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**Final Performance Report**

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Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Program LWA

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**Cover Photo:**

Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer Megan Amara Szrom on assignment in Benin, strengthening the capacities of the Gbedjromede women’s group in pest management and efficient water management through an integrated market gardening-fish farming approach.

Photo by Mountaga Drame for CRS

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**Acronyms**

**ALCA-Benin** Association de Lutte contre l’Analphabétisation

**ANAPROFIKO** Assosiasaun Nasionál Produtor Fini Komersial

**Ccom Dassa-Zoumé/** Dassa-Zoumé Communal Cell of Territorial Agricultural Development

**ATDA4** Agency/Pole 4

**COCOF** Conseil Consultatif de Femmes

**COOPAGA** Coopérative des Agriculteurs de Gatore

**CDC** Community Development Centers

**CRS** Catholic Relief Services

**DEDRAS** Organization for sustainable development, reinforcement and

self-promotion of community structures

**F2F** Farmer-to-Farmer

**FY** Fiscal year

**HACCP** Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point

**iDE** International Development Enterprises

**IPM** Integrated pest management

**JAFEM** Juventude Agricultura Floreta Emprezarial

**KABOKU** Koperative y’Abahinzi n’Aborozi bo mu Kibaya cy’Umuvumba

**KDFA** Kamuli District Farmers Association

**KFL** Kabeihura Farmers Limited

**KOAIRU** Koperative y’abahinzi b’ibigori n’ibishyimbo ba Rubira

**MEAL** Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

**NEPLAS** Nepal Laboratory Accreditation Scheme

**NKM** New Kakinga Millers (NKM) Ltd

**NGO** Non-governmental organization

**PERSUAP** Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan

**ReTAB** Réseau des Transformateurs d’Ananas du Benin

**SACCO** Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization

**SILC** Savings and Internal Lending Communities

**SOW** Scope of Work

**SUAP** Safer Use Action Plan

**SWOT** Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

**TILOFE** Timor-Leste Organic Fertilizer (organization)

**UNPAZ** Universidade da Paz (Timor-Leste)

**URCPA-BA** Regional Union of Cashew Producer Cooperatives, Borgou-Alibori

**USAID** United States Agency for International Development

# Executive Summary

The goal of Catholic Relief Services’ (CRS) 5-year Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program is to generate rapid, sustainable, and broad-based food security and economic growth in the agriculture sector in six countries: Benin, Ethiopia, Nepal, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, and Uganda. A secondary goal is to increase the American public’s understanding of international development programs and to promote international understanding of the United States (U.S.) and its role in foreign assistance.

At the beginning of the program, all six core countries were designated as Feed-the-Future (FtF) countries, and CRS worked closely with each USAID Mission to align Country F2F Projects with FtF goals and priorities. A value chain approach was chosen for each Country F2F Project. The following projects were chosen for each country:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CRS F2F Core Countries | Country F2F Projects |
| Ethiopia | Crops, Livestock |
| Uganda | Agribusiness, Livestock |
| Rwanda | Horticulture, Maize |
| Benin | Cashew, Soybean |
| Nepal | Crops, Livestock |
| Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture |

CRS completed **567** **assignments** in its six core countries over the five-year period and an additional 50 under the Agriculture Sustainability Activity associate award in Liberia.

F2F assignments **assisted 153,698 persons** (exceeding CRS’ goal of 150,826), of whom **70,547 (46 %)** were female. Similarly, **46% of all people directly trained were women**, accounting for **14,671** of the **32,056** people who received formal training from F2F volunteers. A total of **119 assignments were conducted by female volunteers (21%).** CRS was deliberate in selecting host organizations that had large numbers of women as beneficiaries and, where possible, where women were leaders, held positions of authority or jointly held leadership positions with male counterparts. Cumulatively, CRS assisted a total of **211 host organizations**.26% of hosts were engaged in the first year (FY2019) with 23%, 17%, 28% and 6% supported, respectively, in the ensuing four years. On average, each host received technical assistance through three volunteer assignments.

