



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: **Madeleine Philbin**
- b) Host Organization: Nile Pro Trust Ltd
- c) Assignment: UG44
- d) Dates of Assignment: August 14 - September 5
- e) Number of days worked 21

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW “One major objective; Streamline the leadership and management of the newly established cooperatives with emphasis on cooperative governance, management principles, group cohesion, conflict resolution, leadership roles and responsibilities. The assignment will work with the leadership of the six new cooperatives on improving their cooperative leadership and management skills; the leaders should carry the vision and mission of the cooperative to improve the farmers’ incomes and livelihoods.”

a) Progress with the objective

Two-day trainings took place with each of five farmer groups. These farmer groups were introduced to the concepts of leadership, the role of the leader, the qualities of a good leader; as well as to: group decision-making, communication, conflict, effective meetings -- all tied back to the touchstone - the benefits of working together. All farmers participated in small group work and exercises to better understand these concepts.

Farmers identified the characteristics of a good leader - qualities raised up often by first eliciting from the farmers their own stories of good experiences with dependable leaders (or the contrary). (Farmers were also given a opportunity to voice their doubts, misgivings or bad experience around the concept of ‘leader’.) Each farmer was then asked to identify which qualities s/he had, and which s/he wanted to develop. Next, farmers were introduced to the roles and responsibilities of a leader, but this then was grounded in their own experience. Who amongst them had already begun to take on these responsibilities? These folks were asked to stand and were acknowledged by their peers.

Farmers were also introduced to group process, and tips for effective meetings. Farmers were accompanied through the process by their local field organizer (Nile Pro staff.) Gaining valuable experience in group process, farmers were introduced to the concepts of differing conflict and communication styles, and the importance of being self-aware – and how such awareness can lead to a better result in group discussions. Farmers were asked to participate in exercises that deepened their own awareness of their conflict styles and ‘ways of seeing’ and to share their reactions to the interactions and exercises. Every farmer then participated in a role play involving three players: speaker, listener, disrupter – learning how to respond to a “disruptive” person in a meeting, as well as gaining appreciation for the role of ‘speaker’ and ‘listener’. Practical examples were shared with farmers regarding how to organize a meeting in order to reach a decision as a group.



The training was bracketed by discussion of the best experiences (or results) to date with the co-op, and the challenges the group still faces. This kept the discussion of leadership and governance linked to its larger purpose – reaching a goal.

Finally the farmers were introduced to ‘the reasons for successful co-ops in Uganda’ as defined by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives and they were invited to reflect on (and appreciate) their progress relative to this list.

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b) Expected impacts/results

Group Process: Farmers acquired hands on experience, thru practical exercises on organizing a conversation as a group in order to take action and make a decision – experience which should have a direct impact on their monthly meetings. Particular emphasis was placed on setting objectives (in advance) for a meeting, and keeping in mind that the purpose of a meeting is to make a (group) decision. Farmers gained an understanding of communication/perception and conflict/style – and how these factors can contribute to conflict in group settings. Farmers are expected to apply these ideas in group gatherings going forward, as farmers came to recognize the importance of communication, trust. Farmers witnessed very practical examples of ways to manage conflict in a meeting, how to facilitate a discussion, and how to organize an agenda focused on achieving results. These examples are expected to trigger and encourage farmers to analyze their own experience and make changes. One example was a farmer who asked a specific question about how to engage those farmers who remain silent during their monthly meetings - He demonstrated a newly gained awareness of group facilitation and how certain techniques can shift a meeting from unsuccessful to dynamic.

Leadership Roles: Farmers were able to articulate the qualities of a leader and the job of a leader, and to look at themselves against these measures. This should help clarify roles and invite differing farmers to step forward in different capacities (rather than a group relying too heavily solely on the chairperson-leader.) Additionally, farmers were accompanied in these trainings by the local Field Organizer, who is now positioned to follow-up, particularly with those individuals who demonstrated leadership and thoughtfulness in the trainings themselves.

