

## 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: Jeff Knowles
- b) Host Organization: Little Sisters of St Therese of the Child Jesus
- c) Assignment: Farm Planning
- d) Dates of Assignment: 5/09/16-5/25/16
- e) Number of days worked: 15

### 1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW: To develop an integrated farm plan that sustainably optimizes the productivity and net income earning for the farms and improve resource us planning.

- a) Progress with the objective: Completed, see attached farm plan
- b) Expected impacts/results: Improved soil quality on the four land units operated by the sisters resulting in increased yields and profits. Serve as a model farm for Meru farmers. Begins to educate farmers on the role they can play to address; soil degradation, improving soil quality and yields while addressing climate change.
- c) Recommendations<sup>1</sup>: See below

### 1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
<p>1) Improve the quality of the soil at Machaka, Kiirua, Kathita and Ntumburi farms by following the advice provided in the folder entitled, "Unlock the secrets of the soil. The four principles include;</p> <p><b>Keep the soil covered as much as possible.</b> Reduce tillage operation to leave crop residues on the surface. Ensure mulch, compost or vegetative material covers the soil surface as much as the year as possible. This will reduce weed growth and improve habitat for microbial activity</p> <p><b>Disturb the soil as little as possible.</b> Reduce the amount of tillage being done to improve microbial activity and reduce compaction.</p> <p><b>Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the SOIL.</b> Ensure harvested crop residues are returned to the soil, either through composting or left on the soil surface.</p> <p><b>Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops.</b> Current operation is using a good rotation and should continue. Begin to experiment with cover crops to keep the soil covered.</p>	<p><b>See recommendation</b></p>	<p>Little sisters leadership team and individual sisters at each farm</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>

<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.

Managing for soil health is one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop production and profitability. The farms at Kiirua and Kathita Kiirua should also adopt these following principles.			
<p>2) Over a three year time period convert farming operations on all farms to organic. Create organic fertilizer by establishing significant amounts of compost and mulch to add to the soil in place of inorganic fertilizers currently being applied. Use all forms of organic material available on and around farm including; grass clipping, leaves, saw dust, biochar, manure, wood ash, leaves, weeds, kitchen scrapes, etc. (Excluding potato farm in forest) Avoid woody vegetation and vines.</p> <p>Each of the four farms managed by the sisters should strive to establish high volumes of compost. The transition from inorganic to organic fertilizers and compost should be done over a couple years to avoid reductions in yields.</p>	Convert farming operations to organic, create organic fertilizer through composting.	Little sisters leadership team and individual sisters at each farm	Over a three year period
<p>3) Over a 2-3 year period replace chemical insecticides with organic methods of controlling destructive insects. Study online information on integrated pest management that involves utilizing beneficial insects and plants to eliminate white flies, aphids and cut worms. Complete internet searches for organic methods for controlling the above pests. Request another F2F volunteer skilled on this subject.</p>	Replace inorganic pesticides with organic.	Little sisters leadership team and individual sisters at each farm	Over a three year period
<p>4) Provide leadership to local farmers, Ministry of Agricultural personal and other orders of Catholic sisters by sharing the power point presentations on; soil erosion and best management practices, biochar, unlock the secrets of the soil, why get a soil sample. Encourage farmers to have their soil analyzed. Sister Jacky and Veronica are well trained and should play a key role in future educational effort.</p>	See recommendation	Sisters Jackie, Naomi, Veronica, Ministry of Agriculture	When opportunities arise.
<p>5) Hire a farm manager to work, live and manage all aspects of the farming operation on Ntumburi farm. This individual should be well versed in all aspects of farming including; vegetable, grains and fruit trees. The person should be devoted to church, have tremendous passion for farming and have good</p>	Hire farm manager	Little sisters leadership team	As soon as possible.

people skills. Expectations for this individual should be quadrupling profit for the sisters over a three year period.			
<p>6) It is recommended that a minimum of two additional acres of land on Ntumburi be planted too high value fruit crops such as; oranges, mangos, passion fruit, papayas, bananas, etc. While fruit trees are maturing, vegetative crops can be planted in and around the trees to earn income. Diversification of the operation should be a priority. In addition, the green houses should be repaired to grow high value vegetable crops. In addition, it is recommended that the remaining ten acres of cropland be put in a crop rotation to include; maize, beans followed by 3-5 years of quality hay.</p> <p>7) Establish demonstration plots for local farmers on the Kathita Kiirua Water Project farm. Allow farm to be used as a demonstration to show case conservation practices that include; minimum tillage, composting, ground cover, etc. Involve; Doreen from the Ministry of Agriculture, Annsanto the social worker and Veronica all of whom should be well versed on these subjects. All sisters should help farmers understand the importance of improving soil quality and composting.</p> <p>Seek input for additional demonstration projects that could be useful and beneficial for local farmers.</p>	Establish demo plots	Sister Naomi,	Over a one year period.

#### 1.4 Number of people Assisted

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

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	17	0	17
Employees	17	10	7
Clients/ Suppliers	35	19	16
Family Members			
Total	69	29	40

#### 1.5 Gender



- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How? The sisters of course were women and are highly respected. Because of this the sisters may be able to spread the messages left by Knowles to help the farmers in Meru work to improve soil quality and improve crop yields while addressing climate change.
- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? Follow up with the sisters on future volunteer requests.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment: 40
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment  
\$20,000.00

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

- a) Meals: 19,000 shillings
- b) Transportation: 10,000 shillings
- c) Lodging: 117,000 shillings
- d) Translation: 9,800 shillings
- 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. The sisters have four farms versus two farms that assistance was needed.

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

1.10 Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VOLUNTEER CONTACT:** Jeff Knowles

Retired USDA employee  
18088960504  
Jknow112@yahoo.com

## **Kealakekua Area Volunteer Travels to Kenya to Share Skills with Local Farmers**

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**Jeff Knowles**, a retired **USDA** employee from **Kealahou, HI** travelled to **Kenya** for **3** weeks to share his technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Knowles'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.

**While in Kenya Knowles stayed at the guesthouse of the convent of the Little Sisters of St Therese of the Child Jesus.** This was Knowles's fourth assignment with the FTF program in the last 9 months after completing previous assignments in Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania. According to Knowles each of his four assignments has progressively been more satisfying, fulfilling and exciting.

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**, **Knowles** worked with **Little Sisters of St Therese** in **farm planning** training and giving technical assistance to **the sisters, farmers and Ministry of Agriculture personnel** to enable them to **address soil degradation**, soil erosion, conservation practices and techniques to improve soil quality thus increasing crop production and profit. Up to 48 beneficiaries were reached and it is anticipated hundreds more farmers benefit through demonstration plots that will be established by the sisters working in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Knowles'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).*