A total of **9,378 volunteer days of service were completed**, and hosts contributed **$463,262** towards assignment completion, and further mobilized **$7,738,111** as a direct result of volunteer assistance. A total of **$65,545** was **leveraged by implementers and volunteers in the US**. This included $9,923 from CRS’ Fair-Trade Unit given to Wolkite University for the purchase of hand tools (made locally) and legume inoculum to support rural female farmers in their wheat and bean production. Wolkite submitted an in-depth proposal and was selected out of 6 other hosts as the recipient of these funds.

**Annual net income** of hosts increased from $4,413,121 at baseline to a cumulative total of **$11,516,216** by the end of the project, while the value of **annual gross sales** increased from $51,853,327 at baseline to **$81,563,646** at endline. The total land area under **improved production technology** reached **71,334 ha** over the life of the project. The total value of **rural/agricultural lending** was **$33,447,969** with over **51,486 beneficiaries accessing loans**. The average organizational development index (ODI) score of hosts increased from 2.6 at baseline to **3.2** at the end of the project. This is an indicator of improvements in the host organizations’ management efficiency. Volunteers facilitated the development of **254 new products and services**.

CRS volunteers and staff conducted **1,562 outreach activities**, both in the U.S. and globally, during the life of the project to enhance the general public’s understanding of the F2F program and its activities. These included group presentations and social media posts. CRS volunteers and staff made 680 presentations, 657 social media posts, and 225 publications related to their F2F assignments. Volunteers spent a total of **305 days** giving **post-assignment technical support** to host organizations.

Thanks to budget savings made during the COVID-19 pandemic, CRS was able to deploy a number of local volunteers in Benin and Uganda in September 2023. These volunteers returned to hosts they had previously supported through paired remove volunteer (PRV) assignments and reinforced the prior trainings. Benin deployed seven volunteers on follow-up assignments on topics ranging from marketing to beekeeping, pest management, climate smart agriculture, processing, and fundraising.

Uganda deployed nineteen volunteers on follow-up assignments on the following topics: strategic business plan review, postharvest handling, animal health management, animal nutrition, financial management for savings and credit schemes, recordkeeping, leadership and management, financial software configuration (TALLY ERP9), soybean agronomic practices, quality improvement in yoghurt processing, computer literacy training, poultry layer production management, herd management in small dairy production systems, good agronomic practices along oil seed crops value chains, kitchen gardening, and farming as a business. Since these extra assignments did not involve US volunteers, they were not counted toward the assignment totals for Benin and Uganda.

# Summary of Implementation Experience

## Overview

## Benin

Volunteers completed **101** assignments with **37** host organizations within the Cashew and Soybean country projects including two flexible assignments, directly training **4,468** people (**46% women**, **30% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**54**), technology transfer (**33**), business/enterprise development (**12**) and environmental conservation (**2**). Volunteers made **420** recommendations, **361** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,631** days of service and the hosts contributed **$150,638** toward assignment completion.

*Summary of Benin Volunteer Assignments (FY19-FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Cashew | 6 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 45 |
| Flexible | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Soybean | 2 | 10 | 13 | 20 | 9 | 54 |
| **Benin total** | **9** | **17** | **21** | **32** | **22** | **101** |

### Cashew

Volunteers completed **45** assignments with **15** host organizations within the Cashew country project, directly training **1,795** people (**51% women, 24% youth**) during **747** days of service. Assignments focused on organizational development (**23**), technology transfer (**13**), business/enterprise development (**8**) and environmental conservation (**1**). Volunteers made **195** recommendations, **158** of which have already been applied by hosts. The host organizations contributed **$54,187** toward assignment completion.

### Soybean

Volunteers completed **54** assignments with **21** host organizations within the Soybean country project, directly training **2,595** people (**42% women, 34% youth**) during **852** days of service. Assignments focused on organizational development (**29**), technology transfer (**20**), business/enterprise development (**4**) and one assignment for environmental conservation. Volunteers made **221** recommendations, **200** of which have already been applied by hosts. The host organizations contributed **93,365** toward assignment completion.

### Flexible

Volunteers completed **two** flexible assignments with **two** host organizations, directly training **78** people (**29% women, 58% youth**) during **32** days of service. **Both** assignments focused on organizational development (**2**). Volunteers made **four** recommendations, **three** of which have already been applied by hosts. The host organizations contributed **3,086** toward assignment completion.

