

**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: IDFA ( Iganga District Farmers' Association)
- c) Assignment: UG36
- d) Dates of Assignment: August 4<sup>th</sup> – August 18<sup>th</sup>
- e) Number of days worked: 12 days in the field

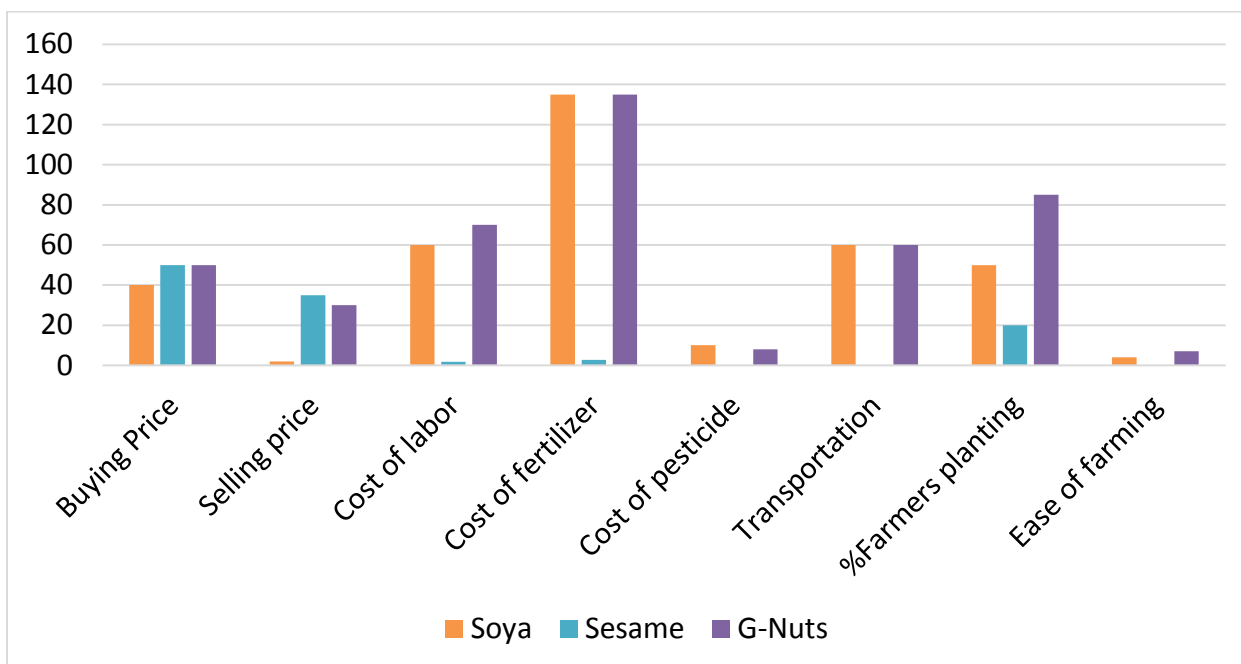
**1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW Enterprise selection through training members on cost benefit analysis for possible investment enterprises and planning for the selected enterprises. There should be a component of awareness creation for the VSLA beneficiaries on investing the money shared out at the end of the cycle in Income Generating activities rather than spending all of it (What are the benefits Vs Disadvantages of the two scenarios).**

