



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: Carmen Byce
- b) Host Organization: Melka Abune Aregawi Gedam Nunnery (Melka-Jebdu Nunnery)
- c) Assignment: ET68 Leadership and Life Skills Development for Youth Engaged in Agriculture
- d) Dates of Assignment: 29 December 2015- 10 January 2016
- e) Number of days worked: 10

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW: The main objective of this assignment is to improve the leadership and life skills for the training staff at the nunnery. These skills will in turn enable the young leaders to engage in profitable agribusiness interventions and serve as role models to their peers. These objectives will be achieved through equipping the nunnery teaching staff and other support staff with leadership and life skills. Additionally, this assignment will also directly focus on the orphans at the nunnery, working alongside the nunnery management to impart these skills. Time allowing, the volunteer may also prepare simple guidelines that the nunnery management can use as reference for future interventions.

a) **Progress with the objective:**

Volunteer completed 40 hours of training for 43 girls and 3 nunnery staff . The training was developed to be hands-on and engaging with a focus on group discussion, participant-led activities and game-based learning. Two classes divided by grade of about 20 students each, from grades 5-10 attended 2-3 hours of training each afternoon.

TRAINING OUTLINE

Day 1: Focus Group Needs-Assessment conducted with nunnery leadership as well as a representative sample of girls

Day 2: Communication- Focus on building confidence. Students shared short stories or dramas with the class to practice skills learned.

Day 3: Leadership and Teamwork- Group discussion on the characteristics of a strong leader, best practices for effective management, and tools for working effectively on a team. Girls demonstrated skills in competitive team building game.

Day 4: Conflict Resolution- Girls explored their natural responses to conflict and discussed effective means for conflict resolution. Using real-life scenarios developed with the nunnery management, the girls brainstormed appropriate solutions.



Day 5: Setting and Achieving Goals- Group discussion on setting S.M.A.R.T goals and developing an action plan to work through these goals and to work through or around challenges/obstacles. Participants created a short-term goals as well as a five-year vision and goal statement.

Day 6: The Student is now the Teacher-Girls created group presentations to highlight key lessons learned in each of the five previous sessions. These were shared with their peers and with the nuns as a means to informally gauge participant learning and to observe the notable improvement in their public speaking and team leadership capabilities.

a)Expected impacts/results

Given the short length of the volunteer assistance in this case along with the qualitative nature of soft skills competency, quantifiable results are not available. All anticipated impacts assume continued support of similar training from the nunnery management.

That said, learning and skills mastery were measured informally as students presented peer-to-peer demonstrations of key lessons learned. The majority of participants demonstrated a very high level of comprehension of the key learning points and most demonstrated good to excellent mastery of the key skills such as public speaking, conflict resolution, team work, management and action planning. It is anticipated that equipped with the coping skills developed in this training:

- Girls will demonstrate immediate improvement in professional skills that will become evident to their teachers and peers and position them as leaders among their nunnery sisters and community peers.
- Girls will demonstrate strengthened resilience to internal and external challenges they face due to their particular situation and respond to stressors and conflicts in a constructive manner.
- With continued support from the nunnery management, the girls will continue to refine these skills and apply them to their daily lives, particularly in their management of the nunnery's 40 acres of agricultural (citrus/vegetable) production.

b) Recommendations¹ (see action plan)

¹ **Note:** Only make not more than 6 recommendations. 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.

1.2 Action Plan

While individually, the training is anticipated to have life-long impacts for most of the orphans, for the impacts of this training to be sustained and institutionalized, the volunteer recommends the following action plan:

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
Establish Peer-to-Peer Life Skills Program	Using the volunteer's training as the foundation and working with the 43 students that attended (grades 5-10), develop a peer-to-peer life skills program that pairs an older mentor with a younger mentee for each of the nunnery's 100+ students. Ideally, the pairs would meet weekly allowing the mentee an opportunity to discuss challenges they are facing at school, at home, or in their nunnery chores (including support of the agricultural production area). Monthly, Nunnery management should host mentor meetings with the girls in groups of 15-30 by age groups for refresher and new training and skills development. Volunteer can share tools to support the formation of this program along with published research that highlights the benefits of such programs in similar efforts.	Nunnery Management	No later than Summer 2016
Partner with Local Professional to Provide Counseling and Health Support	Seek support from local teachers, counsels and/or psychologists to provide targeted counseling or training for areas outside of the nunnery management's area of expertise. This is of particular importance for the girls that continue to struggle to cope using the mechanisms provided through this training and for those that have suffered extreme psychological stressors.	Nunnery Management	Within 60 Days

1.3 Recommended Future Volunteer Assistance:

While there has been significant technical volunteer assistance provided to the nunnery, this was the first soft skills training assistance provided. Ideally, the past volunteer assignments and all future volunteer assignments with this host should be coordinated as to work as part of a more comprehensive program that will be sustained by nunnery management to support improved management on the farm while building youth's agricultural and agribusiness skills.

Follow-on volunteer should work with nunnery management to establish hands-on learning opportunities for the orphans on the 40+ acres of agricultural land to build on past volunteer assistance but with a closer integration of the development of technical and soft skills. This may be accomplished using methodology similar to the FFA or 4H programs in the U.S and other parts of the world. The



program should allow student groups an opportunity to manage small plots of land, maintain farm financial and agronomic records, and compete in peer challenges to demonstrate real world applications of life and management skills. Students will apply the improved technologies (mulching, drip irrigation, composting, etc.) demonstrated by volunteers along with new concepts introduced by future volunteers on the student-managed plots.