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments

* F2F supported **Regional Union of Cashew Farmers’ Cooperative – Oueme Plateau (URCPA O-P)** across four assignments designed to: 1. raise the quality and health of the producers’ cashew crops by introducing grafting techniques; 2. increase farm incomes and improve the pollination of the cashew trees by introducing beekeeping; 3. improve management techniques to streamline the cooperative’s operations; and 4. teach financial audit methodologies to help the cooperative keep track of its operations and growth. The new grafting techniques helped URCPA-OP to raise the quality and health of its cashew crops. Before the training, local nurserymen earned about $800 per campaign because seedling mortality rates were so high. Today they make an average of $16,000 per campaign. Beekeeping (in cashew orchards) has improved not only the productivity of the orchards but the income and wellbeing of the producers, too. In the past, the producers collected three to five liters of honey per hive but now, even with moderate production, they produce at least 10 liters and sometimes up to 20. Cashew nut yields were also lower prior to F2F support. Farmers were harvesting 10 bags and now they harvest an average of 30 bags. Over the course of the project, URCPA-OP’s annual gross sales increased from a baseline of $198,230 up to $469,664 while annual net income increased from $139,230 to $245,668. After strategic plan designing, the URCPA-OP won a grant for almost $245,000 from the United States African Development Foundation to supports its work.
* Host organization, **Agbara-Oluwa**, won first prize for innovation at the annual Departmental Agro-Pastoral Fair held by the department of Collines. This was thanks to the coconut-enriched soy yogurt they learned to produce through a F2F assignment on soybean-derived product diversification. F2F volunteers also helped Agbara-Oluwa Co-op to develop and sell other new products such as soy milk, cocada, soy toast, cookies, and biscuits. F2F facilitated the linkage between the Agbara cooperative and clusters of cashew farmers which increased the cooperative’s supply of cashew apples. It also benefitted the farmers whose income per kilogram of cashew apples increased from 15 to 25 francs in the field and 35 francs when producers delivered the apples to the cooperative directly. The cooperative’s annual sales are now approximately $45,000, up from a baseline of $33,363, thanks to the production of at least 25,000 bottles of apple juice. Along with its other juices, the cooperative produces 500,000 bottles of juice annually. The host’s annual net income has almost doubled from $5,454 at baseline to $9,675 currently.
* With F2F volunteer support host **Vert-Monde**,a local non-governmental organization, built a biodigester for a primary school in Parakou leading to a reduction in the use of firewood for cooking. The digesta obtained from the biodigester is used for vegetable production in the school garden which feeds 500 students. Following this example, more than 50 rural households, including at least 250 people, installed their own biodigesters which reduced local use of firewood by more than 30%. The families use the gas which is extracted from the biodigesters to fuel food processing activities such as dairy cheese and soy cheese production, and the organic fertilizer helps vegetable production in their home gardens.

**Ethiopia**

Volunteers completed **79** assignments with **25** host organizations within the Crops and Livestock country projects, directly training **2,619** people (**43% women**, **43% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**31**), technology transfer (**43**), financial services (**4**) and business/enterprise development (**1**). Volunteers made **341** recommendations, **235** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,272** days of service and the hosts contributed **$37,820** toward assignment completion.

*Summary of Ethiopia Volunteer Assignments (FY19 – FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Crops | 6 | 4 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 48 |
| Livestock | 3 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 11 | 31 |
| **Ethiopia Total** | **9** | **6** | **16** | **24** | **24** | **79** |

### Crops

Volunteers completed **48** assignments with **15** host organizations within the Crops country project, directly training **1,451** people (**48% women**, **40% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**21**), technology transfer (**23**) and financial services (**4**). Volunteers made **195** recommendations, **133** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **784** days of service and the hosts contributed **$27,188** toward assignment completion.

### Livestock

Volunteers completed **31** assignments with **10** host organizations within the Livestock country project, directly training **1,168** people (**37% women**, **47% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**10**), technology transfer (**20**) and business/enterprise development (**1**). Volunteers made **146** recommendations, **102** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **488** days of service and the hosts contributed **$10,632** toward assignment completion.

