Ledesma is the main contact for FTF in DR, providing overall leadership to the program. He establishes and maintains working relationships and formal agreements with FTF partners and responds to their requests for technical assistance. Dr. Ledesma has a strong network of agricultural affiliates in DR from his past work and educational experiences.

The program has one Field Officer, Juan Villar. Villar has a graduate degree in dairy science from Texas A&M University, and training in rural development from Israel, as well as continuous education training in administration from a university in Brazil. He has extensive experience in the field of farm management, and was area director for the province of San Jose de Ocoa, for the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of DR. Villar's role is first and foremost, to facilitate volunteer work at field level. He estimates between 50-100% of his time goes toward field logistics and accompanying the volunteer. He is responsible for: translation of the teaching of the volunteers to farmers and extensionists; driving; field hotel reservations; implementation of meetings and activities already planned in the visit agenda; and attending and translating all volunteer workshops and trainings. Villar's communication channel is directly through Dr. Ledesma on all issues related to the program except at field level where he communicates directly with local program coordinators from Sur Futuro and ADESJO.

Field staff have built a strong relationship with hosts based on trust and respect for their work. They also report effective communication with POA in DC. Their recent request for an Administrative Assistant has been approved by POA and recruitment is underway. They are hoping this position will help support them with administrative functions such as financial and data management. Also, due to the amount of work in the field, Dr. Ledesma feels that on many occasions he takes on the roles of the Field Officer. Based on the increased number of volunteer deployments planned for 2011-13, an additional Field Officer will soon be joining the FTF team. This is expected to strengthen follow-up support to hosts around volunteer recommendations as well as improve data collection for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

3. Delivery: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

Since the program started deploying volunteers in August 2009, more than 150 producers have been assisted in three regions by over 48 volunteer assignments. Volunteers have used a number of different methods including: assessments, cost analyses, observations, hands-on training and advice, workshops, and development of plans, frameworks and guidelines to support hosts at different levels in achieving their outcomes.

The program has signed a cooperative agreement with two NGOs working in different geographic areas to provide technical assistance to tree crops and horticulture projects: La Fundacion Sur Futuro in Padre Las Casas region, and La Asociacion para el Desarrollo de San Jose de Ocoa (ADESJO) in San Jose de Ocoa region. Tree crop projects have so far focused on avocado production, while horticulture projects have focused on green house production of mainly peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers. There have been a few assignments carried out in innovative areas such as wine and jelly production, solar food drying and strawberry production. The present situation in the country is not favorable to convert the present vegetable production in greenhouses to organic production. This is mainly due to the lack of knowledge and local market availability, as well as the cost of the certification. Nevertheless, several of volunteers have been training the women greenhouses producers on ecological and organic ways of producing vegetables, with the aim of reducing the amount of agrochemicals used, as well as promoting composting practices. One of the ADESJO greenhouses is dedicated to organic production of vegetables, and the volunteers have used this facility for training other farmers and extensionists in this type of production. Many feel this could be a new niche for greenhouse vegetable production by women's groups.

In addition to Sur Futuro and ADESJO, the program is collaborating with a USAID financed project called the 'Rural Diversification Project' known as USAID-RED. This is an economic growth program working with green house 'clusters' in an integrated approach. Like FTF, it targets actors at every stage of the value chain, providing them with tools to

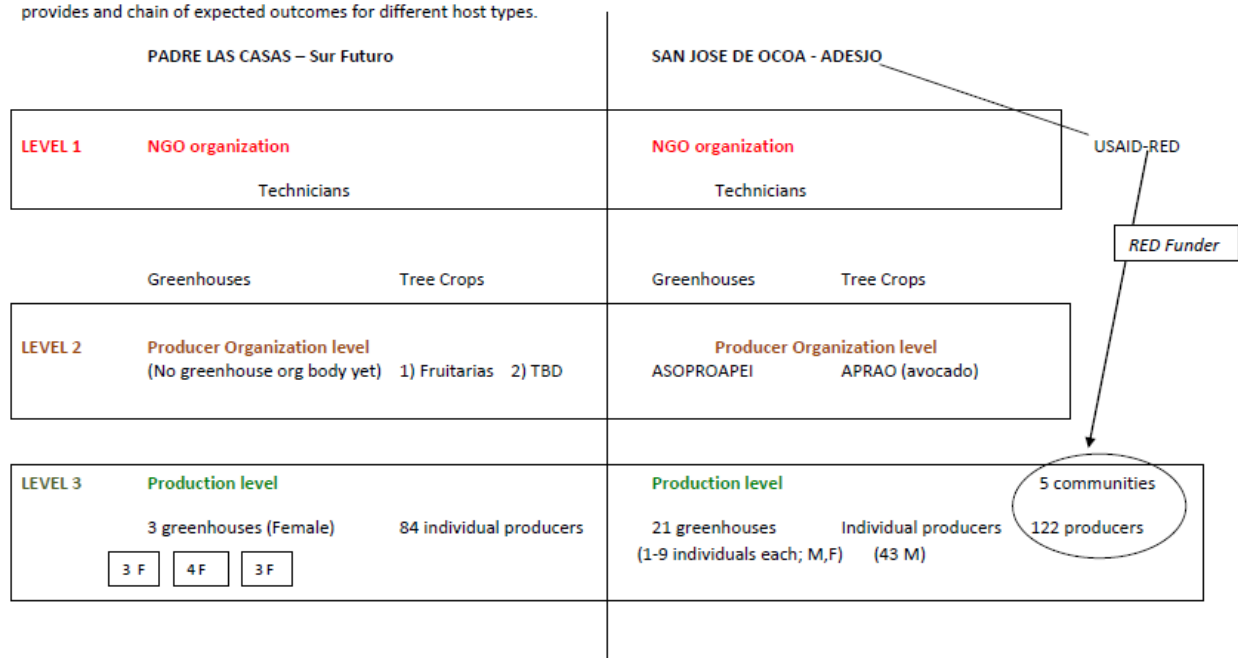
compete in domestic and international markets. FTF has also entered into agreements with UNPHU University in Santo Domingo, University ISA in Santiago, and The Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry/National School of Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry in Jarabacoa Region. Additionally, in February 2011, the program agreed to provide volunteer assistance to 'IDIAF'- Dominican Institute for Agriculture and Forestry Research.

FTF volunteers fill the technical needs of partner programs by working directly with producers as well as the technicians who oversee their work, while the partnering organization provides key ingredients, including: seeds, plants, materials, fencing and training. This has resulted in what some have described as a “win-win situation”. In terms of measuring program impact, partners are also considered FTF ‘hosts’. They receive support in areas of organization development including strategic planning, leadership and management. Technicians working for these larger organizations take part in FTF trainings and workshops as they accompany every volunteer visit. Selection of hosts at the producer level (individual private farmers, groups and associations) are selected by the partners, not FTF staff.

Below is a visual diagram illustrating the different levels at which FTF volunteers provide technical assistance (individual producers, associations, and NGOs):

LEVELS WITHIN NGO STRUCTURE AND HOSTS RECEIVING FTF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

FTF technical assistance is being provided at each level; see logic model for description of program showing relationship between what the program provides and chain of expected outcomes for different host types.



Volunteer scopes of work have primarily been designed by the partners, with support from the FTF Country Coordinator, in order to fit into their jointly-developed annual work plans. However, this is sometimes challenging as dates for assignments are dependent on individual volunteer availability.

Qualities of effective volunteers

According to FTF hosts, partners and in-country staff, one of the key challenges to volunteer assignments so far has been the language barrier. Non-Spanish speaking volunteers rely heavily on translation, which can pose challenges. Although

Villar's ability to translate to and from English and Spanish is impressive, there is always a risk of omission or misinterpretation in any translation process. In addition to this, it can get in the way of the personal relationship built on trust, a highlighted value of the program. Spanish language skills are clearly an asset to any volunteer assignment in the DR. Other reported qualities of effective volunteers include: practical; flexible; credible; having the ability to relate to people; not "telling them what do to" but working with them to resolve their problems; and coming prepared with an understanding of the local context. Partners expressed that FTF volunteers are unique in that they "really listen" to the people, and explain to them *why* they need to make specific changes in their practices; a necessary approach for transferring knowledge in a contextually relevant and sustainable way. All stakeholders talked about the advantage of receiving support from someone who is knowledgeable and credentialed in their field of work: "*they know what they are talking about*". It was apparent that this trust in volunteer's expertise led to hosts willingness to adopt their recommendations, when possible.

Volunteer recommendations

A number of recommendations were not adopted by hosts due to financial constraints (e.g. unable to afford equipment or other required resources; inability to access loans) and lack of technical assistance and support after volunteers leave. Sur Futuro staff gave an example of a written plan for a packing house that was devised by a volunteer. The project has not yet been realized due to the NGO's inability to access funding.

All volunteer reports and recommendations pertaining to each host are translated by FTF in-country staff and sent to the respective partners (Sur Futuro and ADESJO). FTF staff recommend that Sur Futuro and ADESJO share all the relevant findings with farmers and extensionists for application into their production and farm activities. It has so far been expected that technicians from Sur Futuro and ADESJO will provide ongoing technical assistance and follow up of volunteer recommendations. However, technicians reported having limited time for this. Villar also has little time for this as he is constantly coordinating the field activities of the volunteers. There is also no systematic way of following up on recommendations at the organizational level (i.e. recommendations made to technicians). Many hosts expressed a desire for more consecutive visits from volunteers that build off of previous assignments. They also wished they had more time to spend with each individual volunteer.

Volunteer trip reports have also noted concerns about recommendations not being adopted. This has, in some cases, led to "overlapping recommendations". Volunteers Emily Oakley and Mike Appel reported their observations of excessive watering in many of the ADESJO greenhouses. A previous volunteer, Christine Gutke, had already recommended they avoid over watering as it could, and eventually did, increase in the spread of diseases. The Country Coordinator expressed that a key role of the Field Officer should be to follow up on these types of recommendations, as well as collecting good quality impact data. However, as stated above, there have been a number of challenges hindering the Field Officer's ability to do this including limited time due to logistical coordination responsibilities as well as expectations that regular technical support required to adopt recommendations will come from Sur Futuro and ADESJO technicians.

Environment

FTF in-country field staff make an effort to promote the conservation of natural resources when describing their mission. There have been at least seven volunteers so far who have provided environmentally friendly training in areas of pest and disease control, which has led to reduction in pesticide use at producer level. Volunteers have also conducted

assessments, training and development of reforestation and harvesting guidelines for Sur Futuro and Jarabacoa Forestry School.

An observation made during two different monitoring and evaluation visits, as well as noted in a number of volunteer trip reports, is the application of chemicals to green house crops without using protective gear. Evidently, green house producers do understand the health risk this poses, but are unable to afford the equipment. FTF employees have flagged the concern with partnering organizations but the issue has yet to be resolved. *“If we had them we’d use them”*- ADESJO green house producer when asked about protective gear

Gender

So far, close to 19% (9/48) of volunteers who worked with FTF hosts have been female. The majority of greenhouse projects are targeting women’s groups. These groups were established by Sur Futuro and ADESJO, in line with their own policies to promote gender equity in development activities. Focus group discussions were held separately with women and men in order to understand how the program is impacting them differently. It was obvious that women have experienced social empowerment from having an opportunity to work as part of a group and the potential for making their own money, something they did not have in the past. At the same time, it was evident that these women are feeling frustrated after working hard for over two years and still not able to make money due to inaccessible markets. A clearer understanding of longer term impacts of the program on women’s lives will be possible when and if they begin to sell their products and make use of their earnings.

4. Preliminary Outcomes: Where is the program in terms of progress towards the intended outcomes since October 2008?

The project has achieved mainly short and medium term outcomes so far at various levels of the value chain. It is important to note that many hosts did not start receiving volunteer assignments until late 2009 or 2010, so it is too premature to see any longer term changes. Preliminary outcomes are broken down by levels of intended change, in line with the country’s host relational map (see Appendix 8).

Assessments

Initial assessments by FTF volunteers have aided the DR team in planning and prioritizing volunteer assignments. Recommendations have been made on the type of support and strategies required to help hosts achieve their goals. Initial assessments were carried out in a number of areas including avocado production, forestry, agro-forestry, and greenhouse production. Recommendations were made to focus on specific areas such as greenhouse temperatures, soil management, pest management, root rot management, irrigation, varietal selection, production budgeting, and marketing. An assessment of a mahogany plantation and potential for ecotourism was also conducted for the UNPHU University. An assessment by a team of volunteers has spun off into a proposal, small grant and new passive ventilation project for greenhouses in San Jose de Ocoa.



