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VOLUNTEER REPORT FORMAT

1.1 Assignment information

- a) Volunteer Name: Aaron Banas
- b) Host Organization: Nile Pro Trust
- c) Assignment: UG14: Farming as a Business
- d) Dates of Assignment: November 7- December 1, 2014
- e) Number of days worked: 21

1.2.1 Objective 1: Basic Record Keeping

- a) Progress with the objective
 - a. Farmers were introduced to basic record keeping concepts such as expenses and revenues associated with the production process. Farmers then worked in groups to carry out exercises focusing on the identification of these expenses and revenues throughout the process of sesame seed production. All farmers (in a group environment) successfully completed an itemized “record keeping” exercise for sesame seed production. One farmer was then elected by the group to facilitate a record keeping exercise with the entire group’s participation.
- b) Expected impacts/results
 - a. Farmers acquired hands on experience, in practical exercises, identifying and itemizing costs in a record keeping system. Farmers had success identifying all expenses for sesame seed while incorporating the corresponding cost amounts. Farmers were then able to calculate revenue for their production by identifying a market price and multiplying this price by the number of kilograms of production. Overall, farmers acquired new skills and sharpened existing skills in recording the detailed transfer and movement of funds throughout the sesame seed production process.
- c) Recommendations¹
 - a. While farmers demonstrated a sufficient level of proficiency and comprehension of the record keeping process for sesame seeds, this ability must be reinforced with consistent practice and application. While many may be proficient in the record keeping process, this process must find its way into the every farming practices of producers. Farmers were given a follow up assignment that is to be completed on an independent basis. I suggest that Nile Pro Trust provides follow up to this “Actual Expense” assignment by reviewing completed expense sheets and providing feedback to farmers. In addition, I would suggest a series of follow up trainings on basic record keeping. This training should identify those farmers that exhibit high proficiency in record keeping (to receive more advanced assistance)

¹ **Note:** The most useful recommendations for hosts are ones that they can implement themselves with minimal expense. For example, a cooperative might change its financial reporting procedures or hold more regular meetings of its board. Broad recommendations on tax or credit reform, changes in government policy, or investment in large-scale equipment, are usually not within the host organization’s reach.



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and those that are at a lower level (to receive basic record keeping for illiterate farmers). Illiterate farmers require additional specific support in applying these concepts and carrying out practical exercises.

1.2.2 Objective 2: Cost Benefit Analysis

a) Progress with the objective

- a. Farmers were familiar with terms such as profit, however application in every day circumstances is largely insufficient. Concepts such as price and product were introduced and reinforced. Farmers participated in role play exercises with local currency and familiar products such as corn, oranges and chickens. Farmers were accompanied through the cost/benefit process by the trainer and the participating farmer group and asked to share feedback regarding their reaction and decision making process. Farmers gained valuable experience in establishing an effective price point while assuring the incorporation of all costs.

b) Expected impacts/results

- a. Farmers witnessed very practical examples of cost/benefit decision making processes. These examples are expected to trigger and encourage a profit minded thought process for participating farmers. One example was the case of Aluma, a local business owner and sesame seed producer in Rhino Camp. Aluma was chosen to facilitate a sesame seed budget activity which culminated in a cost benefit analysis. Aluma later applied the principles of this exercise to his restaurant business. He demonstrated a newly developed command of cost benefit examination and profit identification. Others are expected to apply these concepts to particular business activities at their homes, farms, etc.

c) Recommendations

- a. The idea of incorporating a farmer's own time into the category of costs is a key concept that was introduced to farmers. This concept is quite foreign to rural farmers and must be reinforced in the future. Farmers continuously discard a "wage" or salary for themselves while they labored during a crop cycle (planting, weeding, buying supplies in town, traveling for supplies, organizing workers, seeking buyers, marketing, etc). This concept and the idea of "opportunity costs" (ex. instead of traveling to town to sell I am in my field planting a different crop) should be reinforced by Nile Pro field trainers in the future.

1.2.3 Objective 3: The Supply Chain

a) Progress with the objective

- b. Farmers were introduced to the concepts of supply and demand. Practical examples were shared with farmers (High demand for meat during Christmas, low supply of sesame seed during a drought). Farmers then participated in a supply chain role play involving three players: maize producer, chicken producer, and restaurant owner. Farmers were asked to observe the interaction among the three players and share their reaction to the interactions and subsequent events.



