



VOLUNTEER REPORT FORMAT

To be submitted to CRS at the end of volunteer assignment and shared with the host

1.1 Assignment information

- a) **Volunteer Name:** Kevin Andrezejewski
- b) **Host Organization:** Namungalwe ACE
- c) **Assignment:** Marketing and Strategic Planning
- d) **Dates of Assignment:** May 27-June 11, 2016
- e) **Number of days worked:** 10

1.2.1 Objective 1: Assist the ACE board, staff and members to outline the Strategic Planning Process and begin the steps to develop the plan together.

- a) **Progress with the objective:** During the training sessions we made good progress to outline the Strategic Planning Process. It typically takes 1-3 months to complete the entire process and Badru and the members who attended the sessions will continue to work on finalizing this process by the end of June. During the trainings we revised the Vision and Mission, Organized a member-driven SWOT (the one in the business plan was done by a consultant), set up 5 Member Committees (Finance, Marketing, HR, Operations, Production), established measurable goals for each committee and began to organize short-term and long-term strategies to achieve the set goals. The last meeting concluded with a train-the-trainer session, which included 5 committee chair people. During this session we reviewed the process to complete the plan, which includes setting clear and measurable strategies/objectives with committee members and developing an individual action plan that each member can follow to contribute in accomplishing the committee's goals.
- b) **Expected impacts/results:** By completing the Strategic Planning process, ACE will have guiding principles to grow their business over the next 3 years. It will also assure transparency and accountability throughout the cooperative's member base and help the board identify leaders who can take the group forward to success. This will be achieved only if the 5 committees we established follow through on working to achieve the goals the members set. Each committee's goals wrap up to the common goal of the cooperative, which is to successfully aggregate crops and market them at a higher price than given on the local market. Ultimately increasing the income of the association's members.
- c) **Recommendations:** The strategic planning process typically takes 1-3 months. It is highly recommended that Badru follows through to coordinate with the active members to complete this process. This includes attending the individual committee meetings to assist in the strategy/action planning process. The board should also monitor the schedules of each committee to make sure they are meeting regularly to work on the strategies outlined to achieve their goals. A quarterly or bi-yearly report consolidating the progress should be given to CRS to assure ACE is moving forward.

1.2.2 Objective 2: Train the management and members of ACE in business development skills to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery.

- a) **Progress with the objective:** This objective was mildly successful. We accomplished the business trainings within the context of the Strategic Planning Workshops. We covered general business acumen including management principles, business practices on how to conduct meetings and setting agendas and basic organizational leadership. We also had small group discussions on how members should promote their individual businesses as well as the cooperative. I do feel the leaders of the cooperative need to continue to reemphasize the importance of good business practices, since there was no accountability amongst most members and lead RPOs. Leadership training should be a continuous portion of their development. Several members were attentive and prepared, but the majority lacked interest, were extremely tardy, and didn't come prepared.
- b) **Expected impacts/results:** For this objective I anticipated that the members would already have working knowledge of how to conduct general business and to be organized, but it was clear during each meeting this was not true. The cooperative is missing strong leadership and accountability, which is impacting how they are organized. Only Badru, the manager, and 2-3 board/members showed strong understanding and interest. Although the coop claims to have active members, I feel they are weak at holding members accountable for participating in the business of the coop.
- c) **Recommendations:** The ACE board and staff need to be stronger leaders and hold members and key RPOs accountable for simple things like meeting attendance, committee participation and general business. The previous volunteer also stressed this, but it was clear this has not been followed through on. I truly believe this coop could be very successful, but needs better organizational skills. This includes regularly attended meetings in which members discuss their progress with their committee goals and issues in achieving them. Although farming is the main activity of members and staff, The "Farming as a Business" approach needs to be incorporated into their coop model.

1.2.3 Objective 3: Spell out marketing strategies, business plans, and income projections that the ACE can work towards achieving.

- a) **Progress with the objective:** The marketing and business planning objective was accomplished by working directly with the Business Manager, Badru. We began by visiting current and potential customers to better understand their needs. It was clear there is a large market opportunity for dried maize, sorghum and potentially coffee. Big companies like Agro-Ways (A grain Licensed warehouse implementing the warehouse receipt system) and Nile Breweries are interested in buying, but only if aggregation can happen in bulk quantities and delivery timeframes can be assured. We also discussed current smaller customers, which will continue to be an important part of their business to assure consistent income.
- b) **Expected impacts/results:** Badru now has a good understanding of how to cultivate potential clients and continue to service existing ones. He is well equipped with a basic marketing flyer that can easily be revised. Although their current supply may, be below market demand it will be important to continue to build relationships while they improve their aggregation practices.

- c) **Recommendations:** Continue to follow up with Agro-Ways and other larger clients to negotiate a contractual relationship. If this can happen before a growing season farmers will have the means to purchase quality inputs, which will increase and assure an appropriate harvest level. Also, long-term, part of their strategic plan they should continue to plan for a large capital investment in a warehouse and/or transportation mode.

1.2.4 Objective 4: Develop a roadmap for implementation of the strategic plan.

a) **Progress with the objective:** The objective of the assignment from the beginning was to work with ACE to understand the strategic planning process and not to complete the plan on their behalf. Through participatory workshops we set guiding principles, defined roadblocks and opportunities and outlined goals to grow the business. With the formation of member-driven committees, the management now has the support structure in place to be successful. Each committee has a set of 3 goals, has begun to establish strategies, and timelines to accomplish goals. The success of the business is now in their hands.

b) **Expected impacts/results:** If followed through on correctly, the members will assist the management to overcome weaknesses, and grow the business. With the lack of attendance at the workshops we spent the last day as train-the-trainer workshop. The conclusion was that each committee chairperson now has the outline to finalize their committee responsibilities and report back to Badru to finalize the strategic plan. I honestly don't know if they will do this with the organizational structure in place, but I hope I'm proven wrong. I expect them to return to business as usual, which is primarily farming and selling at the local level. If they do follow through on the strategic plan, incremental growth will happen in a 3 year timeframe.

c) **Recommendations:** The management and board seem to be behind the strategic plan, but face an uphill battle to get participation from committee members. My recommendation is that a structured meeting calendar is prepared for each committee and for quarterly general meetings. At each event, committee chairs will need to report on progress towards goals and be held accountable for falling short.