Figure 2: ADESJO green house with new hand washing facility, recommended by FTF volunteers

Production, Post-harvest handling and Storage

The program in DR seems to have made the most progress so far in areas of production, post harvest handling and storage. Greenhouse and

avocado producers reported a number of benefits from FTF assistance including: saving money; having more food for the family; increased sense of pride; feeling more united as a group; increased technical knowledge and skills; increased production; and reduction in the amount of agrochemicals used. Volunteers have helped green house producers improve practices in areas of hygiene and sanitation; managing soil fertility; incorporating compost into their beds, pepper pruning, irrigation, pest and disease control, fertilization, and post-harvest handling. One volunteer developed a proposal for production of seedlings for one of the women's greenhouses, which led to the Ministry of Agriculture facilitating funds for the project. Avocado producers reported improved practices in avocado pruning, integrated pest management, packaging and storage, site selection, planting techniques and crop management. Producers have also improved their record keeping with the help of FTF volunteers, which has allowed them to better track their production and manage chemical applications.

During a focus group discussion, a group of green house producers explained in detail the changes they've made in hygiene practices in their greenhouses which is expected to reduce the spread of disease. They have installed a mat and hand washing bowl with soap for washing their shoes and hands prior to entering the greenhouse, as recommended by FTF volunteers.

USAID-RED program officers reported that many of the producers that participated in the IPM trainings have changed the way they handle pests, leading to an increase in production and sales.

Avocado producers said it is too soon to see long term benefits of the program, and that their success is dependent on unpredictable weather conditions. However, they reported short and medium-term benefits from what they learned from FTF volunteers including: increased knowledge, increased networking; improved product quality; reduction of pest and disease; increased production and increased sales. They reported feeling proud about being able to make a living and provide for their family. Learning how and why to prune avocados was emphasized by almost every producer interviewed as an important change in practice that has led to a reduction in pests and diseases, as well as increased production.

Producers believe this is helping them move closer to their goals of exporting their product. Volunteers have also helped avocado producers access information through the internet. Volunteer Phil Phillips provided a list of websites that producers are now utilizing to address their avocado problems.

In addition to their appreciation for volunteer assistance, hosts expressed gratitude for the encouragement and confidence they receive from Juan Villar, FTF Field Officer, on a regular basis.

Box 1: Responses from female greenhouse producers in Padres Las Casas and San Jose de Ocoa when asked about their experience with FTF

"We feel proud because as women we can do the work of men"

"Now we work together, before we worked alone"

"I really thank the volunteers for the workshops and for thinking of us poor women. We have learned a lot."

Box 2: Ripe for Savings

A USAID-RED Field Officer explained what he thought to be one of the most important contributions of FTF program. During a visit to a packing house, a volunteer was able to identify that the pineapples being packaged were too ripe; they would have been rotten by the time they reached their destination. Apparently, the pineapples were green and appeared to be under ripe from the outside, which was deceiving to the naked eye. The volunteer rightly recommended that they sell over half of the pineapples in a local market, preventing the export of a spoiled product.

Marketing and Market Linkages

The biggest challenge for green house producers has been in accessing markets, including the transportation of produce to markets as well as knowing where to sell. Women also expressed that although they have produced more, they are not yet receiving the financial benefit they were expecting: *“you lose the production if you don’t have a way of getting it to market”*.

Many volunteers have recognized this problem and have made recommendations on how to overcome this bottleneck in the value chain, such as recruiting a market specialist to work with ADESJO.

One volunteer, Ralph Bucca, supported producers in Jarabacoa region in solar fruit and vegetable drying, and making wine from passion fruit, guava, cocoa beans, cocoa pulp, and banana and helped them devise strategies for marketing it in tourist areas of the country.

Agribusiness strengthening and organizational development

Volunteers have been building the capacity of technicians from the two main NGOs it works through, Sur Futuro and ADESJO as part of every assignment. Technicians are always present when volunteers conduct trainings, workshops or hands-on support to producers. Technicians have strengthened their ability to provide technical assistance to hosts in the production and post harvesting areas listed above.

Volunteers have also provided training to researchers and extensionists from three different universities to strengthen their ability to provide quality instruction and practical demonstration sites for students. The National School of Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry in Jarabacoa Region received support in developing a curriculum as a step towards becoming an accredited, regional technical institution. Two volunteers also provided recommendations for the construction of a new greenhouse on the Jarabacoa campus, which will be used to provide food and practical instruction for students.

Two female volunteers conducted a strategic planning workshop at the greenhouse group level for Sur Futuro and ADESJO. Their methodology was highly participatory, covering a number of topics including: decision making, conflict resolution and record keeping. Greenhouse associations now have written plans, mission statements and an increased commitment to teamwork.

C. Nicaragua

1. Description of FTF Program in Nicaragua

The main objective of FTF in Nicaragua is to increase productivity and profitability of the dairy sub-sector. Specifically, the project aims to increased milk production, improve milk quality, introduce new cheese types, increase dairy sales and ultimately, increase income for small and medium producers, cooperatives and private sector businesses. As part of the effort to strengthen dairy sector institutions, the project has been building the capacity of university faculty and students to improve the dissemination of information and strengthen community extension services. The key areas of FTF technical assistance at different stages of the dairy value chain, as described host relational map, include: improving milk production and quality; collection, processing and distribution; organizational development; and dairy development service industry.

FTF -Nicaragua began to implement a new horticulture project in January 2011. This was developed after a series of horticulture “flex” assignments between 2008-10. It is intended to work closely with another USAID-funded project implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Because the horticulture project has just recently kicked-off, this report covers only the implementation and preliminary outcomes of the *dairy project* from October 2008 to present date.

2. Management: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

Partners of the Americas’ FTF Program Director, Peggy Carlson, based in Washington DC, has overall responsibility of the FTF program in Nicaragua. Jessie Kalsmith is the Program Officer, also based in DC, and has weekly contact with FTF in-country staff via email and phone regarding volunteer visits and other programmatic issues. The Nicaragua team is led by a Country Coordinator, Dr. Ronald Blandon B., a veterinarian with over 15 years of professional experience in the dairy sector. Dr. Blandon stays up to date on other dairy sector projects in Nicaragua through his connection with CONAGAN (an association of dairy cooperatives and farmer groups and also a FTF host) and by attending regular meetings with other actors. The dairy project has one Field Officer, Daniel Ingram. Daniel is a graduate of UNA-Managua in veterinarian studies. He grew up on a dairy farm and has extensive practical experience in the field. The project recently hired an administrative assistant, Yajaira Eliet Brizuela Trujillo, who performs data entry in F2Fnet, budgeting and accounting and other administrative duties. It was clear that the professional staff in Nicaragua work well together as a team. Their backgrounds complement one another and provide a strong backbone for the program.

Daniel has primary responsibility for almost all of the logistics involved with volunteer visits for the dairy project. Until recently, he was also responsible for all FLEX volunteers, but that responsibility has now shifted to the new Horticulture project Field Officer, Elisa Maria Estrada Guido. Daniel feels that the bulk of his time is spent on logistics coordination rather than providing field expertise. He also helps to prepare volunteer scopes of work and corresponding agendas. The time commitment in coordinating logistics makes regular follow up with hosts difficult, and leaves little time for collecting monitoring and evaluation data. Although it is expected that technicians from cooperatives will do the follow up after a volunteer leaves, the technicians we spoke to reported being over worked and burdened by an unreasonable coverage area. One technician said he is responsible for over 200 farmers and, realistically, is only able to visit each farmer one time per year. Even when they do make it to the farm, they are busy collecting information about the cows and have little time to provide hands-on support or follow up on FTF volunteer recommendations. It was also suggested that technicians from cooperatives may be unwilling to follow up specifically on FTF recommendations because the program is not paying them.

3. Delivery: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

The FTF program is working to provide assistance to stakeholders at different stages of the value chain, from farmers to consumers. A new approach in this program cycle, as compared to previous FTF programs in Nicaragua, has been to target more consumers.

Stages of the value chain where FTF provides assistance:

Farmers → Collection → Processing → Marketing → Commercialization → Consumers

Volunteer technical assistance provided to date includes a combination of assessments, training, hands-on-support at individual farms, development of work plans, recommending new technologies, seminars, and farmer ‘field days’. They have so far provided assistance to 16 individual private farmers, five cooperatives, one association, two universities and one private enterprise. As part of the effort to target consumers, the project has contributed to the ‘Si a La Leche’ campaign, a regional movement to promote health and expand the dairy market. One volunteer has been working with

schools to promote the nutritional benefits of dairy, and two volunteers produced a video about Nicaragua's dairy industry and the importance of consuming dairy products. The video is now being aired on local TV stations throughout the country.

The project has been testing out new approaches to maximize the effectiveness of volunteer assignments, including sending out 'teams' of volunteers to work together on a particular assignment. This has allowed volunteers to discuss and debate recommendations or solutions to a problem in person, particularly if they have different opinions or experiences. They are also able to share ideas, put their heads together, and complement each other's work at different stages of the dairy value chain. The benefits of teaming up have also been felt by volunteers. The following was taken from a trip report questionnaire from volunteer John E. Rushing: *"teams of two are the best. There is less time waiting on the other and you still have someone to bounce your ideas off of."* According to the Country Coordinator, this also helps avoid the problem of volunteers providing conflicting information. For example, one volunteer came and recommended introducing a new type of grass into the pasture, but a subsequent group of volunteers came and said that type of grass would not work in Nicaragua's environment.

Based on feedback from hosts, the Country Coordinator has identified a need to shift the approach from spending just a few hours with many hosts to more focused assignments, spending the entire two to three weeks with just one or two hosts. He plans to use this strategy during the second half of the program with more focused objectives written into scopes of work. He also hopes to reach more cooperatives by including them in the design of a certified label that all would be able to use as a seal of quality. The Nicaragua team has been implementing a number of strategies to spread learning to other farmers throughout the country. CONAGAN, an association of dairy cooperatives, publishes a monthly magazine called "El Ganadero". The magazine includes information about FTF assignments, as well as recommendations made by volunteers. They have also aired messages via TV commercials, including interviews with FTF volunteers. As part of the effort to promote more learning and sharing among farmers, the project has been hosting "Friday Field Days" at the end of each volunteer visit. They invite farm owners from all areas to take part, giving them an opportunity to hear about first-hand experiences from FTF hosts.

Qualities of effective volunteers

Field staff and hosts agreed on a number of qualities that help volunteers successfully carryout their scopes of work and contribute to lasting, positive change in people's lives. These include: being specialized in their field of work (i.e. "experts"); able to articulate information in a language that rural farmers can understand (using simple, less technical terms); friendly and open to sharing their skills; flexible (e.g. someone who doesn't complain about not having air conditioning in his hotel room); culturally sensitive; able to transfer knowledge in a contextually relevant way; previous international experience (particularly, a strong understanding of Latin American culture and context); and having Spanish language skills. It was mentioned over and over again that "repeat" volunteers (those with previous FTF experience in Nicaragua) tend to be the most effective as they are able to return home after an assignment, reflect on the situation, and come back with practical solutions to problems. For the most part, hosts and staff agreed that the majority of volunteers have been flexible, skilled, knowledgeable and friendly. Hosts expressed gratitude and a desire for continued support. During a focus group, employees at Lacteos Nicarao Cooperative articulated the value on-going relationships with volunteers. For example, the marketing officer said her continued communication with Volunteer Jeff Neville after he left Nicaragua was essential in finalizing the design of their new cheese label.

The Field Officer expressed concerns that volunteers do not always read other volunteer trip reports provided by POA before they arrive in Nicaragua, and that a better understanding of the hosts' situation could improve their ability to plan and work effectively. He suggests providing each volunteer with a brief profile of each host they are expected to work with, as well as a list of volunteer assignments carried out to date, as part of their pre-assignment orientation.

Some hosts mentioned that they did not feel the methods used by some volunteers were appropriate to their needs. One farmer stated: *"We don't want to see pictures of cows in Wisconsin, we want something that is applicable to our own situation"*. There was some concern expressed about what was perceived to be a lack of sympathy or respect towards the situation of poor farmers by some volunteers. The Field Officer explained that he sometimes refuses to translate verbatim what the volunteer says because he thinks it would be offensive. He gave the example of one volunteer telling a farmer: *"You're not going to get anywhere with only 3 liters of milk a day. Don't even think about an international market"*. He recommended creating a channel for information sharing between former and future volunteers in order to provide a better cultural and situational orientation for the volunteers before they arrive in country.

Adoption of volunteer recommendations

Almost all of the hosts expressed an inability to adopt some volunteer recommendations due to lack of resources or technical capacity. Some volunteer recommendations have also been quite 'vague', with no detailed instructions left on how or why to do something, e.g. "improve forage". Others require the purchase of materials (e.g. mineral salts) that small farmers cannot afford. The Field Officer fully understands the focus and parameters of the FTF program but sometimes finds it difficult to explain to hosts that the program cannot provide the financial assistance needed to adopt some recommendations. He quoted a host as saying: *"you're telling me to do things I can't afford. If I don't have the money to do that, in what way are you helping me?"* A number of hosts also expressed a desire for the volunteers to leave them with written instructions or guidelines to follow. Many had not received the technical assistance form- a tool developed in 2009 in order to provide hosts with a list of recommendations before the volunteer leaves country. Field staff said this is still being piloted, but expressed difficulties due to the fact that many volunteers do not make recommendations until they have left country. The Field Officer has a hard time finding the time to translate, deliver and discuss the recommendations with hosts as his time is almost always occupied with subsequent volunteer assignments.