**a) Progress with the objective**

**Grass root training:**

The host has planned for two days training sessions for each of the five counties with farmer groups. Therefore, every two days a new group training commenced with some variation in a different venue and with different participants. Every farmer group consisting of two sub-groups of farmers belonging to the VSLA (35-40 participants each day) went under two days of intense conversation, training, Q&A on learning about expense vs. revenue, cost benefit analysis, how to keep record of any of their business transaction, how to control and reduce loss, how to improve on efficiencies and productivity. Part of the second day training focused on moving beyond soil, seed, and crop to crop diversification, crop to production for example using the oil seed to make a product, such as oil, butter, snacks and varied food. In this segment of training participants were able to examine a wide range of oil seed products in various forms and packaging from different countries (In consultation with CRS I purchased the products and brought them). For example, jar of peanut butter or sesame butter (Tahini), sesame oil, peanut powder, individual peanut butter pack, sesame cookies and chips, soy sauce, dried tofu and more. Then a guided conversation focused on comparative analysis of the four types of oil seed, sesame, soy, g-nuts (peanuts) and sunflower. In conversation with the farmers established criteria to objectively select the type of oil seed that best benefits the community. Since none of the farmers grow sunflower even for personal consumption, none of the groups used it in the comparative analysis of the oil seed crop calculated in the table below. We use scale of 0 to 10 for ease of growth, zero being the easiest, i.e. no labor and no hardship to grow or harvest. Furthermore, for the cost of the criteria listed on the chart we used Ugandan shillings without the last two zeros. Some of the cost varied from a community to the next so the amount listed is an average cost for ease of presentation.

## Comparative analysis of the oil seed crops for business enterprise selection



### Organizational training:

IDFA staff and management went under a two days training after the farmers training, during which they were provided with cost benefit analysis for record keeping and further investment in oil seed enterprises. The data gathered from the farmers, their problems, their needs and desire for future crop diversification; investment in oil seed crops and food production and their expectation from the association was shared with the IDFA. Staff was also provided with the remainders of the oil seed products used in the farmers trainings to be used for their market analysis and supply chain and distribution channels evaluation and partnership.

IDFA management and board also went under a day of training and brainstorming in board leadership roles, enterprise development, market assessment, partnership development in the supply chain and distribution channels further engagement and involvement of VSLA farmers in decision making in the oil seed enterprise development.

### b) Expected impacts/results

- 10 separate trainings for over 265+ farmers in five out of six counties were conducted.
- Members' awareness was raised by viewing samples of a wide range of oil seed products that was brought by the volunteer.

- Members immediately asked IDFA to work with them to invest in food production processes.
- Members will diversify their crop and invest in oil seed farming.
- Members pressed for further meetings with the IDFA to discuss collective buying, selling and generating new business.
- Members will apply their knowledge to ask for more involvement of IDFA in enterprise development.
- Members will use their savings to invest in new enterprise for food product and processing.
- Two days ToT for 14 IDFA district staff was conducted on cost/benefit analysis, comparative crop analysis to assess yield, ease of growth, labor use, marketability, price, possible food product business development and how to assist farmers to make decision in investment.
- IDFA will take a much more effective leadership role toward standardization of the crop and product development.
- IDFA will utilize the training material for ToT in training the farmers on an ongoing basis. (all flip charts pages were given to IDFA)
- IDFA will continue weekly training of the other farmers that did not receive the training provided by this CRS volunteer.
- One-day training for the IDFA board and management was conducted to provide them with overview of the trainings and the need for leadership to move the eager farmers from crop and farming to farming as a business enterprise.
- IDFA board and management will make decision on the choice of oil seed enterprise after review and consultation with the VSLA groups.

c) Recommendations<sup>1</sup>

- IDFA needs to develop a standardization plan for farming input and output. Members of association need guidance and collective intervention on input and output procurement and business development processes. IDFA is provided with a member survey guidelines to help them devise their plan based on members' responses. A member survey guideline to assess their ability, desire and willingness to participate and their expectation of the role of the association in this process is provided to the IDFA. (A copy attached- Appendix A member survey guidelines)
- As a part of standardization, IDFA needs to develop a unified training materials on given topics and assure that it will reach every farmer groups, for example "How to tackle Striga weed".
- IDFA needs to conduct the F2F training on business enterprise development for the remaining other farmer groups unable to attend these trainings on cost-benefit

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<sup>1</sup> **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.

analysis and running farming as a business, the value of crop diversification and investment in income generating activities. IDFA should use material from their training with the CRS volunteer and the steps outlined in the meetings with farmers combined with the standard of practice and participation for the members to advance their crop producing business to agro business production. A cost-benefit analysis manual is provided to IDFA after a two days training of the staff. (Appendix-B-farming as a business manual a copy attached)

- IDFA needs to devise a marketing plan to seek strategic partnership with distribution channels to advance the crop to processing food supplies, for example packaging, sale, marketing groups that are already representing other supplies and products.