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. ACE Management and Board need to complete the Strategic Plan. This includes strong emphasis on following through on the committee format and requiring member participation and regular reporting.	Complete the strategic plan including a milestone based action plan with specific goals, updates and timeframes for completion.	Balidawa Badru (ACE Manager), ACE board and committee members	1/7/16
2. The ACE board and staff need to continue to	Each committee should hold monthly meetings to review	Committee Members	Monthly

emphasize the importance of good business practices and organizational management amongst members. Monthly meetings should be scheduled for each committee to discuss their progress and action plan to accomplish goals. Badru should attempt to attend as many of these as possible as time allows.	progress of goals and to give actionable steps to members to work on.		
3. Review and revise bylaws and communicate changes to the members during a general meeting. This should include explaining the purpose and goals of the committees along with expected individual commitments for members including aggregation minimums.	The Board should review commitment level of members as outlined in the current bylaws and revised to match the goals of the coop.	Board and HR /Membership Committee	15/8/16
4. A financial plan and budget should be started to look at the purchase and building of a warehouse facility within the next 4-5 years.	A long term budget plan for a capital investment including costs and finance mechanism.	ACE board and Finance Committee.	15/12/16

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training: 22
- b) Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count): 0
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs: 1
- d) Training/assistance by field: introduction, interpretation, and acquiring classroom supplies

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	20	16	4
Employees	1	1	
Clients/ Suppliers	4	2	2



Family Members	0	0	0
Total	25	19	6

1.5 Gender

- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How?

In general there was equality amongst women and men as represented in their voices. The membership is largely made up of men, so the percentage of participants did hold to that. I was impressed with the authority level of two specific women in the cooperative. They seem to hold an important knowledge leadership and management role not just in the coop, but also in the community.

- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community?

Encourage women to participate and lead committees. Also as ACE grows they would like to hire two additional staff. If she is interested I suggest Winnie be one of the candidates.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution: \$ 1,812.5

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment: 30
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment: \$50

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ 494.01

- a) Meals: meals were provided during the trainings : \$ 149.70
- b) Transportation for participants: \$ 119.76
- c) Lodging : 0
- d) Translation: Yes provided by the host : \$ 74.85
- e) Other (Specify): Training venue- \$ 134.73, Mobilization of participants : \$ 14.97

1.8 Host Profile Data:

Did you obtain any data that supplements or corrects the data in the existing host information as detailed in the SOW? Please list it. NO.

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

CRS should work with the ACE board and staff to be sure that the objectives listed in the report are reasonable and achievable. This includes follow through to assure the strategic plan is finalized, committees are set and regular meetings are scheduled and attended.

Organization and communication are issues within the cooperative that need to be addressed. CRS needs to encourage ACE to improve their communication and organization, for the purposes of both improving their performance as a cooperative and making more effective use of the time of any future volunteers. I don't recommend any further volunteers until this is done.



If CRS does send another volunteer it should be around a specific value chain study on coffee or improving their aggregation of maize. Supply is their major bottleneck.

This is my 4th F2F assignment, but first for CRS. In general the organization was very good, but the required paperwork and presentation format is way above what is required from the other F2F implementing organizations I have worked with.

1.10 Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Golden, CO Area Volunteer Travels to Uganda to Share Skills with Local Farmers

Farmer to Farmer program promotes economic growth and Agricultural development in East Africa

Kevin M. Andrezejewski an **International Development Consultant** from **Golden, CO** travelled to **Uganda** for **2** weeks to share his technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Kevin's assignment is part of Catholic Relief Services' Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program that promotes economic growth, food security, and agricultural development in East Africa.

“By equipping smallholder farmers with business skills to be financially successful and food secure, a big dent will be made to move them out of poverty”. Said **Kevin Andrezejewski**

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the five-year program matches the technical assistance of U.S. farmers, agribusinesses, cooperatives, and universities to help farmers in developing countries improve agricultural productivity, access new markets, and increase their incomes.

In **Iganga, Uganda**, **Kevin Andrezejewski** worked with **ACE** in **Strategic Planning** training and giving technical assistance to **Cooperative Members** to enable them to **be a profitable business entity**. Up to 25 beneficiaries were reached including several women.

Kevin's volunteer assignment is one of nearly 500 assignments that focus on agriculture, food security and nutrition in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. This is the first time CRS has been involved in the 28-year-old Farmer-to-Farmer Program funded by the U.S. government.



CRS is partnering with five U.S. institutions to tap into the rich diversity of the U.S. agriculture community: the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Foods Resource Bank, National Association of Agricultural Educators, American Agri-Women, and the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

The U.S. volunteers will travel to East Africa for anywhere from one to six weeks, their expenses covered by USAID.

“One thing we are certain of is that this program will be beneficial not just to the farmers in East Africa, but also to the volunteers from America,” said Bruce White, CRS’ director for the program. “It’s going to make the world a little bit smaller for everyone involved.”

For more information, visit farmertofarmer.crs.org

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***Catholic Relief Services** is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in nearly 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. For more information, please visit crs.org or crsespanol.org.*