Follow-up

All hosts interviewed expressed the desire for more time with volunteers, and more consistent follow up after the volunteer leaves to ensure they are 'doing it right'. Hosts said they preferred when volunteers walked them through the steps of a new practice instead of just giving verbal recommendations. Hosts also expressed the need for ensuring volunteer assignments are built off of previous ones. One farmer told us it had been at least three months since his family received any type of support. The Field Officer reported that he is frequently asked why FTF does not hire staff to work in the field and that *"all other programs have technicians that work face-to-face with the farmers on a regular basis"*. Of the farmers we spoke to, none were receiving support from other organizations or programs.

Environmental Impacts

According to the Country Coordinator, the FTF program in Nicaragua is extremely conscious about promoting environmental conservation and considering the impacts of dairy farming on the environment. Volunteers have helped train technicians in safe water treatment, locating sanitary water points, and proper disposal of waste water. Field staff

also talked about the importance of reinforcing and maintaining these ‘best practices’ after the volunteer leaves. For example, even though many farmers have learned about proper waste water disposal, many workers are still seen dumping it on ground surfaces or in rivers. This is something that requires longer term attitudinal and behavior change strategies as well as regular monitoring mechanisms.

Gender and Social Equality The main participants in Nicaragua’s dairy project so far have been adult men. There are currently only three female dairy hosts. Twenty two percent (9 out of 41) dairy sector volunteers have been female. Often it is the male heads of households and their sons who participate in knowledge and skill building activities. The program recently hired a new Field Officer who specializes in gender and social development issues to lead the new horticulture program. The horticulture project will work closely with a USAID-funded project implemented by CRS which seems to have a clearer strategy to engage more women. In-country staff reported no written strategy to involve women in program activities or promote economic and social empowerment and equity. However, staff seemed to recognize the need for more strategic thinking around this. They said they have been encouraged by Partners of the Americas DC staff, as well as volunteers, to think about how to involve more women:

“Arlen (referring to Arlen Albrecht, a repeat volunteer) is always telling us that we have to encourage more women to work with the project to improve the social thinking, to get social changes and give more opportunities for women”, Daniel Ingram, FTF Field Officer

The new horticulture project is working with women’s groups and has a clearer strategy through its partners to engage women, with a particular focus on female heads of households.

Another group that has been seemingly left out of opportunities for direct support from volunteers are farm laborers. One particular laborer, who reportedly works 14 hour days 7 days per week on the farm of a FTF host, expressed the desire to participate more in the FTF program and learn more veterinarian skills, *“or anything that would help me advance”*. This laborer told us he makes the same amount of money each month, regardless of how much milk is produced or sold. Currently, the project is only measuring results in terms of farm owners, not their paid staff. Collecting data on all stakeholders, including laborers, could help identify other issues relevant to improving the agricultural sector. This would require further exploration and consideration of appropriate ways to target different population groups.

Box 3. The bigger picture: “The poverty situation has not changed for farm laborers”, Farm laborer, Nicaragua National Dairy Forum, 2010

The production level target of FTF dairy processing activities in Nicaragua has so far focused on farm owners. They participate in workshops and seminars, and learn about new techniques from volunteers directly on the farm. However, many farm owners do not perform the day-to-day labor on the farm. They typically hire out laborers to do the actual work. During a field visit, it was learned that one laborer had pulled his two children out of school in order to move to a new farm for work. The boy child was observed working on the farm with his father in order to keep up with the increased production. Further inquiry revealed that it is not common for laborers to receive pay increases if the labor demands increase. At the National Dairy Forum held during the time of this field visit (March 17, 2010) a farm laborer spoke out. He called attention to the chronic poverty situation that has faced farm laborers and their families for decades, and stressed their need for more support.

4. Preliminary Outcomes: Where is the program in terms of progress towards the intended outcomes since October 2008?

The project has so far achieved short-term impacts of increasing knowledge and skills in practices intended to increase production, improving milk and product quality and increasing sales. Some of the longer-term intended outcomes (increased annual income and revenue) are likely to be more noticeable after another few years of reinforcing the new and improved practices recommended by the program. The in-country team has been building its monitoring and evaluation capacity to be better able to measure project changes as a result of volunteer activities. A number of hosts have also received training in record keeping for their farms and business, which is also expected to result in higher quality data and tracking progress. Outcomes are clustered by the level of intended change as described in the dairy project M&E Plan.

Improving Milk Production and Quality (Primary host type: Individual private farmers)

One of the key aims of FTF in Nicaragua is to help individual farmers produce more, contaminant-free milk. Specifically, the project is aiming to increase average daily production by 50%, improve pasture management, increase calving rates to 65% and reduce mortality rates by half. With these changes, farmers are expected to sell more milk at higher prices and ultimately increase their household incomes.

Farmers reported improvements in milk quality, increased production, increased access to markets, and increased milk sales as a result of the assistance they have received from FTF so far. Farmers reported a number of improvements made in their practice as a result of what they learned from volunteers, including better post natal care, improving the nutritional value of feed (use of mineral salts), improvements in safety (including the installation of electric fences), knowing when to cut the grass to increase nutritional value of forage, improving hygiene and sanitation practices and the use of genetics for breeding. One farmer's wife explained in detail what she had learned from the volunteers, including how to properly wash and clean the udder, making sure to wash her hands before milking and wearing protective clothing. Farmers reported increased pregnancy rates and reduction in calf mortality since they started improving their practices. Six of the 16 individual private farmers the program has worked with have so far increased calving rates to 65% and 12 of them have made improvements to their pasture management. Half of them have reported reductions in mortality rates, however, because they do not keep records of this, it is hard to know the exact rate. FTF is working with farmers to improve record keeping in order to help them measure progress in this area. They are better equipped to prevent, identify and treat mastitis and improve the health and nutrition of cattle. They are having less milk rejected for poor quality, are able to sell at higher prices, and use the extra money to invest back into their farms. Overall, farmers reported better management of their farming practice and increased confidence and comfort level to share what they know with other farmers.

"Before, we did not see the importance of being sanitary. Now we see that if you do it, it will increase the quality of milk and we will sell more. We'd still be receiving very low prices for our milk if it wasn't for Farmer-to-Farmer"- Wife of FTF host Alberto Ordonez (family has received support from five FTF volunteers since October 1, 2008)

Many farmers are now milking their cows twice a day, instead of once, which is an indicator of increased milk production. Half of the farmers involved in the program have already increased production rates by 20-30%. However, the normal pick up time to take milk to the collection center is earlier in the day. This means that milk from the end of the day has to wait until the next day to get picked up, and is likely to spoil. In response to this, the program has started

piloting the use of a peroxide system to keep the milk fresh overnight. This is a method used in other countries and if proven effective, could be an affordable means to preventive spoilage.

Farmer Marta Fajardo said since she adopted the recommendation to introduce mineral salts into the cow feed, and started to identify cows that can produce more readily (a skill taught to her by a FTF volunteer) her calving rates have increased. Her cows are now giving birth every year instead of every two. Her daily output per cow has increased from 3 to 3.5 Liters. The quality of her milk has been upgraded with more fat and solids, and she is able to sell at a higher price. Volunteers have also helped her develop a system for keeping track of vaccines given to the cattle, which allows her to better monitor their health. Marta told us that she has also learned about good practices from Daniel, FTF Field Officer, such as composting manure and using it as a fertilizer.

Diversifying and Enhancing Dairy Processing and Organizational Development (Primary host type: Collection, processing and distribution sites; Cooperatives, Associations and Companies)

Cooperatives reported a number of benefits from the support they received from volunteers including: improved access to markets; better control of waste water; improved cooling systems; and improved presentation of their product. Lacteos Nicarao Cooperative employees said that since they improved their cheese labels with support from volunteer Jeff Neville, they have already begun to notice an increase in sales. They admitted to feeling reluctant to move forward on the idea at first, as they did not believe changing a label could actually increase sales, but are now noticing the benefits. They also talked about improving their milk quality as a result of implementing hygiene practices, as well as a new cooling system put in place with the help of volunteer Joshua Peissig. This is also saving time and money they were spending to repair their old system. Collection sites have reportedly improved environmental conservation by adopting volunteer Joe Van Rossen's recommendations about proper waste management. They are now using a treatment tank to dump the waste water and adding lime to prevent the foul smell it was generating.



Figure 3: Lacteos Nicarao cheese labels before (left) and after (right)

A new system has also been put in place for testing the milk quality before it reaches the collection site. Volunteer Robert Albrecht introduced the use of a petri-dish and swab to test milk at the farm and send it to the lab for testing. This helps avoid milk being turned down for poor quality once it reaches the collection site. (Note: Although this has been a useful recommendation, field staff pointed out the need to develop a strategy to access the materials at low cost. Currently, the volunteer has been bringing the items in from the US where it costs approximately 50 cents per dish compared to \$6-7 USD if purchased in Nicaragua).

Dairy Development Services Industry (Primary host type: university faculty and students)

The short to medium-term intended outcome towards strengthening the dairy development service industry is to improve the dissemination of information on 'best practices' from universities to cooperative technicians and communities. So far, FTF volunteers have been working with faculty and staff at UNA Managua and UNA Camoapa in areas of training, research, demonstrations, practical applications of agricultural technologies, organizational

development, and knowledge management. Action plans have been developed to strengthen extension work and build the capacity of universities to 'team-up' with cooperatives in assisting small farmers. UNA-Camoapa faculty reported feeling more comfortable and capable of working with poor farmers. They called attention to the "human value" of programs like FTF: *"My experience with poor farmers has changed my life"* - UNA CAMOAPA faculty.

Faculty and staff were especially grateful for improvements made to their resource data base, a project implemented by volunteers from University of Wisconsin-River Falls. They talked at length about a new website database that allows faculty and students to upload and access journals and other dairy sector resources. They expect this easy access to new information to lead to increasing the spread of information and best practices that can be adapted to farms in Nicaragua. Faculty have increased their skills in knowledge management through the on-line data base and feel more organized.

Faculty at UNA Camoapa talked at length about their increased technical capacity in water dowsing. Volunteer Don Nolen conducted a practical training with faculty, students and technicians from San Francisco Cooperative on locating sanitary water points in order to improve the water supplies on farms. Improving water supplies is a step towards improving the health of cattle which is necessary for increasing production and quality of milk. The activity also resulted in locating two water points for a local hospital that had not yet opened due to lack of water.

Faculty said that, thanks to the reinforcement of a number of volunteers, they have changed their traditional management and practices in areas of forage, nutrition, and genetics. They gave an example of how they used to clear the entire paddock of trees. Now, they understand the importance of leaving the trees to provide more shade, a better environment for the cows. Volunteers have also helped develop action plans for extension work for both universities. Plans are aimed at building the capacity of students, strengthening the relationship between universities and cooperatives, and carrying out more practical research (e.g. evaluating the status of forests).

D. Haiti

1. Description of Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Haiti

FTF has been working in Haiti for over ten years. For the current program period (2008-2013), country projects include: Horticulture, Apiculture and Small Animals. The main objective overall is to increase small and medium producer income by increasing the productivity and profitability of the agricultural sector. Specific objectives for the Apiculture Country Project include improving production yields and profitability for small and medium scale beekeepers and strengthening and replicating agribusinesses and producer organizations. The objectives for the horticulture project are to increase fruit and vegetable production yields, reduce crop spoilage and increase overall product quality. In addition, the horticulture project is aimed specifically at profitability for small and medium scale fruit and vegetable producers, and strengthening and replicating agribusinesses and producer organizations. The small animal project aims to increase small animal production, improve the quality of meat and indentify and link producers to markets.

2. Management: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

The program is led by a Country Coordinator, Benito Migny Jasmin. Benito is an Agronomist who also has training in law, sociology, journalism, and photography. Although Benito first learned about apiculture when he studied in Honduras many years ago, he calls that his "secondary degree". In his own words: *"Farmer-to-Farmer is my university degree"*. There are two Field Officers responsible for volunteer visits; mainly logistics coordination, regular follow up to hosts and data collection. Anderson Pierre is the main Field Officer who oversees rabbit production. He has an environmental

science and tourism degree from University Roi Christophe in Haiti, and has taken a number of continuing education courses in agriculture through FTF. Gerard Michael Joseph, aka 'Papy', oversees the bee keeping operations. He studied at the National Agriculture Technical School, University State of Haiti. He has trained in economics, environmental science, tourism, sociology, human rights and emergency first aid. Both Field Officers share the role of covering the horticulture project hosts. FTF is supported by two female administrative assistants, Wilnese Merisier and Josemine Pierre.