Overall, farmers acquired new skills and sharpened existing skills in leadership, group cohesion and conflict resolution.

c) Recommendations¹

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



IMMEDIATE ACTION: It is recommended that the Field Organizers immediately follow-up with those “key” leaders from each training, ie those leaders who showed themselves to be particularly engaged and interested in the training – and talk to them about taking on different active roles with co-op. It’s important to do this while the memory of who participated is fresh (in the minds of the staff) and the memory of the training itself is fresh (in the minds of the participants.) The training is both an “end” and a “means” – and “end” in itself through the good lessons taught, but also a “means” for drawing out those with leadership potential.

The Maecora Farmer Group specifically asked for a useful tool to help them with organizing an Annual General Meeting. The F2F Volunteer provided that resource to NilePro, and that should get to the Maecora Coop quickly - in part to assure them that they are “being heard”.

NEXT STEPS: While the Leadership Training seemed to be a positive experience for all involved, I did not have the impression that any farmers had “asked” for leadership training. They did ask for training -- and especially demonstrations -- of agricultural practices which they could immediately adopt to improve yield. Interspersing such “hands-on practical” ag training with leadership training would likely help to keep “leadership” in context of the overall goal, improved livelihoods and improved lives.

For future Leadership trainings, it is recommended that staff keep focused on ‘leadership’ in order to make the trainings as effective as possible, rather than opening the doors to all members. High turn-out is not the key here, rather reaching the right target audience. The ‘leadership’ might be narrowly defined – e.g. those who have a formal position as chairperson, secretary, committee chair, etc; or could include a broader group, such as those having “ leadership potential” as judged by the best instincts of Field staff and those in a formal leadership role. A possible practical topic for key leadership could be leadership *and planning* – ie taking the Business Plans and adding timetable/benchmarks in order to map a path from here to there.

It is also recommended that subsequent Leadership trainings have a more intentional focus on building the capacity of field staff. The F2F Volunteer could be teaching the Field Staff how to lead a training, or perhaps co-facilitating. In which case, it would be important to debrief immediately after each training to discuss who (among the leadership) had the most potential; as well as to point out comments about the training techniques themselves and the group dynamic in order to aid the Field Staff in his/her own development.

To this end, it would be helpful for the F2F Volunteer to be introduced to the Field Staff at the outset, and gain an understanding of their roles – so as to best be “collaborators” in the trainings going forward (not just “trainer” and “translator”.)

tax or credit reform, changes in government policy, or investment in large-scale equipment, are usually not within the host organization’s reach.

1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW (Deliverable) Provide a manual of the training information, activities, exercises

a) Progress with the objective

F2F Volunteer completed a “Leadership Training Guide” which was provided to NilePro staff.

b) Expected impacts/results

The training guide can serve as a tool for future trainings led by Nile Pro Trainers, as well as a reference for the Local Field Organizers as they follow-up with each farmer group who participated in this series of trainings.

c) Recommendations

Make sure the Leadership Training Guide is distributed to all Field staff.

1.3 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. Field staff make use of Leadership Training Guide as a point of reference with 5 participating groups and possibly use with new groups in the future.	Make sure the Leadership Training Guide is distributed to all Field staff	NilePro: Ronald Kizito	Immediately
2. Maecora Coop given the opportunity to participate in a ‘How to Organize an Annual General Meeting’ training – an interest they expressed	Share the useful tool (AGM Guidelines) with Maecora	Nile Pro: Ronald K Local field organizer (Muzungo Robinson)	Immediately
3. Follow-up with key leaders from each training, by field staff, inviting them into deeper engagement	Reach out and meet with key leaders individually, discuss their reflections on training, invite them to take on greater (specific) leadership roles or tasks	Nile Pro Field Organizers	Within two weeks
4. Organize Demonstration Training on agricultural	Determine what training is available,	Nile Pro (Ronald Kizito) CRS F2F staff	Within two months

practices for these 5 co-ops groups	and a workable timeline		
5. Include capacity building of staff in future Leadership Trainings	Include in the design of subsequent F2F Leadership assignments an intentional component of capacity-building for Nile Pro field staff	Nile Pro (Ronald K.) CRS F2F staff	Within two months
6. Organize leadership training and planning for a target group of leaders	Identify farmer group(s) whom Nile Pro would like to see take on a continuing deepening leadership role (including planning), and design a F2F assignment that serves this need.	Nile Pro (Ronald K) CRS F2F staff: George Ntibarikure Maria Nakayiza	Within two months

