

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: Katherine Cassidy
- b) Host Organization: Kabondo Sweet Potato Marketing Cooperative Society
- c) Assignment: Provide leadership and board governance training
- d) Dates of Assignment: June 3-17, 2015
- e) Number of days worked: 14
- f)

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW:

To strengthen leadership and governance of Kabondo Sweet Potatoes Marketing Cooperative Society to ensure sustainable development

- a) Progress with the objective: We touched 43 farmers, and presented certificates to 40 farmers who attended at least three of our five trainings.
- b) Expected impacts/results: We energized the Cooperative Society community to look at leadership in new ways, and realize that "Everyone is a leader," not just executive members.
- c) Recommendations: That the same 43 farmers, plus more, gather quarterly to recommit to the leadership skills learned in June, as a way of holding on to the new sense of "ownership" in the Cooperative Society they gained over these two weeks.
- d)

1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW:

To enhance the capacity of Kabondo cooperative board and members to provide guidance to accelerate the implementation of various cooperative activities

- a) Progress with the objective: Group was keen on volunteer's offer to help them set up a Cooperative Society Facebook page plus a website (blog). They need to "tell our story" to Kenyan farming sector and NGOs ready to support cooperatives that move forward. They understood that outsiders, even in desired Nairobi market, cannot find any trace of them on the Internet
- b) Expected impacts/results: Cooperative Society currently scrambling to develop its flour product, but needs to support that effort with basic marketing and public relations effort in Nairobi and NGO community.
- c) Recommendations: That group continues to work alongside their Member of Parliament and other elected officials to empower farmers and elevate the benefits of "the Best of Western Kenya sweet potatoes."

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1, Facebook page	Establish and update	Tobias Muga	August 1, 2015
2, Website (blog)	Establish and update	Tobias Muga	August 1, 2015

3, Sweet Potatoes for Health and Profit Initiative, through 2020 -	Connect with multi-year, 5-country plan	Executive	As soon as possible
4. Branding for KSWMCS	Create a logo	Executive	August 1, 2015
5. Work with politicians	Identify specific needs	Executive	August 1, 2015
6. Enhance "Ownership"	Regroup quarterly	Executive	September 15, 2015

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- Through formal training: 43 farmers trained for a total of 501 hours on five days.
- Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count)
- Out of these above, number of host staffs --8 executive board members were active.
- Training/assistance by field

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	43	22	21
Employees			
Clients/ Suppliers			
Family Members			
Total	43	22	21

1.5 Gender

- What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How? Women are the backbone of the farming community. We scheduled our trainings between 11 and 2pm, allowing for all the farmers to do their work at home before dedicating a portion of their days to traveling and training. Also, we did not conduct training on two Tuesdays or one Friday, because these are local market days and women are expected to sell on those days. (We did schedule one training, mistakenly, for a Friday. We expected diminished attendance, yet attracted 30 farmers on that day nonetheless).
- How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? Perhaps partner with KWF - Kenya Women's Finance Bank (not the correct name) to offer microloans to women as one of the benefits of Cooperative Society membership, for value-added initiatives. We visited one very new private-company operation in Ringa for processing sweet potatoes for value-added puree; this would be an excellent next endeavor for the Cooperative Society, providing that the machinery and refrigeration and truck can be afforded.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$: 700.

- Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment: 5.
- Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment: \$500. (My per diem supported the closing ceremony event and meal that served 60 farmers and

politicians, plus sodas and biscuits for 120 students of the Blessed Sacrament Education Center, Diocese of Homa Bay).

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ (Please consult the host as well)

- a) Meals: \$25, in meals provided volunteer by families that hosted volunteer for farm visits.
- b) Transportation: \$20, by paying portion of cost of car hire for two days of farm visits.
- c) Lodging: None. (Cost covered by CRS).
- d) Translation: \$600. Three board members provided translation at all five trainings plus closing event.
- e) Other (Specify)

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. Volunteer expected to train just eight or 10 board members, but was delighted to enlarge the impact after executive members invited additional Cooperative Society members to take part. Both volunteer and board members were delighted with the turnout of more than 40 farmers who returned day after day, in spite of no sitting allowance or transportation reimbursements. CRS should know that the Kabondo farmers are extremely receptive to new ideas and hardy volunteers.

1.9 Recommendations for CRS: That the next assigned volunteer understand that the host lodging facility (Diakonia Resort) may have limitations with respect to electricity and Internet connectivity. Perhaps this shortcoming was the result only of an unpaid power bill at the guesthouse; otherwise, the staff provided excellent hospitality, care and friendship. Also, executive board members have no transportation for farm visits, so the volunteer may be asked to cover much of the cost (1000 shillings or more) to hire a car for four or five hours of visiting area farms. Still, very much worth the volunteer's contribution to the cost.

1.10 Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOLUNTEER CONTACT: Katherine Cassidy, 207-215-4952, katherine.cassidy@gmail.com

Washington County (Maine) Volunteer Travels to Kenya to Share Skills with Local Farmers

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

Katherine Cassidy, a former state legislator from Lubec, Maine, travelled to western Kenya for three weeks in June to share her technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Cassidy'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.



“My three weeks in Kenya became my experience of a lifetime,” Cassidy said. “I worked alongside a very resilient but vulnerable community of farmers, all working extraordinarily hard to improve their livelihoods and those of their children.”

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 Kenya, Cassidy worked with the Kabondoo Sweet Potato Marketing Cooperative Society in leadership and board governance training. She provided technical assistance to farmers working to secure more sweet potato markets and accelerate the cooperative’s activities that enhance the region’s prosperity. More than 40 Luo farmers were reached.

Cassidy’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.