The FTF program in Haiti works through an overarching organization, Makouti Agro Enterprise. Makouti employs 40 Field Officers ('DTs') who work in various locations around the country. There are approximately 20 DTs in the north. DTs meet once a month and participate in organizational development and technical training. DTs are responsible for follow up after the volunteer visits, monthly data collection as well as providing regular training and support to producers. A number of DTs have been trained as trainers by FTF volunteers to improve their ability to transfer knowledge and skills to other producers. One beekeeper described Makouti as "*a bridge connecting FTF to farmers*". FTF field staff are also employees of Makouti Agro Enterprise. They are a highly effective team who work together to solve problems, maximize the effectiveness of volunteer assignments, and ensure good quality data is collected from the field. Their main challenge has been in the way of communication. Internet and phone lines in the office are inconsistent due to the poor infrastructure throughout Haiti. This makes data entry into POA's information management system, F2Fnet, a challenge. Regular communication with POA in DC, UWEX and volunteers via email and phone, as well as being able to access resources and information via internet is also problematic. However, staff have an impressive ability to manage the program and move things along regardless of the obstacles. Staff feel they could benefit from having a resource library with books on hand about business management and agriculture.

3. Delivery: What is working well and what, if anything, could be improved?

Since October 2008, 36 volunteer assignments have provided assistance to thousands of farmers in areas of beekeeping, rabbit production and horticulture, including some repeat volunteers. The exogenous effects of a devastating earthquake on Jan 12, 2010 prevented the program from deploying seven US volunteers planned to travel between January and May 2010. During that period, Makouti took part in humanitarian response efforts. They mobilized and prepared rabbits to feed people who had been injured, and disseminated medical donations to hospitals and clinics with the assistance of POA in Washington, DC. Three FLEX² volunteers were deployed in areas of trauma counseling during this period to support earthquake victims.

Core FTF project activities resumed in May 2010 to support rabbit producers, beekeepers and horticulturists in the north, west and south regions of the country. Volunteers have used a number of methods to transfer knowledge and skills to staff, DTs and local producers including: assessments; trainings; seminars; field visits; and hands on support. Benito, Papy and Anderson have all attended trainings and workshops run by FTF volunteers in order to build their own capacity and provide on-going support to hosts.

Makouti selects the producers it works with (i.e. hosts) by using a criteria check list, which includes but is not limited to: an aim to have a social impact, proof of assets, credibility, and human resources available.

² Flexible ("flex") assignments take advantage of opportunities outside the FTF core project areas. Volunteers are sent in to explore new project areas or respond to specific requests from USAID.

Qualities of effective volunteers

Staff and hosts alike have been very satisfied with the majority of volunteer assignments. It was concluded that the best volunteers are 'repeat' volunteers, because less time is spent on familiarizing themselves with the content. The most effective volunteers are those with appropriate expertise, good training dynamics, able to transfer knowledge and skills in a practical way, outgoing, open-minded and able to relate well to people. Volunteers who try to speak Kreyol, and those who link them up with resources (material for cages, bee hives, etc.) after they return home are highly valued.

Volunteer recommendations

The majority of volunteer recommendations have been *adapted* to the producers' own context rather than *adopted* exactly the way the volunteer recommended. Most often, the FTF staff and appropriate DT review and, when possible, test the volunteer recommendations before the volunteer leaves. Benito follows up with suggestions for further adaptation if needed after the volunteer leaves. The main barrier to adopting recommendations has been lack of resources, including lack of access to credit and loan systems. Makouti staff, also trained by FTF volunteers, conduct regular follow up visits with farmers to see if they are adapting the recommendations made by volunteers. On-going communication and follow up with hosts has been a key factor to the success of producers in Haiti. FTF in-country staff feel that reinforcing and adapting recommendations is much more important than counting the number of recommendations adopted. Recommendations may change after the volunteer goes home; they are often trial and error.

"Even if volunteers provide good information, they <hosts> need the right materials to make it work"- Benito Jasmin, FTF Country Coordinator, Haiti

Monitoring and Evaluation

Two trainings have been conducted by UWEX M&E Specialists/FTF volunteers for FTF and Makouti staff, DTs, community leaders and producers. Haiti has improved its M&E system and has developed a rigorous system for collecting data on success of producers- particularly beekeepers and small animals. They have developed performance logs for each of its producers, nectar charts for beekeepers, and memory notebooks for rabbit producers, all including project specific indicators of success. They also keep a record of all trainings that take place. Their system involves providing a small fiscal incentive to community DTs to collect data on every producer and report back to Makouti each month. In-country staff have improved their understanding of M&E and how it can be used to improve their work as well as highlight their achievements. This has given the Haiti team a tremendous advantage in being able to measure results, both in terms of Makouti as well as FTF contributions to change.

Environment

FTF projects in Haiti use an integrated approach that focuses on environmental, economic and social impacts. They discourage use of inorganic pesticides and fertilizers in their work while promoting composting. A number of volunteers have provided training covering issues of composting, planting trees, and using rabbit manure as fertilizer. Volunteers have also covered topics on safe hygiene and sanitation practices and the importance of using natural products. Makouti currently has three tree nurseries, and they require bee keepers to plant trees. A number of hosts reported planting trees and creating compost piles as a result of what they had learned from volunteer trainings.

Gender

FTF in Haiti has an active strategy to engage women in their project activities. Specific consideration has been made around the inability of women to travel far to trainings due to their other domestic responsibilities and cost and time involved in travel. In an effort to overcome this barrier, the FTF team has started going to the homes of women to provide hands on support and training, instead of expecting them to travel to a training venue. Other strategies include making special requests to DTs to recruit women, encouraging male beekeepers to bring their daughters to trainings, and working with a number of female university students. The team has also begun to measure the participation of women as an indicator of progress. In Plaisance, they now have over 2000 women participating in the project. Makouti Field Officers ensure that women members of the household are involved in every new family trained in rabbit production. FTF staff have expressed interest in receiving support in developing a longer-term strategy to confront the cultural attitudes and beliefs that prevent women and girls from participating in activities. So far, over 44% (16/36) of assignments directly supporting hosts have been female volunteers, including some repeat volunteers.

4. Preliminary Outcomes: Where is the program in terms of progress towards the intended outcomes since October 2008?

FTF in-country staff report the most progress to date in farm and business management and accessing markets for selling rabbits and honey. Overall, program benefits reported by hosts include: increased household food security, improvements in health, self confidence, knowledge, social status, ability to afford new commodities (more land, new houses, vehicles, etc.), reinvestments to the business, improved product quality, ability to send kids to school, and the ability to hire new employees. According to Benito, social indicators in Haiti are just as (if not more) important as economic indicators. Many hosts expressed feeling “socially proud”. Success has been evident in improved well being of participants, with hosts experiencing a reduction in stress-related-illnesses like high blood pressure and depression. *“It makes them feel proud and empowered when they (volunteers) come to their farm”*, -Benito Jasmin, Country Coordinator.

Beekeeping

Between 2008 and 2010, over 1,600 beekeepers were trained by FTF volunteers in Haiti. Volunteers have worked with beekeepers in areas of basic hive maintenance, nutrition, controlling Varroa (a parasitic mite associated with honey bees), and new hive construction. The introduction of the removable Kenya top Bar Hive (KTBH), otherwise known as a ‘long hive’, by volunteer Conrad Berube has shown to be an appropriate transition from the traditional log hives. The KTBH is easier and cheaper to construct than the removable frame hive. It can be built with local materials and allows easier inspection than the traditional log hive, as well as wax removal. Beekeepers have started to venture into different directions such as selling wax for candles and propolis for its medicinal properties, as well as improving the quality of their honey.

Box 4: Responses from beekeepers when asked about the difference the FTF program has made in their lives:

“They opened the door for me to understand new diseases and treat them. They taught me how to make boxes and now I sell those boxes.”

“Before volunteers from Farmer-to-Farmer came, the situation with bees was not good. But after trainings from them, I can now send my children to school and take care of my family. Before I could not even dream about owning a donkey and now I have a motorcycle. And I have more dreams. This makes me proud.”

In 2010 alone, 79% (587/743) of beekeepers trained had improved their practices after receiving training from FTF volunteers. Indicators of improvement were based on criteria developed by Makouti, including: improved hive structure;

creation of a hive nucleus; increased number of bees per hive; number of colonies with complete frames; improved swarming control; increased nectar flow; reduction in hives lost to Varroa,

Case Story: Andremonne Solomon has come a long way

Andremonne Solomon is the primary caregiver for her entire family. Her husband has a physical disability, and she earns the bulk of the income that supports their family of six. Since becoming involved with FTF and Makouti Agro Enterprise, she has increased her household income from producing and selling rabbits, a practice taught to her by FTF volunteers and Makouti technicians. She has been able to sell enough rabbits to pay for school tuition of all four of her children, costing 2500 Haitian dollars (~\$61USD) per year, for those in secondary school. She has also used her income for medical fees as well as nourishing people back to health by feeding them rabbit meat. Her household food consumption has also increased. Andremonne said the best recommendation she has received from a FTF volunteer was to expand the variety of food she gave her rabbits to include wheat bran, oranges, sweet potato, syrup, and salt powder. This made her rabbits stronger and prevented them from dying. She hopes the program will continue to get more people involved.

improved monitoring of diseases and feeding; and prevention of theft (one of the biggest challenges to beekeepers in Haiti).

Participation in FTF activities has resulted in improved honey quality, reawakening of hives, increased household savings from replacing sugar with honey, increased access to beekeeping equipment and increased access to markets. One beekeeper had 38 hives that “came to life again” after receiving assistance from FTF volunteers. Beekeepers are now harvesting honey twice per year instead of only once, resulting in more honey and increased sales.

“We’ve created a beekeeping ministry!”- Benito Jasmin, FTF Country Coordinator

A number of hosts expressed gratitude for the practical approach used by FTF volunteers. They found this more advantageous than trainings facilitated by other agencies, which tended to be more theoretical. They also appreciate the focus on both prevention and treatment of Varroa. Attitudes about beekeeping have improved throughout the country, and much of this is believed to be a result of FTF and Makouti’s influence. There are now approximately 20 other NGOs planning to work in beekeeping, and Makouti recently received a request from the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture to train extension agents in beekeeping. The Makouti beekeeping project has received national recognition, with FTF playing a key role.

Small Animals

The small animals project has focused mainly on rabbits so far, although there are

plans to do more with goat rearing in next half of the program. Volunteers have provided a number of trainings to Makouti staff, DTs and individual producers in a number of areas. DTs and

Box 5: Reaping the Rewards

There was a time when beekeeper Noe Brazier lost 75 hives to the Varroa mite. With help from FTF volunteer Don Hopkins, he learned how to identify and treat the parasite and construct new hives. This allowed him to resume his full practice, which contributed to an income of \$12,000 USD from honey, hive and cage sales over the past year.



Figure 4: "Proudness" is used as an indicator of success in Haiti

Makouti/FTF Field Officers have been trained as trainers, which has helped spread knowledge and skills to even more producers.

Overall, rabbit producers reported a number of benefits from their involvement with FTF program including: increased confidence; sense of pride and recognition in the community; ability to influence others; ability to pay for self and others to go to school, ability to feed self and family, more people sharing food (an indicator that people are making more money); increased rabbit production; increased sales; increased access to markets; and increased access to equipment.

*“The biggest challenge is continuing education – this is what we expect from volunteers – we don’t have a school to learn about rabbits in Haiti”-
Rabbit producer*

On average, commercial rabbit production has increased from 1 to 10 units (30-50 does per unit); household production increased from 0-20 units (12-16 does per unit), individual production from 24-1090 units (4-6 does per unit) and 7-600 units for individuals with 2 does per unit. Seventy four percent of all rabbit producers reported being able to send all of their children to school, an estimated cost of \$50 USD per year, with money made from rabbit sales. Volunteer trainings have led to increased knowledge and improved practices in breeding, nutrition, disease management (particularly ‘mange’), safe meat processing, quality assurance, marketing, and constructing and maintaining a new cage design. The new cage design is more sanitary and safer than the previous design, preventing accidents and attacks from predators.