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- c. Farmers gained an understanding of the dependency of unit of the supply chain on another. Farmers recognized the importance of communication, trust and confidence in the different units along the supply chain. These ideas were applied to the sesame seed supply chain and farmers analyzed their own supply chain experience.
- d) Recommendations²
- a. Farmers continuously express a concern for the acquisition of fixed markets (and better prices). The recommendation that was shared with farmers was one of **diversification and a stronger understanding of the variation of prices due to supply fluctuations**. I recommend that Nile Pro explores the possibility of two areas: 1) grain storage-by creating a supply of grain in periods of the year when supply is low, farmers may obtain higher prices. 2) value added- by researching value added alternatives farmers may be provided a higher price for their end product.

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
SHORT TERM			
1. Provide a manual of the training information, activities, exercises	F2F Volunteer will complete a "Training Guide" to serve as a tool for future trainings led by Nile Pro Trainers	Aaron Banas, F2F Volunteer	November 27 th (closing meeting)
2. Provide materials/resources for future trainings	F2F Volunteer will provide Nile Pro with posters, budget formats, and training objects for future trainings led by Nile Pro Trainers	Aaron Banas, F2F Volunteer	November 27 th (closing meeting)
MEDIUM TERM			
3. Improve communication with Farmers	Take into account farmer responsibilities and commitments when planning trainings (ex. Sim Sim harvesting). Assure a	Nile Pro field staff and farmers	For Future F2F Volunteer Trainings

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	proper invitation and practice punctuality (both farmers and trainers).		
4. Encourage Female Participation and Women's Empowerment	Plan an all women training for future F2F trainings to encourage and motivate women	Nile Pro Planning Staff	For Future F2F Volunteer Trainings
5. Increase Support for Illiterate Farmers and those with limited educational levels	Plan hands on activities, role plays, and visual learning tools to assist in comprehension and understanding of trainings concepts	Nile Pro Staff and F2F Future Trainers	For Future F2F Volunteer Trainings
LONG TERM (Potential F2F Assignments)			
6. Business Plan Template	Provide business plan template and subsequent introductory trainings to Nile Pro and Farmers	F2F Future Trainer	Jan-Apr 2015
7. Area Cooperative Enterprises (ACE) Training	Prepare and Train Cooperative leaders in small business/micro enterprises and Cooperative Leadership	Nile Pro Staff and F2F Future Trainers	Apr- Aug 2015
8. Market Access and Linkages	Train farmers to identify, obtain and sustain fixed markets	F2F Future Trainer	Sept-Dec 2015

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- Through formal training **236**
- Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count) **3**
- Out of these above, number of host staffs **5**
- Total number of women **60**
- Training/assistance by field

Topic/field	Total	Males	Females
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Rhino Camp	41	36	5
Manago	36	26	10
Bandili	54	32	21
Rigbo	30	24	6
Drabi	39	26	13
Vurra	31	27	4
Total	231	172	59

1.4 Gender

- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How?
 - a. The majority of farmer training participants were male (75 percent). Most of the trainings had limited participation of women. Women were generally slightly less participatory than their male counterparts, although several female leaders were highly active throughout the training span.
 - b. On a community level, gender roles were more tangible. Women were assigned to cooking and cleaning duties, along with certain farming and fire wood collection responsibilities, while men were largely responsible for farming activities. One of the female individuals from the host organization was responsible for translating and facilitating the trainings on a daily basis, as well as holding a role in the preparation and clean-up of daily meals. This was a considerable work load and excessive burden that did affect the training performance and effectiveness.
- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community?
 - a. Women are very active in farming. The host organization shared that one of the focal objectives of the organization was the empowerment of women through the introduction of sesame seed. Women proved to be very knowledgeable of oil seed crops. However, on several occasions, and in large part due to the overwhelming majority of male participants, the voice of women was not heard. I would suggest future trainings exclusively for female farmers. I believe this would give females the opportunity to: 1) extend their voice without facing gender obstacles that are very common in social environments 2) share ideas, opportunities, and pool resources 3) empower and motivate.
 - b. Another option for increased women participation would be to implement a method of regulation of male and female participants. I would be interested in observing the dynamic of an equally distributed gender breakdown in the same trainings. I imagine that a larger number of women would motivate less active women to participate in a greater fashion.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$ **2937.5**

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment **50 hours**



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- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment
250 Dollars

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ (Please consult the host as well) **\$ 465.823** (*This value excludes meals for staff and transportation, host staff were sharing the same food with the volunteer and using the same vehicle which expenses were covered by CRS*)

