

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: Mahnaz M. Harrison
- b) Host Organization: Dora Denbel Cooperative Union

Assignment: Cooperative Promotion and Management pertinent to Grain Agribusiness/Value Chains

c) Dates of Assignment: Oct 28- Nov 11, 2015

d) Number of days worked 12 days

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW:

is to help cooperatives' leaders and members of the MAPFC and BDFCU in improving their cooperative leadership/management and grain business skills.

a) Progress with the objective

b) Grass root training:

The host has planned for seven days of training sessions for different primary cooperative members in different locality including farmers, local government staff and the leadership of the primary cooperatives. Therefore, every day a new group training commenced with some variation in a different venue and with different participants. Every farmer group discussed leadership roles and responsibilities of each member, primary coop and the coop union, communication, effective management, enhancing role of women and strengthening the cooperative union's role. The participants were also informed of the value of business enhancement for the cooperative union as it impacts everyone. In this segment of training participants were able to examine a range of possibilities to assess value chain opportunities and understanding the importance of a market analysis for products development.

Organizational training:

Bora Denbel staff and management, leaders and members of the primary cooperatives and local government officials received training after the farmers training, during which they were provided with daily participatory workshops on the following topics:

- Cooperative leadership and management skills
- Roles and responsibilities of cooperative leaders and members
- Effective leadership:
 - Improving decision making
 - Conducting effective meetings
 - Conflict resolution
- Strategies to enhance women's leadership in the cooperative
- Strengthening membership and attracting new cooperative members,

c) Expected impacts/results

8 separate trainings for 69 farmers in five of counties were conducted.

Members' awareness was raised by being engaged in cooperative management and organization workshops. Members and leaders of the cooperatives learned about value of engaging women as both consumers and providers of goods and services that the community at large could benefit economically. Leaders of cooperatives became interested in engaging women farmers in cooking classes with possible production capability of prepared food for the sale in the cooperatives'

stores. A pilot demonstration class about nutritional value of haricot beans and cooking instruction was designed, coordinated and delivered by Mahnaz M. Harrison, president and CEO of Last Mile4D, who also provided a micro-grant to buy the ingredients for this demonstration. Catholic Church compound was used as the venue, CRS approved of the pilot and Bora Denbel Cooperative union facilitated the transportation of women farmers. Other primary cooperatives are also interested in such demonstration as their primary plan to engage women farmers.

Cooperatives' leaders became aware of the value of computerized agro market and weather technologies to provide them real time and relevant market and weather analysis for seasonal farming and markets as an important investment to improve their farming. Leaders of the primary cooperatives will be seeking members support and the cooperative union to invest in a computerized system.

Cooperatives' leaders became aware of the need to go beyond their organic formation and exercise most basic of organization, management and communication techniques to enhance their operations and improve their relations with their members.

The last day of training was for the Bora Denbel Union's leadership, management and staff on cooperative leadership and management, effective management, enhancing the role of women in leadership and market expansion and sustainability of the cooperative union. Bora Denbel Union will take a much more effective leadership role in providing training in organization, financial management and communication. Bora Denbel Union board and management will take an active leadership role to train the eager primary cooperatives on new business development and accountable and transparent organizational structures.

d) Recommendations¹

- Bora Denbel Union needs to develop its organizational capacity with goals and projections to improve its operation and its relationship with primary cooperatives.
- Bora Denbel's business plan shows that the employees are supervised by the board. This is not an effective management approach. They need to visit this item and revise it based on best practice management principles.

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. Needs to develop an organizational plan based on sound management,	1) develop annual budget, develop human resource policies and	Zenebe	

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.