The Haiti program has been fortunate to have the commitment of repeat Volunteer Myriam Kaplan-Pasternak, a doctor

Box 6: Responses from rabbit producers when asked about their experiences with FTF program:

“I became a famous man in the community”

“My rabbits got mange and I treated them with oil and have been able to help over 100 others treat this. I feel like I could almost become a vet”

“Thanks to Farmer-to-Farmer we feel great and encouraged to help the country get ahead”

“In my community, no one knew about rabbits. I didn’t know anything – I only knew they were a strange animal liked by French people. I felt lucky to be given rabbits and training to take care of them”

of veterinary medicine (DVM), who has carried out nine FTF assignments in Haiti, six of which occurred between 2008-2010. She has worked with the Makouti team to overcome the challenges of raising rabbits in an economically disadvantaged country, such as trying to convince people that rabbits need adequate supply of safe water to drink in order to stay healthy and reproduce. This is especially challenging considering that half of the human population in Haiti does not have access to safe water sources for drinking, cooking and bathing. In an effort to overcome this challenge, Volunteer Kaplan-Pasternak introduced small pet water nipples attached to recycled plastic soft drink bottles found locally. This has prevented spilling and contamination from keeping the water in open bowls,

and ensures rabbits have a consistent supply of water. This has helped increase milk production and nutrient absorption, which has resulted in higher reproduction rates and reductions in mortality.

Volunteer Kaplan-Pasternak has also played an instrumental role in helping Makouti leverage resources through micro-credit lenders, such as Leo Blumle at the Patricia Sullivan Haiti Outreach Foundation for rabbit cage wire, and accessing grants through her non-profit ranch ‘Devils Gulch Educational Services’ (DGES), which has helped Makouti expand their operations. She also helped Makouti launch a vet clinic where she conducted trainings.

Another area of progress over the past few years has been in the communities’ receptiveness towards eating rabbits, which has helped producers sell more. Country Coordinator Benito Jasmin thinks this is due to spotlighting it as a socially

acceptable thing to do, as it is human nature to ‘follow trends’. Volunteers have supported Makouti in promoting and marketing the nutritional benefits of eating rabbits through messages over the radio, and by requesting rabbit when eating at restaurants; this has led to more restaurant owners adding rabbit to their menus in an effort to please their foreign customers. Makouti has also promoted the rabbit industry by buying rabbits from producers to demonstrate a demand, offering special prices on rabbits during the holidays, and hosting special events that serve rabbit.

The rabbit project has also reached out to young people, generating interest in the new generation of Haitians to become involved in rabbit breeding. A twelve year old boy known as “Little Benito” has learned how to raise rabbits from his father, a FTF host. He plans to use the money he makes from rabbit sales to pay for his school tuition.

Horticulture

So far, six horticulture volunteers have helped farmers improve practices in areas of organic production, transplanting, bed preparation, seedling production, composting (using rabbit waste), nursery production and development of business plans and monitoring and evaluation. Farmers have increased their knowledge and skills in seed selection and managing diseases. They are better able to measure their progress with improved record keeping. They have improved product quality, increased production and accessed more markets. Benefits include: increased

Box 7: Spin-off Effects: From teacher/farmer to teacher/farmer/bee keeper/rabbit producer

Oles Bazille has been benefiting from FTF program for over one year. Before his involvement with FTF he was a teacher and small scale farmer. He started receiving support from FTF in beekeeping in 2010, which has led to improved honey quality, increased production, and increased sales. He has also started selling wax for candles and propolis for medicinal purposes (e.g. curing ulcers, skin infections, respiratory infections, etc.) Since then, he received 1 female and 2 male rabbits from Makouti and has begun breeding rabbits after participating in FTF trainings. He now has 127 rabbits. He is grateful for the opportunities he has had to expand his potential in so many areas: *“It has sharpened our vision and given us new hopes for our community.”*

ability to feed families and pay for medical treatment; ability to construct new homes, and investments back into the farms. Many horticulturists have also received additional support from Christian organizations, missionaries and local agricultural schools.

Institutional Strengthening

Makouti has begun to pair up with a number of universities in order to provide practical experiences for university students seeking agricultural degrees. Students have participated in volunteer trainings in all project areas, as well as monitoring and evaluation and record keeping. Hosts reported feeling inspired by the vision of Makouti, and the transformational character of its leader, Benito Jasmin, with one farmer referring to his personality as “contagious”.

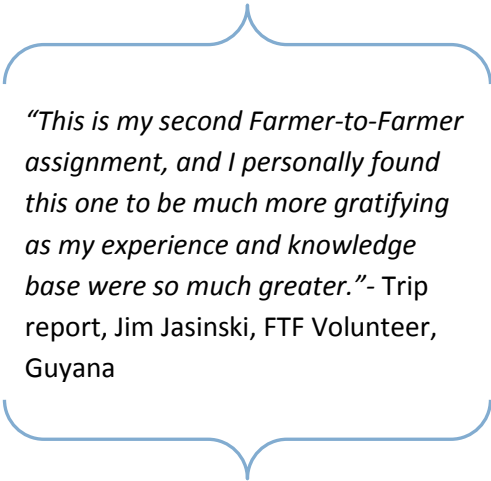
IV. Recommendations

Program Descriptions: Overall, programs are on track with the primary activities described in their project strategies with some minor deviations in order to respect changing circumstances. All projects are designed to target various stages of respective value chains in alignment with USAID mission projects. Some country programs have found collaboration with other USAID projects challenging for a number of reasons. It is not always possible to fit volunteer assignments into other project work plans as the assignments depend on individual volunteer availability that cannot always be planned far in advance. However, given the nature of a technical assistance program, FTF staff have iterated

the need to develop strategic alliances with other programs as essential. Hosts that receive infrastructure investments and regular technical support from other projects (e.g. GTIS in Guyana, USAID-RED in Dominican Republic) tend to have stronger value chain linkages. Focusing on hosts that can influence all levels of the value chain (e.g. Cooperatives in Nicaragua) and working through a larger central organization with consistent support from numerous sources (e.g. Makouti in Haiti) also seem to be more effective strategies than providing one-off assignments to hosts with no other affiliations. **Recommendation:** Review project strategies to address evident gaps in respective value chains (e.g. production, post-harvest handling, marketing and commercialization) and plans for developing collaborative partnerships with existing programs in order to link volunteer assignments to on-going efforts in each country.

Management and Delivery: There are a number of aspects of program implementation that are working well across countries. FTF Field Officers provide a tremendous amount of support to volunteers in country that allows them to carry out their scopes of work, as well as gain a cultural appreciation of the respective countries. Staff have built strong community relationships built on trust and respect, and have helped improve leveraging and networking among different stakeholders. Opportunities for learning and sharing between countries have been invaluable to program improvement and recognition purposes.

Generally speaking, hosts have been very satisfied with the level of expertise volunteers provide as well as their practical approach. There is a high value placed on relationships as many hosts continue contact with volunteers after they leave, including ongoing donations of materials and linkages to funding and credit schemes, providing opportunities to improve and expand agricultural practices and businesses. Repeat volunteers are considered to be more effective and efficient in carrying out their assignments than new volunteers due to their pre-existing understanding of the context (cultural, socio-economical, logistical) and their ability to 'jump right in' rather than having to spend time acquainting themselves with the situation. Recommendations from repeat volunteers also appear to be more sustainable due their previous assessments of what does and does not work.



“This is my second Farmer-to-Farmer assignment, and I personally found this one to be much more gratifying as my experience and knowledge base were so much greater.”- Trip report, Jim Jasinski, FTF Volunteer, Guyana

In terms of program improvement, hosts expressed a need for more advance notice of volunteer assignments, more time with volunteers, more consistency between assignments and follow-up support after volunteers leave. Partners would like volunteer assignments to better fit into their own operational work plans. Although many hosts are able and willing to make changes in their practices based on the advice of FTF volunteers, many recommendations are not adopted due to lack of required resources or financial means. Leaving adequate time for debriefing at the end of volunteer assignments can help ensure recommendations are relevant and understood by FTF staff, hosts and partners.

Volunteers receive an extensive orientation packet prior to deployment, including prolific trip reports from previous assignments; finding time to read through them all is challenging, especially for assignments in countries that have had numerous volunteers. Ambiguity about who is considered a FTF 'host' has also caused some confusion in reporting and tracking recommendations by host. Field Officers have found it difficult to disseminate volunteer trip reports to every host, particularly when they require translation, and full reports are not relevant or user-friendly for all audiences. They also report feeling overwhelmed by the logistical coordination required for volunteer visits, which limits their ability to

provide on-going technical support to hosts as well as carry out quality monitoring and evaluation. Finally, many hosts in DR, Nicaragua and Haiti find it challenging to work with volunteers who do not have local language skills.

Specific recommendations for program management and delivery:

- Develop volunteer scopes of work around building strategic alliances and partnerships with existing programs and strengthening linkages across value chains; collaborate and pair volunteer assignments with existing efforts and programs with infrastructure investments and loan opportunities
- Include a list of host names, brief profile information and concise summary of previous volunteer assignments in volunteer orientation packets; encourage volunteers to communicate with previous volunteers prior to deployment
- Involve producers in the development of scopes of work to ensure they are based on need, fit into their work plans and are aligned with intended outcomes
- Develop scopes of work to allow volunteers to have more focused time with fewer number of hosts
- Block out time at the end of each volunteer visit for writing up reports and debriefing
- Make time in Field Officer schedules for translating and articulating volunteer recommendations in the appropriate language and level of understanding of each host (this may require a verbal explanation of each recommendation for non-literate hosts)
- Review roles and responsibilities of in-country staff to ensure adequate follow-up is made to hosts and quality monitoring and evaluation data is collected, analyzed and used
- Develop a system to explore why recommendations are not adopted or adapted and work with partners to devise an action plan to address the issues
- Communicate to volunteers the importance of providing relevant recommendations: Are required resources available and affordable? Do hosts have the technical capacity to adopt or adapt the recommendations? Do hosts understand what to expect from adopting the recommendation?
- Continue efforts to recruit volunteers with appropriate language skills (Spanish for DR and Nicaragua, Kreyol or French for Haiti) to avoid misinterpretation and translation difficulties and ensure the right technical vocabulary required for knowledge and skill transfer is used

Gender: Twenty nine percent (51/176) of volunteer assignments between October 2008 and March 2011 have been female volunteers (including some repeat volunteers). A few projects involve more women producers than others, likely due to partnerships with organizations that have a clear strategy for promoting gender equity (e.g. ADESJO and Sur Futuro in DR). None of the FTF country programs have a written strategy or system for measuring how specific projects might impact men and women differently. The Haiti team has recently added 'increased participation of women' as an indicator of progress in their M&E system, and the Nicaragua team recently hired a female Field Officer specialized in gender and social development for the new horticulture program. All countries expressed an interest in receiving support in assessing gender equality relevant to each project area. **Recommendation:** Recruit volunteers to facilitate local-level gender analyses with staff, partners and hosts for all projects and develop a strategy for enhancing and measuring positive gender impacts.

Environment: FTF in-country staff are conscious about considering the implications of all FTF program activities on the environment. All volunteers receive a copy of the USAID environmental guidelines prior to their deployment, and staff seem to be well aware of the regulations. There have been a number of trainings by volunteers in areas of composting, IPM and safe use of chemicals (pesticides, herbicides) for FTF hosts. It was observed on a number of farms that chemical

application is often done by paid laborers who have not typically been involved in FTF activities. A number of environmental health concerns have been raised in volunteer trip reports in almost every country. Although not directly related to FTF activities, they do require attention as they threaten the safety of FTF hosts as well as members of their surrounding communities. **Recommendations:** Ensure all people involved in every stage of agricultural processes participate in relevant trainings, including farm laborers, as well as those working in collection and processing centers; Identify and utilize appropriate country protocols for reporting environmental and public health concerns; review what actions each country program takes to mitigate environmental problems and how they can promote stewardship and appropriate and sustainable management practices; monitor and assess these practices on a regular basis to ensure environmental standards are consistently upheld.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Field Officers from each country are responsible for collecting baseline and impact data for all FTF hosts. The main challenges so far tend to be around questions about annual income. Asking people how much money they make is awkward for both the interviewee as well as the interviewer. FTF staff do not think that income is an elemental measure of economic well being and the accuracy of the reported numbers is also questionable. Farmers often do not keep such records, and if they do, they might alter them depending on how they perceive the purpose of the question. Asking questions about what people did with additional income does not seem to be problematic. For example, hosts reported being able to buy a motorcycle or a new house, pay for tuition or medical costs, and hire more paid staff. These types of indicators seem to be more relevant and would likely portray a more accurate picture of economic growth than annual income. Field staff find that it is easier to collect project specific data using locally created data collection forms or annexes. Most Field Officers feel that M&E is an onerous task, as the bulk of their responsibilities lie in logistical coordination of volunteer assignments. **Recommendations:** Review and revise the roles and responsibilities of Field Officers to ensure quality monitoring and evaluation is performed in timely manner; Carry out a rigorous analysis of the entire M&E system to explore and address existing problems, including the functionality of F2Fnet, as soon as possible³. This is essential to being able to effectively demonstrate achievements by the final program evaluation in 2013.