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments

* **Mohammed Abuna Guto Dairy Farm** learned from F2F volunteers how to better care for its cows, how to produce and market dairy based products such as yoghurt, and how to expand as a business, and create employment. The farm established forage production and feed systems, growing elephant grasses, alfalfa, corn, and lablab on five hectares of land obtained from the local government. The government’s local agriculture office is using Mohammed Abuna’s forage fields and dairy farm to demonstrate best practices to other farmers. As a result of dairy farm design and proposal development support from a F2F volunteer, the farm secured and mobilized a bank loan of $62,500 for expansion of the dairy farm business and start-up of product processing and marketing. The company expanded its business by starting milk processing, opening a restaurant to sell its products, and engaging in school feeding programs. In August 2022, the farm opened its Shalo Yoghurt Café. Before F2F support, the farm had less than a dozen employees and two cows. Now it has 33 employees, 68 cattle, and sells 1,200 cups of yoghurt per day in addition to cheese, butter, and milk. The farm’s annual gross sales have increased from $57,724 to $237,060, and annual net income is $28,447, up from a baseline of $17,155.
* F2F host **Wolkite University** was the recipient of a CRS Ethical Trade Fund proposal grant of $9,923 which it used to purchase improved hand weeding tools (made locally) and legume inoculum to support rural women farmers in their wheat and bean production. Following an on-farm demonstration of biofertilizer use through F2F, the university facilitated the supply of rhizobium inoculants to farmers in two districts via its extension system. The university also promoted small farm tools (e.g., row makers, weeders) and taught farmers to practice in-home gardening with light soils. Wolkite University went on to expand the demonstrations and promote biofertilizer use in new districts and on new crops. Finally, the host used training it received on the Geographic Information System (GIS) from another F2F assignment to map the geographical border of the university, which helped eliminate disputes with bordering communities. Additionally, they used the tool to locate research sites for the university.
* As a result of F2F volunteer technical support, host organization **Ras Gayint Multipurpose Farmers’ Cooperative Union** improved its marketing skills and boosted its gross sales to $7,278,020, earning a profit of $600,437. Following previous volunteer support on agricultural product marketing, Ras Gayint Farmers’ Cooperative Union joined the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange for export marketing. By June 2023 the union had generated $1.51 million from red and white bean export marketing.
* CRS supported **Bora Denbel Farmers’ Co-op Union** with assignments on financial management and record-keeping, farming practices, warehouse management and quality control. Between 2020 and 2023 the union’s wheat production increased from 12,000 quintals by 150 farmers to 50,000 quintals by 356 farmers. CRS volunteers also trained the union in marketing and now the members take part in exhibitions and bazaars in different cities, using the events to showcase the quality of their maize, wheat and teff flour. When CRS provided the trainings on warehouse management, the government took notice and gave Bora Denbel additional warehouses for food storage since the union’s production had increased. The benefits of the members’ healthy farms are impacting the community which now has access to quality food at lower prices.

## Nepal

Volunteers completed **94** assignments with **58** host organizations within the Crops and Livestock country projects, directly training **3,901** people (**40% women**, **28% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**25**), technology transfer (**57**), business/enterprise development (**10**) and administrative assignments (**2**). Volunteers made **412** recommendations, **305** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,479** days of service and the hosts contributed **$120,104** toward [assignment completion.

*Summary of Nepal Volunteer Assignments (FY19 – FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Crops | 7 | 10 | 14 | 20 | 15 | 66 |
| Livestock | 2 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 28 |
| **Nepal Total** | **9** | **14** | **15** | **30** | **26** | **94** |

### Crops

Volunteers completed **66** assignments with **41** host organizations within the Crops country project, directly training **2,795** people (**41% women**, **28% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**24**), technology transfer (**33**), business/enterprise development (**7**) and administrative assignments (**2**). Volunteers made **294** recommendations, **219** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,014** days of service and the hosts contributed **$106,917** toward assignment completion.

### Livestock

Volunteers completed **28** assignments with **17** host organizations within the Livestock country project, directly training **1,106** people (**37% women**, **27% youth**). These assignments focused on technology transfer (**24**), business/enterprise development (**3**) and organizational development assignment (**1**). Volunteers made **118** recommendations, **86** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **465** days of service and the hosts contributed **$13,187** toward assignment completion.