1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW Training on basic business management skills with emphasis on risks identification, analysis and risk management in business, calculation of breakeven points, and profit/loss in business, seasonality factors and determining the appropriate timing for loan investment in business.

a) Progress with the objective

**Grass roots and organizational training:**

A one-day training for the board and management of IDFA, a two-days training for ToT and another set of two-days training was conducted for five farmers group over the course of 13 days. One day of training focused on business management skills. Farmers understood that they needed to conduct farming as a business in order to change their lives. They came prepared with notebook and asked many questions. They learned about expense vs. revenue, break even points, how to control loss, how to invest in tools that can help them reduce loss, how to mitigate their crop risk by diversifying and or working in groups to have a better yield. On the second day of training they learned about crop diversification, crop yield and cost comparison. They learned to invest their savings for business development and set aside their previous goal of spending their savings. They understood that a business investment may not yield right away and they need to look at the benefit of their investment over a period of 2-4 years. They learned they could work with IDFA to bargain for better input and output prices. They learned that business investment could not rely on seasonality factors and their desire to invest irrespective of the time of savings investment currently in place.

b) Expected impacts/results

- Members became aware of the value of record keeping to improve their understanding of expense/revenue.
- Members begin keeping record using the samples and tools that was provided.
- Members will work with the IDFA staff on an investment plan as the end of the year approaches.
- Members will use their profit/loss assessment to diversify their crop and invest in oil seed crops and enterprise development.
- IDFA will work with VSLA members to select an investment plan for each county with its groups.

- IDFA will use the economy of scale to provide members with best input and output procurement and processes.
- IDFA board and management will identify partners for value chain and distribution channels.
- IDFA will collaborate with VSLA to devise a marketing plan to launch the business enterprise investment.

c) Recommendations

- IDFA will develop a business investment analysis based on the member survey and the outcome of individual training for each farmer group modelled after F2F business enterprise development trainings.
- IDFA will identify distribution channels partners and develop a plan for engagement and partnership to advance the selected business enterprise option by VSLA for marketing.

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. Develop a strategic plan for the next 5 years	1) survey members, 2) prepare a market analysis with cost/benefit analysis for product development based on selected oil seed crop for the business enterprise development, 3) enhance the organization's operational capacity	Paul Bisiki ( IDFA Coordinator)	12 weeks, November 10, 2015
2. Transition the Association to Cooperative/Operationalize the Cooperative	1) develop annual budget, develop human resource policies and procedures, develop financial policies, identify partnership opportunities, 2) establish partnership criteria and expectations, 3) enter to partnership to advance the	IDFA Coordinator and management committee of the board	January 2016

	business enterprise development		
3. Develop a five year financial projection plan	1) develop an annual budget based on operational needs of the organization, 2) identify business opportunities for sustainable growth , 3) identify new sources of revenue 4) review and audit the finances of the organization	IDFA Coordinator	End of September
4. Strengthen the board capacity	1)create an advisory board, 2)identify advisory members in banking, accounting, law, non-profit, foreigner with connection and knowledge, 3) use the 3 Ws (wisdom, wealth, work) for the board member selection among the farmers, 4)include more women on the board	Board chair and Coordinator	Two phases, complete before the end of the year
5. Develop a standardization plan	1) develop standard for input, i.e. quality, quality bulking, use of new seeds, fertilizer etc, 2) develop standard for output, i.e. use of new bags, etc. 3)develop training standard with materials to be left at each community, 4)develop communication standard, 5)develop organizational standards of	Ben Kaziba ( IDFA Staff)	August 2016

	conduct, monitoring and evaluation		
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#### 1.4 Number of people Assisted

