



## 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: Donna Rosa
- b) Host Organization: Huruma Women's Group
- c) Assignment: KE 12- Business skills training and strategic business plan development
- d) Dates of Assignment: September 4-24, 2014
- e) Number of days worked: 14 in field

#### 1.2.1 Objective 1:

Assist the group to evaluate their business management skills, identify relevant training needs and carry out identified trainings, including record keeping

##### a) Progress with the objective:

Evaluated the business skills, management practices, business structure, and capabilities of the group. Record keeping practices were evaluated and templates developed for Huruma to use for both daily and monthly tracking. No formal training was provided but several group sessions were held to provide input for the business plan and discuss operating issues. Significant time was spent on diagnosis of business issues and potential solutions. Suggestions were made to improve operational management.

##### b) Expected impacts/results

Streamlined and more accurate record keeping, more efficient business practices, better understanding of profit, sales, and productivity.

##### c) Recommendations<sup>1</sup>

1. Establish a formal business structure: General Manager, Operations Manager, Finance Manager, Business Development Manager
2. If a suitable financial manager is not found, seek additional formal training in bookkeeping. Time did not allow for formal training, and the person to manage the finances has not yet been identified.
3. Operations recommendations for milling: run two shifts in times of heavy demand, establish a systemized order numbering system so orders are completed in timely fashion and not lost, don't allow for calling in of orders (orders to be brought in and completed as first come, first serve) and offer volume discounts to encourage larger, more efficient runs.
4. It is extremely important for Huruma to get a handle on their costs. I made a lot of guesses and estimates in calculating costs for the business plan and they could be way off. In my separate document outlining the recommendations I have included instructions on how to calculate costs and yields.

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<sup>1</sup> **Note:** 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.



### 1.2.2 Objective 2:

Assess the group's market potential for the value added products, including SWOT analysis, market research and analysis, product distribution channels and repackaging strategies.

#### a) Progress with the objective

Current products and capabilities for new products were assessed. SWOT analysis of the overall business was conducted and included in the business plan.

#### b) Expected impacts/results

Improved profitability of current line, incremental income with new products, utilization of under-capacity equipment

#### c) Recommendations

1. A sales and profit analysis of the retail store products showed that some items had small sales and/or low profit margins. The line was classified into 3 categories based on profitability and sales: 1) Promote-7 items 2) Offer in order to have a complete line but raise prices if possible-7 items, and 3) Drop or raise price – 3 items. See business plan for specific products.
2. Offer more dried products. These have a low cost of production, offer added value, represent new and interesting line additions, provide shelf life and food security, and utilize the solar dryer which sits mostly unused. Training may be needed in proper drying techniques. Specific local fruits and vegetables need to be identified.
3. Longer term, other new products should be considered, such as juices, beverages (chocolate sorghum), more flour blends, spiced baking mixes, roasted salted seeds and nuts, seed and nut pastes, and preserved jams.
4. Regarding packaging, Asili Foods has labels designed but not all bags carried the labels. All bags must carry the printed labels in order to look professional.
5. The retail store should be moved to a higher traffic area in town. This has been promised by the deputy governor of the county.
6. The retail store must be kept fully stocked at all times.
7. The milling business is not as profitable as the retail business. This is partly due to excessive maintenance fees for aging equipment and partly due to not charging enough. Asili offers the extra service of cleaning in addition to milling for the same price as others charge for just milling. While this undoubtedly brings business as it represents a good value, they are making less than 1 shilling profit per kg of product. I recommend either charging 6 shillings for the service or separating the two services 4 shillings for milling and 2 for cleaning. If they cannot get into a better profit position they are better off abandoning the milling and focusing on the retail with unique new products.

### 1.2.3 Objective 3:

Explore ways of raising funds for expansion of Huruma Women's Group enterprises and increase both group members and farmers income.