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments

* F2F Nepal worked with the **USAID Fall Armyworm (FAW) Task Force** to review national trainings on FAW, blending Nepal’s control practices with global guidance. The increased incidences of FAW in Nepal and the upcoming maize planting season acted as an incentive for agriculture scientists and extension workers to participate in the program. Virtual sessions provided a platform for broad engagement and exchange of ideas among policymakers, government authorities, and academics. F2F collaborated with USAID implementing partner International Development Enterprises (iDE) Nepal to develop strategies for sustainable FAW management using integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. CRS and iDE jointly organized the National Workshop on Fall Armyworm in Nepal on March 22, 2023, to share research results achieved at that point, both nationally and globally. Sixty-five people attended the workshop representing USAID, USG implementing partners, and national government. From March 9 to 24, 2023, F2F helped the FAW Taskforce conduct a FAW assessment, which showed that overall losses in maize production due to FAW decreased from 25-30% in 2019 to 10% in 2022, indicating the effectiveness of the F2F interventions.
* CRS introduced smallholder ginger farmers to low-cost storage solutions through local host **Airawati Multipurpose Small Agriculture Cooperative Limited**, an organization of 1,221 majority women members. Through F2F assignments the farmers also learned to manage rhizome rot and ginger planting techniques that prevent disease and lead to more robust production. At a cost of just $120, the cooperative built a storage facility using easily available local resources. The facility allowed the cooperative to store its ginger for longer and take advantage of favorable prices when market demand was higher but supply lower. The cooperative’s annual gross sales increased from approximately $65,000 to $71,000 from one year to the next, and annual net income rose from $3,000 to $4,000. The cooperative also mobilized $2,500 from the local government for ginger seedling management as a pilot project to replicate the knowledge introduced by a F2F volunteer.
* F2F host **Munaa Krishi Ltd.** is a company founded by members of the Nepali diaspora. It buys grains, fruits, vegetables, and meat directly from local farmers and exports them to international markets. Munaa Krishi hosted three F2F volunteer assignments focused on creating a concrete business plan, developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for agricultural commodities, and putting into place an effective marketing strategy. Volunteer recommendations helped Munaa Krishi improve quality control at its operational facility located in the company’s headquarters and introduce a new approach to sourcing produce; Munaa Krishi now sends buyers directly to farmers which saves the farmers time and money when it comes to selling their produce. Marketing has been enhanced through a branding and communications strategy devised by a F2F volunteer. The company now emphasizes the local market its sources from - local farmers, local products—and has found a wider audience for its products and the ability to offer a fair price to local growers. With support from F2F, Munaa Krishi’s annual gross sales increased from $469,565 to $782,608. Similarly, annual net income increased from $75,130 to $203,478.

## Rwanda

Volunteers completed **104** assignments with **45** host organizations within the Horticulture and Maize country projects directly training **4,832** people (**44% women**, **15% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**42**), technology transfer (**30**), business/enterprise development (**28**), administrative (**2**) and financial services assignments (**2**). Volunteers made **476** recommendations, **350** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,690** days of service and the hosts contributed **$57,937** toward assignment completion.

*Summary of Rwanda Volunteer Assignments (FY19 – FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Horticulture | 9 | 7 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 56 |
| Maize | 4 | 5 | 12 | 16 | 11 | 48 |
| **Rwanda Total** | **13** | **12** | **25** | **30** | **24** | **104** |

### Horticulture

Volunteers completed **56** assignments with **24** host organizations within the Horticulture country project, directly training **2,235** people (**50% women**, **15% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**18**), technology transfer (**21**), business/enterprise development (**13**) and administrative (**2**) and financial services (**2**). Volunteers made **253** recommendations, **119** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **954** days of service and the hosts contributed **$28,020** toward assignment completion.

### Maize

Volunteers completed **48** assignments with **21** host organizations within the Maize country project directly training **2,597** people (**39% women**, **15% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**24**), technology transfer (**9**) and business/enterprise development (**15**). Volunteers made **223** recommendations, **157** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **736** days of service and the hosts contributed **$29,917** toward assignment completion.