- Through formal training **290** participants
- Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count) the same
- Out of these above, number of host staffs **25** staff
- Training/assistance by field: interpretation and introductions

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	265	75	190
Employees	25	20	5
Clients/ Suppliers	0	0	0
Family Members	0	0	0
Total	290	95	195

#### 1.5 Gender

- What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? On average 85% of participants were female farmers or farm laborers as men have moved to cities in pursuit of work. They clearly are active in VSLA work and were the record keepers, key holders of the three locks on the saving box. They mostly yielded to the men and their responses until I pressed hard to hear from women participants. Did these roles play a part in your assignment? Yes, women came on the second day of trainings prepared to take notes on the cost/benefit analysis and what they need to look for. How? They actively participated, asked questions and took notes. They agreed/those that came with notebooks and had the ability to read to become the record keeper in their households.
- How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? Encourage them to speak up and participate. Create training opportunities only for women, where they do not have to yield to men. This could empower them to not shy away from active participation. The host organizations leaders are all men, lack of women presence in the leadership of IDFA could possibly mean the trainers are always men and therefore not attentive to bringing women to the fold. Including women in the leadership of the IDFA might be a good start.

#### 1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$ **3,193.75**

- Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment 45 hours
- Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment \$450.00
- Volunteer provided a grant for \$100 to establish best practice to a woman farmer with IDFA supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the best practice process.

#### 1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ **772.47**

- Meals \$0.00
- Transportation for participants- \$ 407.30
- Lodging \$0.00





- d) Translation was provided on all occasions: \$337.08
- e) Other (Specify): Farmer mobilization- \$ 28.09

#### 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.

#### 1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

- Since the farmers have been mostly maize grower they have very little knowledge about the oil seed agro information i.e. planting, fertilizer, pesticide, soil preparation and other oil seeds knowledge necessary to be successful in diversifying their crop and investing in oil seed crop with the interest to invest in income generating activities of the new crop. Recommendation is to invite volunteers with specific oil seed agro knowledge to educate the farmers on the particulars of oil seed crop.
- Striga weed is devastating many of the famers rice, maize and sugar crop. They don't have the knowhow knowledge to address this major problem. A team of volunteers with research, technical and chemical knowledge of tackling this problem should be assembled to train the IDFA members and provide practical advice and guidance to the farmers to reduce and eradicate the Striga weed before it bankrupts the struggling farmers. Farmers reported in many instances that they only harvested 1/5 of their yield and the rest was damaged by striga, the numbers are staggering and needs serious attention.
- Irrigation beyond rainy season. Farmers are concerned about patterns of dryness impeding their traditional planting and harvesting patterns. They don't have the knowhow of helping themselves to drip irrigation methods or any other irrigation system. Volunteers with specific knowledge of drip irrigation and or system irrigation could train IDFA and their farmers on practical and hands on approach to water management and irrigation system development.
- I have strongly urged IDFA to work on the recommendations I worked out with them and the need that they must work on those to secure the health of their organization. Organizationally and administratively they have almost no capacity. Their work have been project based and focused on farmers, but now that all donor funded projects have come to an end their survival might be at stake. There was no organizational budget that I could review. No knowledge on the part of management about their financial health. They should only be provided with other volunteers if they meet the target dates for most of the recommendations in the Action Plan.

#### 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**

**Mahnaz M. Harrison**, a **President and CEO of Last Mile4D** from Washington, DC travelled to **Uganda** for **three** 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 **Uganda**, **Mahnaz M. Harrison** worked with **Iganga District Farmers Association (IDFA)** in **business enterprise development of oil seed crops** training and giving technical assistance to **board and management of the organization, the district staff ToT, and the farmer groups in all counties** to enable them to **impart business management skills to the farmers of the saving groups beneficiaries through enterprise selection, business planning and management**. Up to **290 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](http://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](http://crs.org) or [crsespanol.org](http://crsespanol.org).*