V. Conclusions

Based on the evidence available, all four FTF country programs appear to be moving in the right direction towards achieving their project-specific intended outcomes as well as the broader impacts in economic growth, environmental conservation, access to financial services and strengthening agricultural sector institutions. Some programs have been operating for longer periods of time than others, and have had an opportunity to develop effective approaches over many years of learning and evaluation. Each country program has adapted well to changing contexts and external events, and country staff appear to be flexible and eager to experiment with different ways of maximizing program benefits. Many hosts have not started receiving volunteers until late 2009 or 2010, and it is therefore too premature to notice longer-term impacts such as increased income. As a result of FTF trainings, workshops and hands-on support, hosts have reported increased knowledge, skill and confidence levels, and changes in specific practices that have led to both intended and unintended outcomes and positive effects on their lives and livelihoods. Many hosts expressed benefits in terms of empowerment, pride and improved overall well being – often just by having an opportunity to participate in FTF activities and learn new skills that offer the potential to succeed. Improvements in practices have led to better quality products, higher production rates, and increased sales. Money from sales has been used for education

³ A full review of the FTF M&E system is planned to be carried out over the next few months by UWEX-PD&E with a report and recommendations to follow.

and medical expenses, purchasing new commodities, and reinvesting back into businesses. Individuals and families have been able to provide more nutritional food for their families and increase their household savings. Communities have a strengthened sense of cohesion and improved food security. Organizations have improved their record keeping, organizational skills, management plans and M&E capacity to better track their progress. Universities have increased access to resources and information and are better equipped to team up with cooperatives and disseminate best practices to communities. It is important to honor the day to day efforts of the in-country staff, the work of other programs, and the collaboration and networking that takes place between FTF and other actors, all of which have contributed to progress made to date. Continuing to improve the M&E system and strengthen linkages across value chains will help country projects demonstrate their achievements and contribute to the goal of generating rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector in their respective countries by 2013.

VI. Dissemination of results:

It is important that findings from this mid-term review are shared with all actors of the program, including USAID, Partners of the Americas, volunteers (former and future), in-country staff, partners and hosts who participated in the study, USAID missions in country, and other relevant agencies. Results should be articulated in a way that is appropriate for the language and level of understanding of particular stakeholders. Suggested ways to disseminate:

- 2-page written summary of key points per country/sector of relevance
- Power point presentation
- Face-to-face discussion

APPENDIX 1: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question (what do you want to know?)	Source (who has this information?)	Method (how will you gather this information?)
1. Describe the program in each country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the intended outcomes? What are the primary activities? What is the approach? What is the theory of change? Is the program aligned with USAID mission objectives? 	<i>Overall Program:</i> USAID RFA	Document review
	<i>Country level:</i> Country project strategies; Country project M&E plans (logic model, host relational map, host list form, data collection plans)	
2. Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the program managed? What are the roles and responsibilities of FTF in-country staff? What are the communication channels between key stakeholders? (Partners, volunteers, POA, FTF staff, UWEX, hosts) What is working well and what can be improved in terms of program management in each country? 	In-country staff; POA- DC staff	Interviews
	In-country staff; Hosts; partners	Interviews
	Volunteer trip reports and questionnaires; M&E field visit report; POA bi-annual and annual reports to USAID	Document review
3. Delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What activities have been carried out to date? Who did they reach? How were beneficiaries selected? Who were the volunteers? How were they selected? Who are the main partners? How is the program working with or through partners? Is the program being delivered as originally planned? Why or why not? How has the program/project evolved since October 2008? What is working well and what can be improved in terms of how the program is being delivered? 	Volunteer trip reports and questionnaires; M&E field visit reports; in-country field data (training records, surveys, reports, logs, etc.); POA bi-annual and annual reports	Document review
	In-country staff; Hosts; partners	Interviews
4. Preliminary Outcomes: Where is the program in terms of progress towards the intended outcomes since October 1, 2008? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have hosts increased their knowledge and skills as a result of FTF activities? Have hosts improved their practices as a result of the program? What difference have these changes made so far to individuals, families, communities and organizations? How? What all has contributed to these changes? What are the unintended outcomes or potential consequences of FTF program so far? Why did these or might these occur? 	M&E field visit reports; POA semi-annual and annual reports; in-country field data (annexes, production logs, diaries, technical assistance forms, reports, surveys, etc.); Volunteer trip reports	Document review
	Hosts; In-country staff; partners	Interviews
	Hosts	Focus group discussions

APPENDIX 2: Bibliography

FTF program documents reviewed:

USAID. RFA No. M-OAA-EGAT-605. John Ogonowski Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FTF) Leader with Associates (LWA) Cooperative Agreements. April 21, 2008

Country project strategies for each country

Country program M&E plans (host list forms, host relational maps, logic models, data collection plans)

Partners of the Americas' semi-annual and annual reports since 2008

Volunteer trip reports

Volunteer questionnaires

University of Wisconsin-Extension Monitoring and Evaluation project trip reports

Meeting minutes (POA-UWEX teleconferences, UWEX Advisory Board)

Country-specific data collection instruments:

- Host record keeping logs/notebooks
- USAID mission M&E forms (Guyana)
- Project annex forms
- Country project monitoring and follow up forms

Other references:

USAID 2007 mid-term review of FTF program

USAID FTF final program evaluation 2003

Partners of the Americas FTF program final report 2003-2008

USAID. Constructing an Evaluation Report. April 2006

USAID. Assessing the Effectiveness of Economic Growth Programs. Private Sector Development Impact Assessment Initiative. May 2010

Keesbury, Jill. USAID Development Information Services. The Value of International Volunteerism. A Review of Literature on International Volunteer-Sending Programs. July 2003

USAID. Managing International Volunteer Programs. A Farmer-to-Farmer Program Manual. March 2005

USAID. Gender Assessment USAID/Dominican Republic. Sept 2009. Available at:
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ847.pdf

UNDP. Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluation for development results. 2009

APPENDIX 3: Interviews

Country	Person interviewed	Gender	Relationship to FTF	Date
Guyana	Kelvin Craig	Male	Country Coordinator	12/09/10
	Shaun Francis	Male	Field Officer	12/11/10
	Fitzroy Valentine (member of Marfriends)	Male	Host: Individual Private Farmer	12/10/10
	Satash Chico Persaud	Male	Host: Other Private Enterprise	12/11/10
	Beni Sankar	Male	Host: Other Private Enterprise	12/13/10
	Vanessa Wallerson	Female	Host: Member of Kuru Kururu Farmer's Crop and Livestock Association	12/12/10
	Yonette Kennedy	Female	Host: Chairperson of Kuru Kururu Farmer's Crop and Livestock Association	12/12/10
	Vivien Fredericks	Male	Host: Individual Private Farmer and member of Hauraruni Friendly Farmers Society	12/13/10
Dominican Republic	Dr. Rafael Ledesma	Male	Country Coordinator	01/11/11
	Juan Villar	Male	Field Officer	01/16/11
	William Tejera	Male	Host: Sur Futuro Technician	01/15/11
	Carlos Bonilla	Male	Host: ADESJO	01/14/11
	Jeffrey Paris	Male	Partner: USAID-RED	01/13/11
	Ing. Pilar Ramirez	Male	Partner: USAID RED	01/13/11
	Martha Fernandez	Female	Host: Instituto Technico Superior de Ciencias Abientales (Jarabacoa Forestry School)	01/13/11
	Jesus de los Santos	Male	Abt. Associate Consultant for USAID-RED	01/13/11
	Franklin Morella	Male	Host: Sur Futuro Technician	01/17/11
	Manuel Mosada	Male	Host: Sur Futuro technician	01/17/11
Nicaragua	Ronald Blandon	Male	Country Coordinator	01/31/11
	Daniel Ingram	Male	Field Officer	02/02/11
	Gustavo Rodriquez	Male	Host: Technical Director for CONAGAN	01/31/11
	Pedro Tinoco	Male	Host: Field Technician for CONAGAN	01/31/11
	Jose Antonia Rivera	Male	Host: Technical Advisor for Eskimo	02/03/11
	Aris Mejia Herrera	Male	Host: Technician for CENCOPEL	02/03/11
	Carlos Ruiz	Male	Host: Faculty Dean at UNA-MANAGUA FACA	01/31/11
	Marta Fajardo	Female	Host: Producer, San Isidro Farm	02/02/11
	Monje Fajardo	Male	Brother of host Marta Fajaro	02/02/11
	Jose Anjel Marenko Hurtado	Male	Laborer at host Josefa Miranda's farm	02/02/11
	Juan Dr. Ledesma Goanjo Miranda	Male	Host: Technician at San Francisco Cooperative Processing Plant	02/02/11
	Tomas Parriles	Male	Host: Production technician at San Francisco Cooperative Processing Plant	02/02/11
	Lesby Burgos	Male	Son of host Miguel Burgos, Individual Private Farmer	02/03/11
	Haiti	Benito Migny Jasmin	Male	Country Coordinator
Anderson Pierre		Male	Field Officer	02/28/11
Gerard Michael Joseph		Male	Field Officer	02/28/11
Oles Bazille		Male	Host: Bee keeper, rabbit producer, horticulturist	02/26/11
Andremon Solomon		Female	Rabbit producer	02/25/11
Wenson YFelix		Male	Rabbit producer	02/27/11

APPENDIX 4: Interview Questions

Interview Questions by unit of analysis

Field visit data collection methods:

1. *Interviews*
 - *In country staff*
 - *Select hosts at different levels of the respective project value chains*
 - *Select partners*
2. *Focus Group Discussions: select hosts*

In addition to these methods, Document Review will include: Country strategies; M&E plans; In-country data collection tools (farmers diary, annexes, technical assistance forms, follow-up forms, field notebooks, etc.); POA semi-annual and annual reports; Volunteer trip reports; Volunteer questionnaires; UWEX M&E field visit reports

Field staff: Country Coordinators and Field Officers

Program strategy/description

1. Were you involved in the original development of country projects and strategies for this program period (Show project strategy document: Oct 2008-Sept 2013)? What role did you play?
2. Were any of the hosts or partners involved? If so, how did they participate in the process?
3. Do you integrate FTF activities with other USAID or donor funded programs? **Are partners clearly defined as to roles and responsibilities?**
4. Are there strategies being implemented to promote spread of benefits from volunteer assistance?
5. Do your country projects describe the measures that will be taken to enhance positive gender impacts and to ensure equitable participation and access to benefits by women? *If yes, please provide example*
6. What is being done to promote environmental conservation through the FTF program in your country?

Management

7. Could you briefly describe your background and how it relates to the FTF program?
8. Can you please describe your roles and responsibilities? *Probe: How much time is put into supporting volunteers in preparation, developing scopes of work, logistics, translation, etc.*
9. Are there other programs that FTF staff manage besides FTF?
10. **Are the Country FTF Offices adequately staffed with technical, management and support personnel necessary to carry out the Program?**
11. Are systems in place to ensure the safety and security of volunteers and Program staff?

Volunteer Scopes of Work

12. **What is the process for developing volunteer scopes of work?**
13. **Are systems in place to adequately prepare volunteers for their assignments and provide technical and logistic support necessary?**
14. Can you please describe the communication that takes place between yourself and:
 - Hosts

- Partners
 - Volunteers, Probe: what follow up, if any, do you have with volunteers after they return to the US?
 - POA staff in DC
15. Do you think these communication channels are effective? Why or why not?
 16. What is working well in terms of the way FTF program is managed?
 17. What, if anything, do you think could be improved in terms of the way FTF program is managed?

Delivery

18. **Selection of Hosts:** Please describe the process you go through to select FTF hosts. *Probe: Do they have to meet certain criteria? Do they submit proposals? How do they learn about the FTF program?*
19. **Have you developed any collaborative arrangements for providing volunteers to other USAID development projects?**
20. Is the program being delivered the way it was originally planned? How has it evolved? What has influenced this change, if any?
21. How would you describe the qualities of an effective FTF volunteer? *Can you give any examples volunteers who exhibited these qualities?*
22. Has the quality of volunteer assignments been consistent? Please explain
23. How do you feel about the recommendations volunteers have made to hosts? *Probe: Have they been culturally appropriate? Contextually relevant? Economically feasible? Realistic? Please explain.*
24. Have hosts been willing and able to make appropriate changes to their practices based on volunteer recommendations? *If yes, please provide examples*
25. Overall, what percentage of volunteer **assignments** do you think have been effective from October 2008 to date?
 - a. Less than half
 - b. Half
 - c. More than half
26. Please explain how follow-up is provided to hosts. *Probe: who conducts follow-up? How often? How is it documented?*
27. Besides volunteers, what sort of assistance is provided to hosts? Follow up: If there is an identified need for support that FTF is unable to fill, what do you do
28. Are you testing out any innovative ways of using volunteers? (e.g. group assignments)
29. What are your biggest challenges, currently, in implementing the FTF program?