#### a) Progress with the objective



The best way of raising funds is to improve business practices and product offerings so the enterprise can sell more. This was explored in great depth and all the recommendations address this.

b) Expected impacts/results

Sustainable income through better business practices, operational improvements, and interesting, demand-driven, profitable products. Stimulation of local economy and ultimately job creation.

c) Recommendations

1. Differentiate the business by promoting the fact that supporting Asili products means support for the community in that Huruma provides local community services. This gives the consumer a reason to buy from Asili rather than others.
2. Promotion for the retail line should focus on the following to create differentiation:
  - stability of the dry products (food security)
  - nutritional value
  - local sourcing/support of local farms and enterprises
  - unique custom flour blends
  - natural status (no preservatives or artificial ingredients, minimal processing)
3. Low cost local signage, brochures, sampling, seasonal sales, special events, and other creative promotions should be used to stimulate sales. Education of the consumer is likely to be an important component of the sale, and recipes and cooking demonstrations should feature the products.
4. For the milling business, the added services of cleaning and threshing should be used to differentiate the service, creating value for the consumer. Business development should be via personal sales calls on businesses such as restaurants, bakeries, etc. The same techniques for the retail market can be utilized for promotion of milling to individuals, as well as special discounts for larger quantities.

1.2.4 Objective 4: Assist Huruma Women's Group identify potential partners for financing their business enterprises.

a) Progress with the objective

Institutions and organizations for microfinancing have been identified for Huruma. The business plan will provide documentation to support the case for investment.

b) Expected impacts/results

Additional capital will provide funding for growth.

c) Recommendations

Huruma contact any or all of the following (also detailed in the business plan).

Hand-in-Hand International: <http://www.hihinternational.org/What-We-Do/eif-2013.aspx>

Kiva: [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

Bomo: [www.thebomaproject.org](http://www.thebomaproject.org)

Kenya Central Bank lists of Microfinance Institutions:



[www.centralbank.go.ke/index.php/microfinance-institutions/14-bank-supervision/83-list-of-licensed-deposit-taking](http://www.centralbank.go.ke/index.php/microfinance-institutions/14-bank-supervision/83-list-of-licensed-deposit-taking)

Faulu Microfinance Bank: <http://www.faulukenya.com/>

Foundation for Sustainable Development:

<http://www.fsdinternational.org/devsubject/microfinance/kenya>

Association of Microfinance Institutions in Kenya: <http://www.amfikenya.com/>

#### 1.2.5 Objective 5: Develop five year strategic business plan.

a) Progress with the objective

Plan was developed and provided as a separate document.

b) Expected impacts/results

Provides a blueprint and compass for future growth. Will support documentation as Huruma applies for financing. Shows that the enterprise has potential and represents a good investment.

c) Recommendations

Follow the business plan and make any necessary adjustments as the business develops. Avoid making constant changes, but continually evaluate progress.

#### 1.2.6 Objective 6:

Develop first-year action plan, including anticipated year one gross sales calculation, year one operational and business expenses estimation, and a detailed budget.

a) Progress with the objective

Action plan was developed with the group and included in the business plan. Estimates of 2014 and 2015 income and expenses were developed which can also serve as a budget.

b) Expected impacts/results

Provides specific actions for the business, as well as a timeline for the next year. Gives structure to follow and concrete steps.

c) Recommendations

1. See business plan for specific action steps. Try to adhere to timelines.
2. Asili must obtain new equipment and better facility for the milling operation. This has been promised at no cost by the county government, but constant follow up with them may be needed. Don't let them forget their commitments.
3. As noted in Objective 1, due to poor record keeping the numbers may be way off.

#### 1.3 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	51	1	50
Employees			
Clients/ Suppliers	7	1	6
Family Members			
Total	58	2	56

#### 1.4 Gender

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

Since this was a women’s group, gender was a key component. I met several other women’s groups in the community and it is very clear that it is women who come together to improve their lives and livelihoods. They seem to have a much deeper sense of community support than men, and are usually willing to do whatever it takes to achieve their goals.

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

I believe CRS is providing good support for Huruma. There are other women’s groups that can benefit from enterprise support, training and advice. See the last question for details. I highly recommend that CRS seek out these groups and evaluate the support needed, either by CRS or other organizations.

#### 1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$

- Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment 10
- Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment \$100

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

- Meals
- Transportation
- Lodging
- Translation
- 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.

No additional information, but I had to adjust the assignment based on what I learned was needed. I spent a lot of timing manually compiling financial information so I could diagnose and assess the business. I also spent additional time helping to address specific day-to-day business problems that surfaced in conversation and were not in the SOW.