finance and marketing principles	procedures, develop financial policies, develop marketing policies to identify partnership opportunities, 2) establish partnership criteria and expectations, 3) enter to partnership to advance the union's business enterprise		
2. Needs to develop the capacity of the primary cooperatives on modern management, financial literacy and marketing principles	1) train the cooperatives on basic cooperative management that will include how to develop annual budget, human resource policies and procedures, financial policies, 2) establish membership criteria and expectations, 3) identify membership loyalties, to incorporate their needs in primary cooperative business enterprise development	Zenebe	
3. Needs to develop a standard management agreement that is sustainable and transparent with the primary cooperatives	1) identify best practice management agreements, 2) survey members, 3) use the survey result to draft the agreement based on sound cooperative management principles	Zenebe	
4. Needs to devise their training protocols for the primary cooperatives and	1) examine other cooperative union protocols 2) present		

the current pay for attendance procedure	the membership a solid plan of action with clear benefit identification for both primary cooperatives and the union, 3) establish the new protocol and get it approved at the general assembly		
4. Needs to develop marketing plan to engage women as an economic bloc not tapped on. 5.	1) identify engagement opportunities that ties-in with women's traditional roles, 2) provide discounted rate to encourage women's participation in the market activities and membership.	Zenebe	
6.			

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training
- b) Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count)
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs
- d) Training/assistance by field

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	53	50	3
Employees	16	13	3
Clients/ Suppliers			
Family Members			
Total	69	63	6

13 Women attending the haricot beans cooking demonstration are not included in the above table

1.5 Gender

- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Most farming communities I visited almost 98% were dominated by men. There was no woman present in the leadership circle of the primary cooperatives. Did these roles play a part in your assignment? I inquired about the lack of women's presence in the meetings and encouraged them to see inclusion of women as an opportunity to develop new economic circle/business promoting unique qualities women can



bring to the table. Cooking classes to create a local market consumption habits for white haricot beans. How? Lack of women presence in the whole industry is negatively impacting the consumable markets' utilization and expansion.

- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? Any future funding for any activity should be tied-in to inclusion and participation of women.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$ 9,000.00

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment 30 hours in advance 20 hours in the field
b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment, time and research to prepare the presentations \$7800. USD

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

- a) Meals N/A
b) Transportation \$10.00 a day
c) Lodging N/A
d) Translation \$100
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.

- Union's by-laws
- Union's brochure
- Union's marketing material
- Previous volunteers reports and analysis

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

- I. Must ask and expect from the host to take active and participatory role in these trainings. The organization has a great deal of management and organizational leadership deficit and they did not attend one whole training from the beginning to end. Not to mention the wrong message gives the attendees about the lack of importance the Union placed on these trainings by not attending.
- II. Must ask host to respect volunteers' time. If the training will not start till noon, the volunteer should not be picked up at 9:00 and just waiting around for farmers to arrive one at a time. Every single day I waited on average about 2-2 ½ hours until the farmers came. They already knew that was the case therefore they should have adjusted the time accordingly.
- III. Would be helpful to ask for a better coordination on the part of host. Great deal of confusion and disorganization about transport, location of the training, day of training(training on a market purchase day for farmers)
- IV. Housing arrangement could also be better coordinated and secured. Too many guests were at the compound at the same time and that made for some seriously less than ideal living conditions. No water most days, no hot water, dusty and dirty room.



- V. Use of Interpreter with excellent command of language. Although I spoke slowly and used elementary vocabulary I have serious doubt if even 60% of what I said was understood by the person who acted as my interpreter. Lack of familiarity with most basic principles of interpreting also impedes on the effectiveness of the work. My interpreter would engage in the conversation as oppose to translating the message between participants and I.

1.10 Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Washington, DC Area Volunteer Travels to Uganda to Share Skills
with Local Farmers**

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

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**Washington, DC Area Volunteer Travels to Uganda to Share
Skills with Local Farmers**

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

Mahnaz M. Harrison, a President and CEO of Last Mile4D from Washington, DC travelled to Ethiopia for two and half weeks to share her technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Mahnaz M Harrison'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.

"Energized by the farmers' desire to learn and their wants to change," said Mahnaz M. Harrison.



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 **Ethiopia**, **Mahnaz M. Harrison** worked with **Bora Denbel Cooperative Union** in Oromia region of the country, in **cooperative leadership, management, strengthening women economic empowerment, communication and organizational capacity building that would enhance the union's performance and sustainability**. These technical assistance trainings to **board and management of the organization, the district staff, and the farmer groups in all counties** was to enable them to **impart cooperative management, organizational leadership and business management skills**. Up to 69 primary cooperative **farmers, trainers, managers and board members** were reached.

Mahnaz M. Harrison'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.