Preliminary Outcomes

30. In what areas do you think the projects have made the most progress to date?
31. What all has contributed to this progress?
32. Do you notice any difference the program is having in the lives of individuals, families, communities and/or organizations?
33. In what areas have the projects made the least progress to date? What factors are preventing or slowing progress in these areas?
34. Have you noticed any benefits that you did not expect when first planning the program? If so, what?
35. Have you noticed any potentially negative effects of the program that you did not anticipate? Why did these or might these occur?

Monitoring and Evaluation

36. Which indicators are you using to measure progress in your projects (e.g. strategy papers, M&E plans/logic models, baseline and impact indicators, annex indicators, etc.) Are they clear, realistic and appropriate?
37. Are procedures in place and being implemented to collect required baseline and impact data on hosts? (Is the data collection plan being implemented?)

- a. How, when and by whom is baseline data collected?
- b. How, when and by whom is impact data collected?
- c. Are there problems with any of the Standard FTF Indicator definitions?
- d. Are there any specific problems with data collection?
- e. Do you think that Standard FTF Indicators and the data collection system is capturing most of the FTF Program benefits?
- f. What, if any, changes would staff recommend for the M&E system?
- g. How sound is the overall country system for monitoring and evaluation of impacts from the FTF Program?

Hosts and Partners

Management

1. Could you describe the relationship you have with the Farmer-to-Farmer program?
2. Were you involved in the development of the volunteer's scope of work? If so, what role did you play?
3. Did you have communication with the volunteers:-before they arrive?-after they leave?
4. What do you understand about FTF Program objectives and requirements? How did you learn this?

Delivery

5. Have FTF volunteers met your expectations in terms of their scopes of work? Why or why not?
6. What do you think are the qualities of the most effective volunteers? Can you give an example of a volunteer that possessed these qualities?
7. How do you feel about the recommendations volunteers have made? Probe: Were they relevant? Appropriate? Feasible? Could you provide examples?
8. Is there anything you think could improve about the way FTF is implemented?

Outcomes

9. What are you aiming to achieve with our agricultural operation or business?
10. Where are you at in reaching these goals?
11. What has been your biggest success or something you've been proud of over the past few years?
12. Did you learn anything new or change anything about your practice that led to this success? I.e. what are you doing differently now that you didn't do before?
13. Is there anyone in particular that taught you what you learned or supported you to make these changes?
14. How have you benefited **most** from the Farmer-to-Farmer program?
15. Have you shared what you learned or gained from the program with other farmers? What motivated you to do this or not to do this?
16. What have been your main challenges in reaching your goals? What do you plan to do about this?
17. Did anything happen as a result of your participation in the Farmer-to-Farmer program that you did not plan or expect? If so, please explain? Probe: this may be negative or positive?
18. Is there any other support you would like to receive from FTF in the future? If so, what?**M&E**
19. How do you measure progress in your agricultural operation or business?
20. Have you received any support from FTF in record keeping, or tools to help you monitor your progress?

APPENDIX 5: Focus Group Discussions

Country	Participant profile	Men	Women	Total	Date
Guyana	Hauraruni Friendly Farmers Society members	2	1	3	12/13/10
	Kuru Kururu Farmers Crop and Livestock Association members	5	7	12	12/12/10
	Marfriends Land Farmers Cooperative-Men	5	0	5	12/10/10
	Marfriends Land Farmers Cooperative-Women	0	4	4	12/10/10
Dominican Republic	Avocado producers from Asociacion de Fruticultores de Padres Las Casas	5	0	5	01/17/10
	APRAO avocado producers in OCOA	5	0	5	01/14/11
	Greenhouse producers from two greenhouses in OCOA: 'Buscando esperanza' y 'El sol sale para todos'_in La Horma'	0	9	9	01/15/11
	Las Lagunas Greenhouse Group	0	7	7	01/17/10
Nicaragua	Alberto Ordonez and family	3	2	5	02/01/11
	Laborers at Lacteos Nicarao Cooperative	2	3	5	02/01/11
	Faculty at UNA-CAMOAPA	6	1	7	02/02/11
Haiti	Bee keepers	4	0	4	02/27/11
	Rabbit Producers	4	1	5	02/25/11
	Horticulturists	4	0	4	02/26/11
Total		45	35	80	

APPENDIX 6: Focus group discussion guiding questions

Focus group discussions

Criteria: Each participant should have received technical assistance from at least one FTF volunteer between October 2008 and present date; **Materials:** Tape recorder; Note books and pens; Placards with letters on them (placed in front of each participant to keep track of who said what while protecting anonymity)

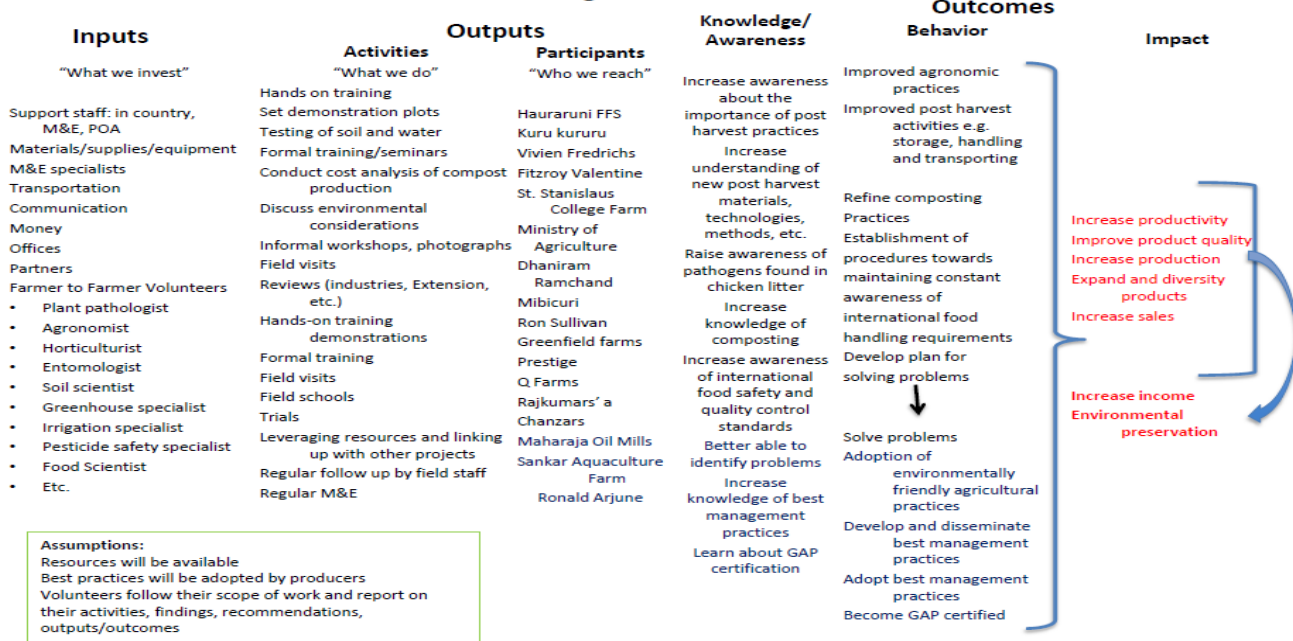
Welcome and Purpose: Thank you for being here today. You were asked to participate in this discussion because you have received assistance from the Farmer-to-Farmer program at some point over the past few years. I am _____ from the University of Wisconsin-Extension in the United States. I am here on behalf of Partners of the Americas to learn about your experiences with the **Farmer-to-Farmer Program**. The information you provide will help us understand how effective the program has been so far, and to make any improvements if necessary. Here with me is _____ from _____. She will be helping to take notes during the discussion. I will be asking the questions. Neither of us will participate in the discussion. We ask that you direct your responses to one another rather than to us; *Ground Rules:* Everyone's ideas are important, everyone is encouraged to speak; there are no right or wrong answers; negative comments are useful. Please feel free to disagree with one another, we would like to have different points of view. I want this to be a group discussion, so you needn't wait for me to call on you. Please speak one at a time so that we can hear what everyone has to say. We have a lot of issues to cover, so I may change the subject or move ahead. Please stop me if you want to add something at any time; *Time Required:* This will take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours of your time; *Purpose of tape recorder and Confidentiality:* You've probably noticed a tape recorder here. We will be recording the discussion because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Often people say important things in these discussions and we can't write fast enough to get them all down. **Specific names will NOT be used.** You will notice a letter in front of you. This letter will be used to keep track of who said what, but will not be linked to your name. All comments are **confidential**; nothing you say will affect your participation in the services you currently receive in any way; whatever is said in the circle **MUST** remain in the circle. You are free to drop out of the discussion at any time but may **NOT** discuss information shared by others with anyone once you leave the group; *Voluntary Consent:* By agreeing to participate in this discussion you are giving us consent to document, record and use information shared today for program learning and improvement purposes. Does anyone have any questions before we begin? Does everyone feel comfortable with the use of the tape recorder? Does everyone agree to participate? If yes, begin with first question.

1. Please take a minute to think to yourself about your _____ practice. What are some of the things that have gone well or have made you especially proud over the past few years?
2. Have you made any **changes in your practice** that contributed to this success? What were these? *Probe: Things you have done differently, new practices or technologies you've applied. What or who helped you make these changes? (if they say FTF volunteers, ask if they remember their names)*
3. In what ways have you **benefited** from the FTF program? *If they say increased income, ask how they know this and what it is used for (e.g. educational expenses for kids, purchase new assets, etc.)*
4. **Who** performs the production labor for your business or farm? *Follow up: paid staff, mainly women, mainly men, children, etc.*
5. **Who participates** in activities or receives support from the Farmer-to-Farmer program?
6. Is there **anyone else** who benefits directly or indirectly from the program? If yes, How?
7. Is there anyone who **doesn't** benefit? Would changing something about the program allow more people to benefit?
8. Is there anything that has **not gone so well** in your farming practice or business over the past few years? If so, what do you think caused this to happen/not happen? *Probe: rabbits dying, market access. Follow up: What do you plan to do about this?*
9. Do you have any future needs for FTF assistance? (List needs)
10. Please take a minute to think about the volunteers from the United States that have assisted you. What do you think those volunteers learned from you? *Follow up: What do you hope they will do with what they learned?*
11. How would your life or situation be different if you had never participated in this program? (list specific support from above)
12. If you could change one thing about the Farmer-to-Farmer program, what would it be?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss before we go?

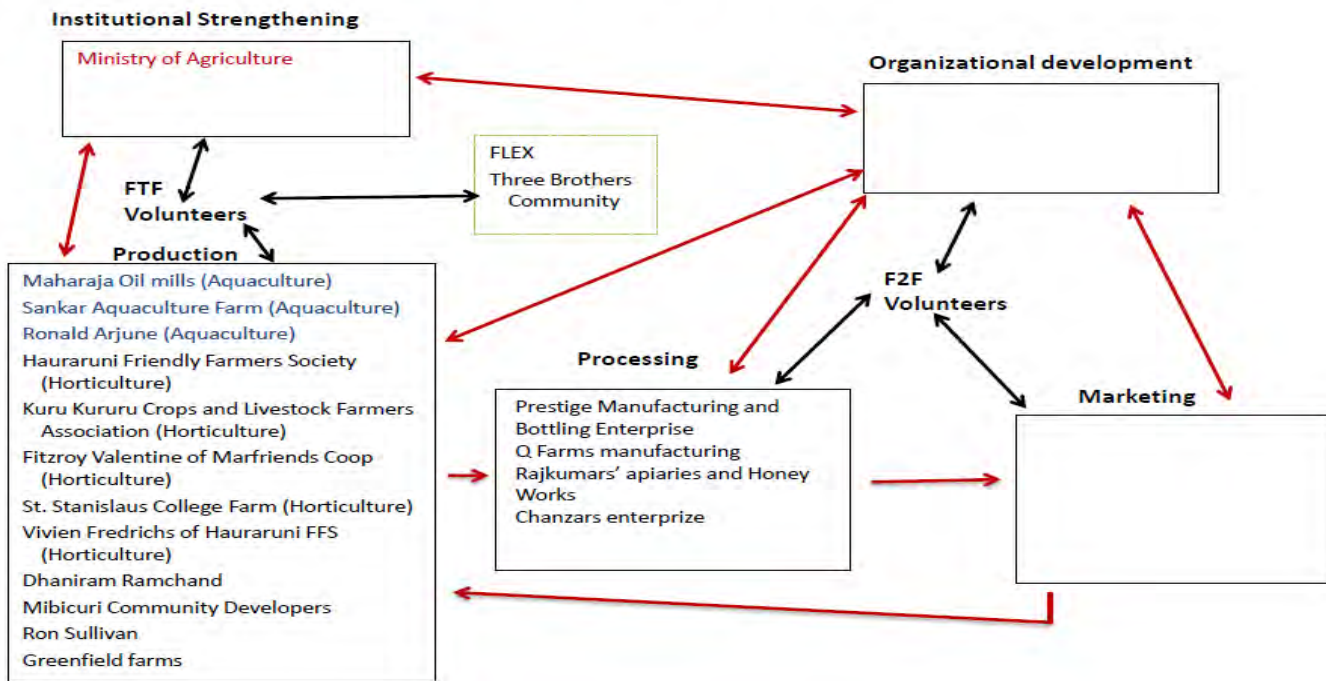
Thank you for participating in the discussion today.