	F2F Volunteer Observation: Aaron Banas	Contribution reported by Host: Nile Pro Trust
Meals for Staff	Field staff mostly ate with F2F volunteer. CRS covered all food costs in the field.	200,000
Transportation for Staff	I was unaware of any transportation contribution. All transport was paid for by CRS.	210,000
Lodging Allowance for Field Staff	I am unaware of any lodging contributions. CRS paid for lodging of driver and one field staff.	200,000
Translation	One Nile Pro employee served as the translator for the majority of the trainings. This person was substituted on two occasions by another Nile Pro affiliate. Total= 12 days of translation.	450,000
Stationary	Host Organization provided notebooks for each farmer. CRS provided pencils and all other materials.	120,000
Fuel for Mobilization	I was unaware of any fuel costs covered by Nile Pro. CRS covered fuel costs.	158,000
Farmer Feeding	After certain trainings (not all) farmers were provided with a modest lunch (rice, or rice and beans).	360,000
TOTAL HOST CONTRIBUTION	** In my opinion the host contribution is largely inflated and not representative of actual contribution. I observed a host contribution of notebooks, translation and farmer feeding. CRS was	1,698,000 (1,288,000-excluding transportation & meals for field staff)



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	responsible for the large majority of other costs.	
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1.9 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.

Financial Management was less of an emphasis (although there was some elements of this in the record keeping process), while supply chain analysis was inserted.

2.0 Recommendations for CRS

Strengths	Observations
Volunteer Support	Volunteer welcome, Accompanying volunteer to assignment, assuring volunteer comfort and safety, answering volunteer questions and concerns
Volunteer Materials/Supplies	Internet, phone, airtime
Accommodations and Transport	Safe, comfortable

Recommendation	Topic	Action Item
Provide a more adequate and comprehensive CULTRAL ORIENTATION to volunteers.	<i>Physical Contact and Personal Space:</i> hand shaking, hugging, holding hands, kissing	-Review of cultural norms and acceptable behavior before visiting the field assignment (Ex. How to react when a man holds your hand, how to take a picture with women)
	<i>Greeting host organization and farmers:</i> handshakes, speaking in turn, greeting high ranking members, communication protocol	-Role play first meeting with host organization



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	<p><i>Dress and Physical Appearance</i> (wearing shorts, formal dress for presentations, tattoos)</p> <p><i>Bathroom, Shower, and Personal Hygiene:</i> Toilet paper disposal, using a latrine, bucket bathes, drinking water for teeth brushing</p>	<p>-Provide a guide to dress and physical appearance</p> <p>-Review these scenarios</p>
<p>Improve Time Management: Bang for your Buck</p> <p>**Note: Volunteer time is short and cost of training is VERY HIGH. Volunteer must prepare well, be informed on what to prepare, be precise with current need (according to past and future training objectives), be rested and fed, and have an audience that is also in a captive state. Anything on the contrary is poorly used time and funding.</p>	<p><i>Pre-departure preparation of F2F Volunteer:</i> Training themes, group size and dynamic, venue, transport expectations, PREVIOUS TRAININGS, education level.</p> <p><i>Transport:</i> dependability, comfort</p> <p><i>Farmer Coordination (Host):</i> Relative punctuality, high concentration levels</p>	<p>-Establish pre-departure communication with host (skype call, email) and assigned F2F country manager</p> <p>-Carry out conference call with previous volunteers, CRS F2F staff</p> <p>Long term strategic planning with host. Ex. F2F agronomist, F2F farming as a business, F2F cooperative specialist, F2F Marketing Specialist</p> <p>4*4 vehicles in rainy season</p> <p>Select appropriate times (afternoons) and confirm time and venue on several occasions.</p>
<p>Provide orientation on Sensitive and Contentious Issues</p>	<p><i>Sexual Orientation</i> (homosexuality, holding hands, interaction with the opposite sex)</p>	<p>-Carry out an Orientation Scenarios Exercise prior to entering the field assignment</p>



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	<p><i>Religion</i> (Christian and Muslim prayer, customs)</p> <p><i>Orientation</i> (expectations,)</p> <p><i>War and History</i> (Amin, LRA, current affairs)</p>	
Provide basic language materials for volunteers (both African English and Local Language)	<p><i>Greeting:</i> host organization, farmers and community members</p> <p><i>Food and Drink:</i> asking for lunch and dinner, respectfully denying food</p>	<p>-Provide a “survival” language document for Ugandan English and if applicable the local language</p> <p>-Review acceptable eating, serving protocol, hand washing, utensil use, etc.</p>
Improve Fund/Cash Administration	<p><i>Carrying large sums of cash:</i> 5 million shillings and 1,000 dollars becomes a liability and makes volunteer an easy target for theft.</p>	<p>-Reduce amount of cash carried by volunteers. Prepay or post pay partners (drivers, hotels, etc).</p>
Assure Adequate Site/Assignment Preparation	<p><i>Transportation and Accommodation:</i> Volunteer negotiation and involvement</p>	<p>-Prepare and confirm prices and availability of transport and accommodation PRIOR to volunteer arrival. Volunteer should arrive to assignment and focus on training (not accommodation, transport details, negotiation, etc).</p>