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- Through formal training 177
- Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count) 6
- Out of these above, number of host staffs 6
- Training/assistance by field

Category					Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners					177	99	78
Group:	total	M	F				
Maecora	21	13	8				
KamKam	33	30	3				
ACT	34	20	14				
Mifialco	50	12	38				
Ililedio	39	24	15				
Employees					6	5	1
Clients/ Suppliers							
Family Members							
Total					183	104	79



1.5 Gender

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

Four of the groups were predominantly male, one was predominantly female. The predominantly female group was also largely illiterate. This required adapting some aspects of the training, moving away from written materials, and more into experiential learning.

- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community?

Much of the success of these trainings will depend on the follow-up – the Field Organizer intentionally following up with leaders who (through the trainings themselves) show potential. It will be important for the Field Staff to keep an eye out for women who can step into these leadership roles. It may also make sense to talk to these “key” women, and ask them to identify other women who could be successful in leadership roles.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$ **3,037.5**

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment - 50
b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment - \$100 USD

a) 1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ **901.48**

- b) Meals \$ 0.00
c) Transportation for field staff and vehicle fueling : \$ 242.96
d) Lodging for field staff and driver: \$33.81
e) Translation: \$ 112.68
f) Facilitation of field staff: \$126.76
g) Other (Specify) Mobilization costs (Airtime, Motorcycle hire)- \$ 112.68, Training Venue: \$272.59

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. NONE

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

- As mentioned above, it would be helpful to have a deeper orientation with the breadth of Host staff at the outset of the work, in order to be more effective in the subsequent weeks.
- At the recommendation of a previous F2F Volunteer, I asked for a working day (to revamp training) immediately after my first workshop – this worked particularly well. It was an opportunity to revise my “pre-pre-packaged training” once I had a sense of the actual audience. This is something I recommend be included in future itineraries.
- It would be helpful to be given a brief list of tourist attractions or other local points of interest, so the F2F volunteer has an opportunity to see and get a sense of the country in a broader, interesting,



enjoyable way. Similarly, it would be a courtesy to be given basic information on how to attend Catholic mass, if desired.

- It would be great to receive the email addresses of other F2F Volunteers who are in the country at the same time at the start of the assignment. Perhaps my experience was an unusual, but there were 5 F2F Volunteers in various parts of Uganda at the same time – sharing tips in real time (via email) did happen to some extent, and it would be good to make that a regular practice.
- It would be great if there were a “bank” or “library” where all of the Training Guidelines designed by the various F2F Volunteers in East Africa for CRS were posted or stored. There is currently likely a lot of ‘re-inventing the wheel’ taking place – Volunteers would be well served learning from (and ‘borrowing from’) one another. Perhaps a shared documents site could be established for F2F volunteers.
- Similarly, it might be useful to explore creating a F2F Volunteer group – perhaps on Linked In? – Where former F2F Volunteers could stay in touch and be a resources to one another.



1.10 Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago Area Volunteer Travels to Uganda to Share Skills with Local Farmers

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

Madeleine Philbin from **Oak Park, IL** travelled to **Uganda** for 3 weeks to share her technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Madeleine'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.

"It was an honor to contribute to the development of these small co-ops, helping farmers to sharpen existing skills and acquire new skills. They are making changes to improve their lives and their living situations. I was fortunate to be able to lend a helping hand, through a focus on leadership development." said **Madeleine Philbin**.

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** **Madeleine** worked with **Catholic Relief Services' partner, Nile Pro Trust Ltd** providing Leadership Training and giving technical assistance to **small farmer co-ops** to enable them to **improve their leadership and management skills and carry out the mission of the cooperatives**. Up to **183 beneficiaries** were reached, through trainings with five farmer co-ops.

Madeleine Philbin'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.