APPENDIX 7: Guyana Program Host Relational Map and Logic Model

**Aquaculture and Horticulture projects
Logic Model**

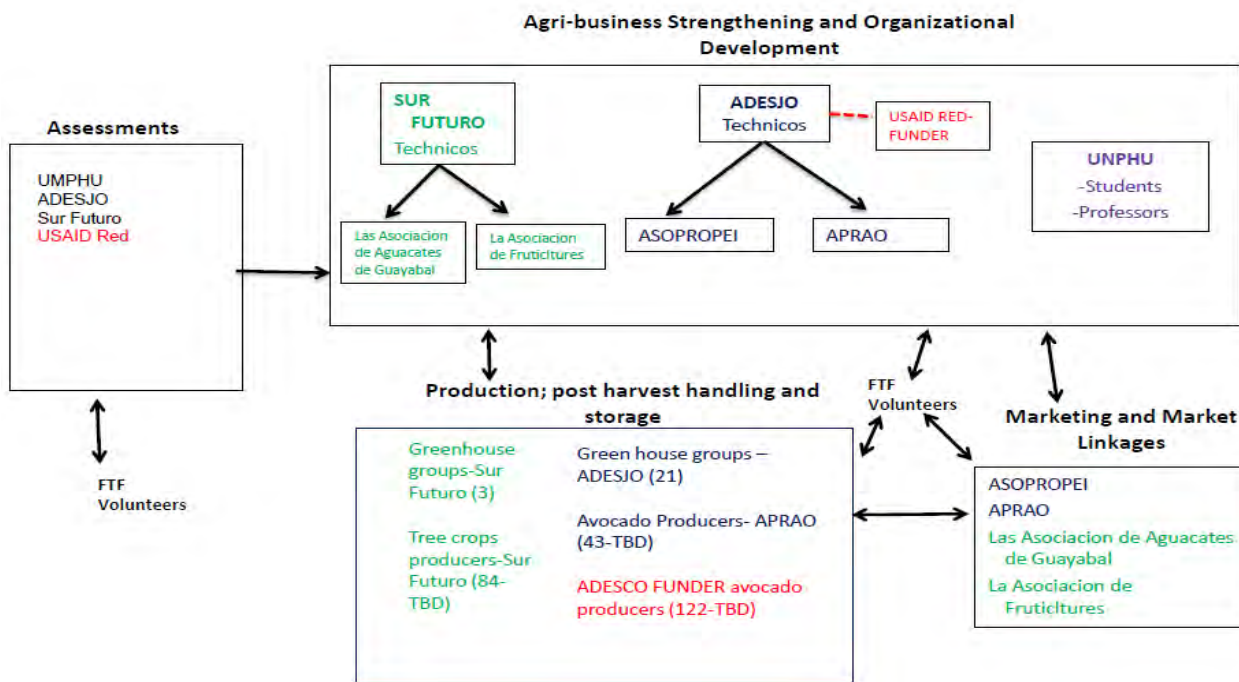


**Farmer to Farmer Guyana – Host Relational Map
Horticulture and Agriculture Projects**

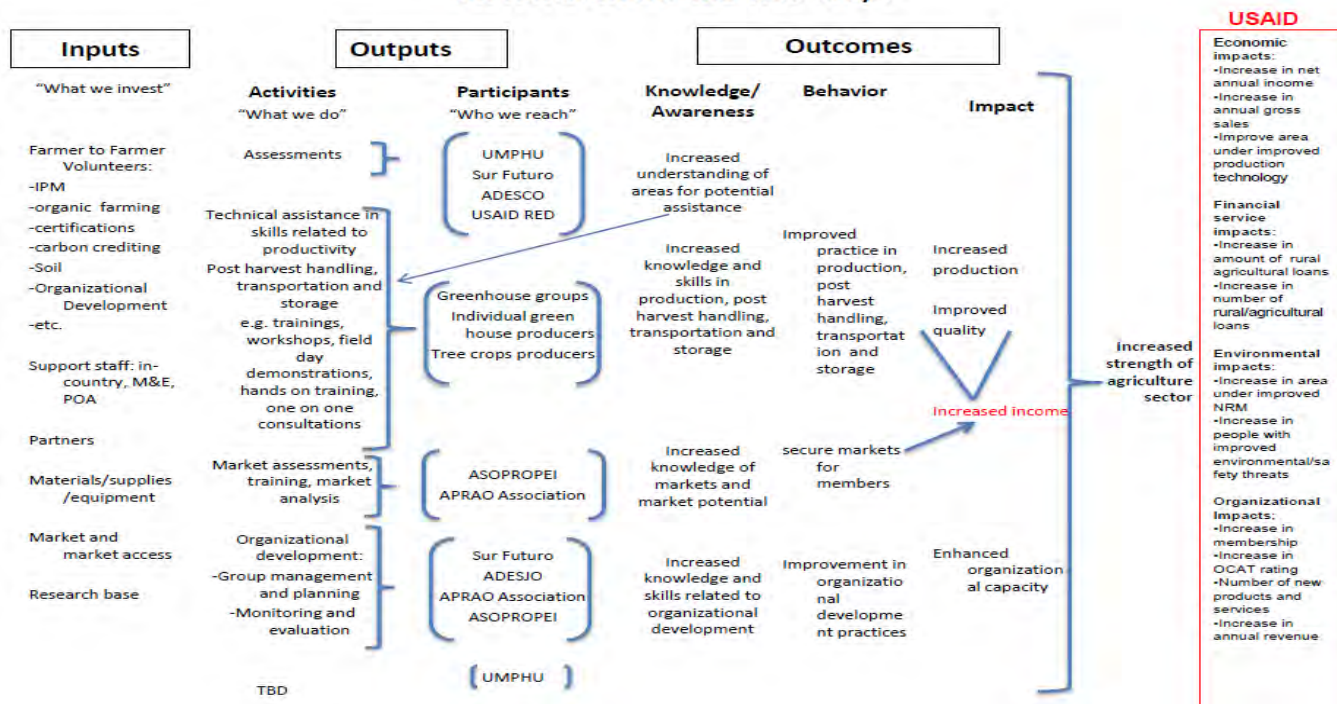


APPENDIX 8: Dominican Republic Host Relational Map and Logic Model

Farmer to Farmer Dominican Republic – Host Relational Map Horticulture and Tree Crops

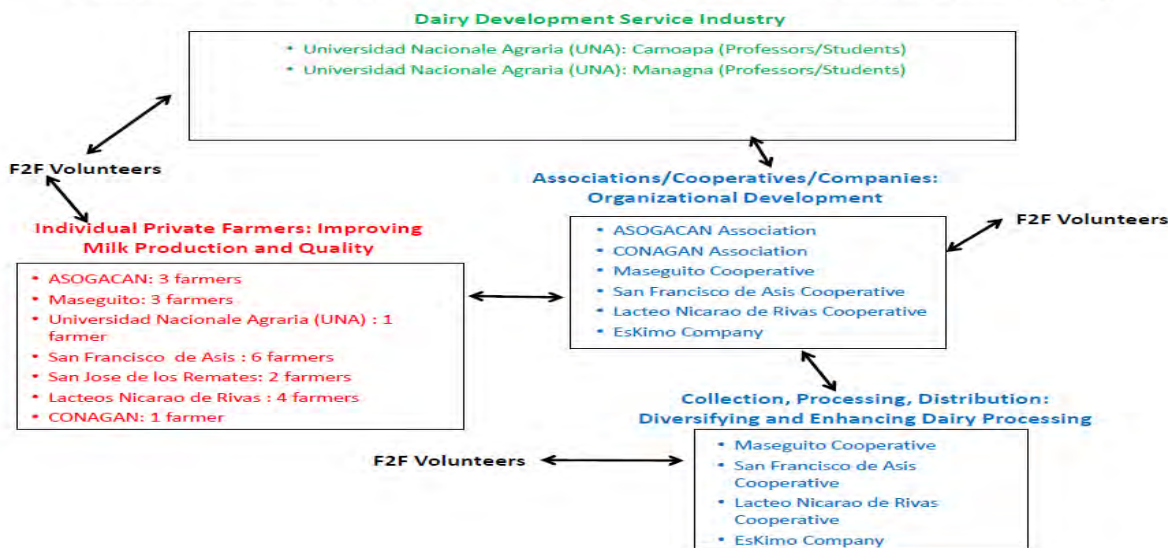


DR Horticulture and Tree Crops



APPENDIX 9: Nicaragua Host Relational Map and Logic Model

Farmer to Farmer Nicaragua – Host Relational Map



**Improving Milk Production and Quality
Primary Host Type: Farmers and Farmers Groups**

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
"What we invest"	Activities "What we do"	Participants "Who we reach"	Knowledge/ Awareness	Behavior	Impact
UNA Camoapa and Managua Professors & Students	Demonstration Farms	Individual Farmers	Pasture Management "Best Practices/adapted to/for Nicaragua Context" • Improved Forage • Increased Silage	Implement intensive rotational grazing Renovate depleted pastures Construct electric fences, etc.	Increased Quantity Produced • Average Daily 50% Increase More sustainable methods of pasture management
Maseguito and San Francisco de Asis Technicos	Test Plots				
Farmer to Farmer Volunteers General	Teaching	Farmer Groups	Cattle Health/Reproduction "Best Practices" adapted to/for Nicaragua context:	Change in pastoral management Identify and resolve problems such as mastitis	Improved Milk Quality (contaminant free) 65% Calving Rates 50% Reduction in Mortality Rates High-quality, contaminant free milk
	• Dairy Farm Management • Dairy Farm Administration/Planning • Dairy Project Planning	• Groups • On-Site Visits/ Consults			
Pasture Management	Transfer knowledge on artificial insemination and other reproductive techniques		Milking Habits/Techniques "Best Practices" adapted to/for Nicaragua context:	Milk cows twice a day Implement hygienic milking practices Dairy producers gain certification	
Cattle Health/Reproduction	Face-to-face				
	University Students' Applied Projects to farms				
	Assumption: farmers transfer knowledge and skills to farm laborers after receiving technical assistance from volunteers				

Diversifying and Enhancing Dairy Processing
Primary Host: Collection, Processing, Distribution

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
"What we invest"	Activities "What we do"	Participants "Who we reach"	Knowledge/ Awareness	Behavior	Impact
Farmer to Farmer Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Resources and Environment Financial Services and Marketing Handling and Storage Equipment 	Technical training	Collection Centers' Manager and Employees		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Handling and Storage</div> <p>"Best Practices/adapted to/for Nicaragua Context"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab testing capabilities Cooling/storage capabilities Pasteurizing capabilities Waste management 	Improved milk quality
	Develop market plans and strategies	Independent Milk Haulers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers gain certifications (e.g. HAACP) 	Improved worker quality
	Assistance holding marketing campaigns and promotional fairs	Processing Plants' Manager and Employees		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Cheese and Other Dairy Products</div> <p>"Best Practices adapted to/for Nicaragua context"</p>	Increased competition
		Sales Managers, Brokers and Distributors		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Packaging, Labeling, Marketing</div> <p>Improved labeling</p>	Increased quantity and types of products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one new cheese variety
					Improved quality of other products: cream, yogurt, butter, ice cream
					Increased sales and distribution
					Increased gross income

Organizational Development
Host Type: Associations/Cooperatives/Companies

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
"What we invest"	Activities "What we do"	Participants "Who we reach"	Knowledge/ Awareness	Behavior	Impact
Face to Face Volunteers in different areas of organizational development	Seminars Trainings Hands-on support	Associations Cooperatives Private companies	Increased knowledge and understanding of good governance, management, human resources, financial systems, reporting, efficiency and sustainability	Improve organizational practices	Stronger agriculture sector institutions

Dairy Development Services Industry
Host Type: Universities

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
"What we invest"	Activities "What we do"	Participants "Who we reach"	Knowledge/ Awareness	Behavior	Impact
Face to Face Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk production and Quality Diversifying and Enhancing Dairy Processing Nutritional benefits of dairy Other Topics 	Seminars Technical assistance to demonstration sites demonstrations	University Faculty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agronomy Animal Science Vet Medicine University Students ↓ Cooperative Technicos	Professors are more prepared to disseminate knowledge to students/technicians New skills gained by technicians	15 technicians disseminating better practices	Stronger agriculture sector institutions