#### 1.10 Recommendations for CRS:

Other Recommendations



## 1. Nutrition

Everywhere I went, people were asking for better understanding of nutrition. I gave some guidelines, but they need more information on what to eat, how to prepare foods, etc. in light of what they can get locally. I imagine the agriculture dept. has this info but apparently it's not getting out.

## 2. Other Groups

I met with other groups who asked for support. CRS should look into their situations and determine if they can help, or refer them to another organization who can.

**Esikya Women's Group**-Composed of 60 members, this group started by supporting AIDS orphans by supplying food and clothes. Later they were trained by the government and certified in midwifery, as it is a long distance to the hospital. They receive financial support for AIDS drugs and there are far fewer deaths now.

Orphans are forced to drop out of school due to lack of money for school fees, clothing, and uniforms. They have basic needs for decent housing and sanitary towels.

Hope Worldwide has supported them with money for school fees and uniforms, but due to funding shortages it will end at the end of this year. The World Vision office in Nairobi apparently has no one to assist.

The group needs a way to generate income so they can be self-supporting. They do make crafts for sale, but other skills training are needed unless a market can be found for the crafts.

### **Safua Women's Group CBO (Community Based Organization)**

This group was formed in 2003 and registered in 2004 to assist HIV orphans. First funding was in 2005 and they were trained on handling people with HIV AIDS. Initially there were 120 members but due to drug availability there are now 50. They say there is still some who attach a stigma to the disease.

They buy "medicinal foods" from Huruma-sweet potatoes, wimbi, sorghum, pumpkin, and soy bean flours. The group does advocacy, care and support.

They are working with Hope International and AMREF- African Medical Relief-SAFA-KANCO- to reduce TB. Since last year USAID provides funds for orphans for uniforms, mattresses, shoes, school fees.

There are actually two groups-Safua Care Group and Safua Support Group. There is no orphanage for OVCs (orphans and vulnerable children). They take them into their homes but find it hard to support with little income. They do local jobs and collect and sell charcoal. Most are widows and single parents.

They cannot afford training on detergent making and marketing. They grow amaranth for their own consumption and wanted to sell to Huruma, but Huruma gets what they need from agriculture dept.

The group need to speak to Huruma to establish if Safua can supply Huruma with amaranth or if they can grow something else for Huruma. Water is a challenge; they can grow pumpkin once a year during the second rainy season but they need something year round.

There needs to be facilitation of communication between Huruma and Safua on how they can support each other, and perhaps an initial supply of seeds from a donor to get Safua started. Perhaps the agriculture department can donate and provide training on what and how to raise other drought-resistant



products. Eventually they would like business management skills on how to manage money and create other businesses.

### **Young Mothers Women's Group**

This group of 10 was started last year as a subgroup under Huruma. It was formed to reduce poverty and help members when needed. The members were trained to make 4 types of detergents and disinfectants, and they also sell baked goods (snack items such as cakes, samosa, donuts, and bjiyas) and beadwork as well as catering services. They sell to individuals, small shops, restaurants, and schools. They have a Certificate of Registration of Self- Help Group from the County of Makueni. They registered with Office of Social Development (SDO) on Jan 16, 2013

The group is well structured and disciplined. They have a charter, officers, and strict rules that members must adhere to. Members are fined for not attending or being late at meetings, and they make loans with interest and late fees. They keep detailed records of their business transactions and make 45% profit on detergent. They also have an emergency fund for members in need, which they replace from their own pockets. Production tasks are systematically assigned and carried out.

They would like training on entrepreneurship, running a business, how to maximize profits, and produce better products. They also need a facility and baking equipment (oven) as they are making the products in their homes. They would like to eventually expand their business beyond Kibwezi.

I provided some general business advice, especially to establish a brand first and foremost.

**\*\*I highly recommend that CRS support this group\*\***

### **Calabash Farms**

This farm supplies Huruma with pumpkins. The owner, Peter Nzau Kimotho, is a refugee from tribal wars in eastern Kenya. He lost everything and restarted his life near Kibwezi. He has the ability and deep desire to produce more than he currently is, but needs equipment such as water piping, a water pump, and a larger tractor. He would like training in agricultural practices and a source of funding if possible. He is also attempting beekeeping with little success, so training is needed.

I recommend that CRS evaluate the situation and if this does not meet your criteria, refer him to another organization that can provide help.