The follow-on training should have a stronger emphasis on Training of Trainers (ToT) with the nunnery management so that the management is prepared to lead and further the program moving forward, creating a higher likelihood that the program will be institutionalized and sustained. Before fielding a volunteer for this assignment, it is highly advised that the host commit to supporting the program through the time of the relevant nunnery staff members as well as dedication of a portion of the agricultural land, most likely within the existing vegetable plot, to student-led projects.

In addition to the ToT with nunnery management to support the continuation of the peer-to-peer mentoring program (see action plan) and the establishment of the student-managed gardening club, the follow-on volunteer should provide additional life skills and management training. Within the next 12 months, nunnery management and girls would benefit greatly from continued life skills and management training which may include:

- Farm Responsibility Management
- Advanced Conflict Management/Resilience
- Basic Principles of Marketing
- Farm Record Keeping

To assist the nunnery management in establishing this program, the ideal volunteer will have experience in the agriculture field as well as extensive experience supporting FFA, 4H or similar youth extracurricular agriculture programming in the United States and abroad. (Writers Note: With my experience in middle and high school agricultural education in the U.S and in establishing similar programs in other countries, I would be happy to support efforts such as this in the future as a volunteer. Also, I can reach into my network of colleagues with extensive youth agricultural education expertise to recruit available and highly qualified volunteer candidates as needed.)

Other recommendations for volunteer assistance include:

Citrus Orchard Management- Within the next 6-12 months, volunteer assistance specifically to respond to extreme drought conditions and to help trees recover from periods of limited water, or to replace dead trees with new varieties, will be essential. The nunnery management indicated that due to long periods of drought and malfunctioning wells on the property, their 30 acre citrus orchard did not yield any product worth selling. This is a significant issue for the nunnery because the agricultural products grown on the property support maintenance costs for the nunnery and orphanage. In absence of the income from citrus sales, the nunnery management was forced to seek alternative funding from the Branch Manager. It is unknown how long such supplemental funding will be available.

Continued Climate-Smart Agricultural Assistance- With drought a likely long-term challenge for the nunnery, continued assistance to build on past volunteers' recommendations for improved techniques for drought tolerant vegetable production will be essential. These technologies should be demonstrated in the student-managed vegetable plots, once established.

Nutrition- Girls expressed enthusiastic interest in learning the basics of nutrition and healthy cooking. These skills would benefit both the nunnery management and the girls who will eventually manage their family's nutrition decisions in the next 3-10 years.

English-Language- The nunnery teachers and students emphasized the need for improved English proficiency to prepare the girls to excel in standardized testing to qualify for universities for advanced studies in agriculture and other fields. If this type of assistance is not within Farmer –to-Farmer Ethiopia's scope, perhaps CRS can work with local organizations or implementing partners that may be able to provide this support.

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training: **45**
- b) Through direct technical assistance: 0
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs: 3
- d) Training/assistance by field

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners			
Employees	3		3
Clients/ Suppliers	42		42
Family Members			
Total	45	0	45

1.5 Gender

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

Since this assignment was at an all-girls orphanage with an all-female staff of nuns, there was not a male audience to serve as a comparative group. However, gender roles were a significant consideration in the design and implementation of the learning methods and in prioritizing training content. Through interviews with the nunnery management along with the older orphans, certain challenges became evident that can likely be attributed to the all-girl population. For example, many girls stated that they were not encouraged to share their opinions or speak as confidently as boys would typically be. In a more extreme example, the nunnery management explained that the girls in grades 6-10, as they attend public school after grade 5, were frequently targeted by male predators that took advantage of the girls' vulnerabilities to manipulate and sometimes even sexually abuse or kidnap the girls. The gender-specific constraints are likely compounded by the girls' often tumultuous pasts and because they are generally sheltered from the outside community, going to school and living at the nunnery, until around age 10 at which time they are exposed to the broader community through attendance at public school.

- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? (see recommendations for additional volunteer assistance as well as the notes to CRS below).



1.6 Value of volunteer contribution (including volunteer time): \$ 5,000 USD

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment: 40 Hours
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host: \$250 USD

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution: ~\$500 USD

- a) Meals- \$0
- b) Transportation- \$0
- c) Lodging- \$0
- d) Translation- \$500 USD
- e) Other (Specify): Meeting space (value unknown)

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.

- The nunnery houses about 125 people permanently (18 nuns and about 103 orphaned girls between ages 5 and 17.
- Girls in grades Kindergarten through Fourth attend school at the nunnery while girls in grades 5th-10th attend public school.
- The nunnery recently installed a third well to replace/supplement the existing second well which was near being exhausted. Even with the new well, the nunnery management is concerned with the lack of power capable of pumping water to the 40+ acres of agricultural land along with to the holding tanks used for drinking water and household cleaning.

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

- As described above, continued work with the Melka Jebdu Nunnery should be coordinated as part of a more comprehensive program developed with the full support of the nunnery management that integrates improved agricultural practices with opportunities to build youth leadership and agricultural skills.
- Per recommendation #2, assist the Nunnery in identifying local organizations or professionals that may provide weekly or monthly counseling support for the orphans, especially those identified by the nuns as needing specialized care to recover from trauma and other issues affecting their social and academic success.
- Considering creating a training resource library that is easily accessible to volunteers to allow past volunteers to upload their training materials along with notes for facilitation for use by future volunteers. This will save future volunteers time in preparing and allow them to focus time on improving and/or expanding the existing materials.
- For future assignments at the Melka Jebdu nunnery or similar hosts, allow time for the volunteer to consult with the CRS Gender team to better understand constraints facing women and young girls in their particular context and so that the CRS Gender team may advise the volunteer regarding gender considerations to strengthen the sustainability of their recommendations to the host.



1.10 Press Release (draft press release and supporting materials attached separately in email)