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VOLUNTEER REPORT FORMAT

To be submitted to CRS at the end of volunteer assignment and shared with the Host

1.1 Assignment information: **ET01**

- a) Jim Worstell
- b) Meki Catholic Secretariat (MCS)
- c) Agronomical knowledge/skill transfer on maize plus wheat and other grains
- d) March 20-April 6:
- e) 14

1.2.1 Build capacity of 10 training of trainers in improved maize production technologies and about 100 smallholding farmers among the beneficiaries of GRAD project to increase their maize and wheat productivity through the use of good agronomic practices.

- a) We succeeded in accomplishing this objective. 27 trainers were trained in two formal training sessions and 115 farmers in informal sessions.
- b) I believe farmers will increase their maize and wheat productivity and profitability due to the trainings. However, I cannot provide a quantitative estimate.
- c) Recommendations

1. Apply Fertilizer according to crop. Employ demonstrations on use of more N on corn and less on beans and peppers. Government recommendations are very broad and do not take crop or soils into account. Farmers are advised to apply 100 kg of DAP and 100 kg of urea to each hectare, regardless of crop planted. Though exact recommendations depend on levels of nutrients in a particular plot, Farmers planting in rich bottom soils may not need urea at all. GRAD could help farmers save money by demonstrating reduced fertilizer use on rich soils.

2. Fertilizer application time. Some farmers are applying DAP and urea before planting. DAP should be applied at seeding and urea after plant is growing vigorously. When applied earlier, urea often volatilizes and is wasted because the plant isn't growing fast enough to use it. Demonstration of this method should also be performed, preferably in farmers' fields.

3. Fertilizer placement. At present DAP is applied half way between the plants. Do demonstrations to show the DAP incorporated in the soil right where seed is planted will provide more benefit. Be sure it is well mixed with the soil before planting seed.

4. New fertilizer products. Many improved fertilizer formulations are used around the world. For example, the highest yields in peppers are achieved through a high phosphate fertilizer



applied at the time of transplanting. As far as I could see, only DAP and urea are available to the farmers. F2F might consider an assignment which demonstrated alternative types of fertilizer and, perhaps, organized an input supply cooperative to obtain and distribute such inputs.

5. Soil health and organic methods. Soil is a living organism. Protect the life in the soil and you improve the quality of your soil and the quantity of your production. Farmers I talked to had little knowledge of how to improve soil quality. Training in soil health, especially in increasing soil organic matter through cover crops and adding compost could be very useful. Agroforestry methods could also be introduced. Many forage legume trees improve quality of soils for grain crop production and reduce erosion while providing forage for livestock.
6. Rotations. Most farmers say they are rotating crops, but some are only rotating from wheat to corn. Training would be useful to insure they know the benefits of rotating from monocots to dicots to break up pest species' ability to thrive in a particular field.
7. Plant spacing. Farmers seem to have adopted row planting for the most part. Where they have, a useful addition would be planting each row offset by half the distance between seeds in second row. This will create a diamond pattern and insure less competition for nutrients and better shading of small weed earlier in the season.
8. Storage of grain crops. Most farmers in Meki could benefit from improved grain storage. Though not a focus of my assignment, I could not help but notice that most farmers grain storage systems are leading to extensive losses of grain quantity and quality. Expertise in grain storage could help farmers save as much as 20% of their crop. In addition, reliable grain storage systems could enable farmers to wait to sell their grain until prices are higher.
9. Marketing strategies. Farmers do not appear to take a very proactive approach to marketing. Farmer-ownership of processing and marketing should be stressed. To be most resilient, farmers should reap profits from every step between them and the consumer. At minimum farmers should induce competition among buyers (coops and brokers). Farmers should be given skills needed to take over the broker function with a local collaborative effort—i.e., forming a marketing organization. This will require an additional Farmer to Farmer volunteer and investigation of government policy limitations on such organization's activities.
10. Soil erosion. Increasing yield and profit with the above will not lead to long run resilience unless soil erosion is addressed. Soil erosion is widespread in the GRAD project areas. The



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activities of MCS are a good first step, but appear to be having only minimal effect. Additional volunteers should focus on soil conservation and exclusion of animals.

1.2.2 Recommendations and observations for CRS

1. Process. I think CRS should consider adopting some of the provisions used by past implementers of F2F. These include having a recommendations section in the Trip Report which goes to the host organization and one which is only for CRS. Some recommendations from volunteers might be more properly given only to CRS. See Appendix.
2. Timing. MCS had a major reporting period coinciding with my visit. Therefore, they were not able to spend the time they wished to in training. Make sure there aren't major conflicts like this in the future.
3. Host accommodations were very pleasant, though volunteers should be urged to bring flashlights since the power goes off regularly. These outages are even more common later in the year when rains intensify, I was told.
4. The system for communication using wireless modems needs a revamp. My first modem only worked once. The second one worked only for a few days. Luckily the host organization guest house had wifi, but it took some days to learn the password.
5. I was treated like an honored guest rather than a fellow worker. So I was taken around to see all the programs, but not asked to do much training. Since the staff was so busy, I hesitated to push our F2F training agenda. Since it's probably unwise for the volunteer to push his trainings on his host, perhaps the coordinator should be the one to insure time for training is available.
6. The guest house provided coffee and bread for breakfast and proximity to MCS offices, but was isolated from restaurants and shops. Places to get food were far enough away to require a vehicle and driver. This meant disturbing the already too-busy MCS staff.
7. Changing money. Future volunteers should be warned that they will have trouble exchanging any Ethiopian birr they have left over. Some F2F implementing agencies pay per diem in dollars to the volunteer before their trip so that they don't have trouble exchanging any remaining local currency.
8. Other than these few minor suggestions, I have been very impressed and happy with all levels of CRS management of F2F.

1.3 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

Topic/field	Total	Males	Females
Enterprise Creation process	27	23	4
Maize production	115	108	7
Organizational Development	26	23	3
Total different people	142	131	11

1.4 Gender

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

One of the strongest and most active participants in the trainings was a woman on staff of MCS. However, women were lacking in other trainings. Women were not out in the fields. All field work, at this time of soil preparation with oxen, was being done by men. Women seemed more reticent to join the crowd walking down to the fields. As a consequence, they did not participate much in the informal trainings in the field..

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

I think it would not be sensible, cost-effective, or even productive to try to get women to become ploughmen. There are certain roles which women are not, in most cases, as suited for and are not going to take. Opportunities for women in other areas should be pursued, but not in the production roles I observed.

When a host organization has few women acting as trainers, training of trainers will attract few women. If CRS needs to attract women as trainees, a solution might be to select organizations which work mainly with women. However, this would likely make the program less effective in meeting other goals of the project.

Given the culture of Ethiopia, rigid quotas for women's participation do not seem warranted. Striving to increase female participation should not evolve into excessive worry about quotas. Impact on the ground is what counts. If men are the ones who have the most impact on maize production and natural resource management, for instance, they will likely be most interested in the training and most able to implement new ideas. Training should be provided for everyone, but volunteers should not be expected to train people who have little interest in or likelihood of impacting a particular aspect of a value chain.



For assignments dealing with many aspects of the maize value chain, such as processing, women are much more involved and should be a much higher percentage of trainees.

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment
8
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment
Negligible.

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

Unknown.

- a) Meals
- b) Transportation
- c) Lodging
- d) Translation
- e) Other (Specify)

1.9 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.

Contacts are listed on participant sheets.