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments

* **Koperative y’abahinzi b’ibigori n’ibishyimbo ba Rubira, Ganza** **(KOAIRU Ganza)** received training on marketing and financial management, post-harvest practices, and business planning. The cooperative used its business plan to apply for $4,000 loan from the local authority and was granted a loan at 2% interest. It used the funds to collect maize from farmers and store it at its collection facility, also providing small loans to members in critical need. A small portion of the loan funded the cooperative’s operations. Today, 75% of members sell their produce to the cooperative, amounting to eight tons of farmers’ soybean production, and the cooperative has been granted the right to sell agricultural inputs. Applying volunteer recommendations, cooperative members have increased the aggregation of their maize, enabling the cooperative to earn more income, which it has used to purchase more inputs to sell to the farmers and buy a new plot of land for the construction of a new maize storage facility. The cooperative’s membership increased from 108 to 135 members; the cooperative recruited local youth at a reduced membership rate to make it more affordable to join and now there are 18 youth members between the ages of 18 and 22 who are learning farming techniques from the older and established members. Annual revenue rose from $4,711 to $39,527.
* Host **General Investment in Farming Technologies (GIFT**) **Rwanda Ltd** presented its business plan developed with volunteer technical support to Banque Populaire du Rwanda and acquired a loan of $477,000 as part of its Capacity Building on Investment Plan Development initiative. The company used $116,000 to buy 30 hectares of land and infrastructure from the government in Zaza Sector, Eastern Province, and $361,000 to renovate buildings and facilities for a plant tissue culture laboratory in order to produce disease-free banana, passion fruit, tamarillo, pineapple, and strawberry plantlets. This laboratory has a capacity of three million plantlets annually, and the installation of equipment in the laboratory with expert technicians is ongoing. The host has identified 10,000 plants being produced in Sri Lanka as mother plants for the tissue culture lab in Rwanda. Currently, the host employs 25 full-time staff and 80 temporary staff. The host has signed agreements with 6 suppliers of inputs such as fertilizer, chemicals, and seeds, and has signed buying agreements with potential clients including FAO, Afrinet Solution, and farmers in Ngoma district.
* **Le Conseil Consultatif de Femmes (COCOF)** was able to leverage F2F training in business plan development to acquire the funds to build a soybean seed bank and pineapple processing facility. COCOF presented its business plan to an array of potential funders and managed to raise $173,700. The grants included $5,000 from OXFAM International for seed bank construction; $25,000 from the Rwanda Governance Board to integrate youth in agriculture; $80,000 from Hillary Dante and OXFAM International to empower women in the pineapple value chain; $38,000 from IRISH AID, through OXFAM International, for the soybean seed bank; and $25,700 from OXFAM International to build pineapple processing facilities in Nyamagabe and Muhanga districts.
* Host **Rwanda Organization for Development Initiatives** **(RODI)** received F2F volunteer support on strategic plan development, proposal writing and resource mobilization. Thanks to this support, the host raised $221,996 from various sources including $35,000 from the Education Development Center/USAID to make vocational training and self-employment start-up kits available to youth; $161,996 from a project funded by Enabel (the development agency of Belgium), and $25,000 from the Rwanda Governance Board and the United Nations Development Program in Rwanda.

## Timor-Leste

### Modernizing Agriculture

Volunteers completed **63** assignments with **18** host organizations within the only one Modernizing Agriculture country project directly training **2,618** people (**47% women**, **70% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**11**), technology transfer (**47**), business/enterprise development (**2**) and administrative assignments (**3**). Volunteers made **294** recommendations, **165** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,124** days of service and the hosts contributed **$26,308** toward assignment completion.

*Summary of Timor-Leste Volunteer Assignments (FY19 – FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Modernizing Agriculture | 6 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 21 | 63 |
| **Timor-Leste Total** | **6** | **10** | **12** | **14** | **21** | **63** |

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments

* The **Timor-Leste Organic Fertilizer** (TILOFE) group launched a new product branded as "Superorganic Fertilizer" following a F2F marketing and branding assignment. A later volunteer helped TILOFE develop its bookkeeping templates and train staff on record keeping. This led to the host digitizing its records. TILOFE is now able to generate accurate and timely reports which, in turn, has improved the management’s decision-making. With its improved accounting system, the company was entrusted with a grant from the Government of Timor-Leste of $9,400 to build compost ponds. The French Embassy also provided TILOFE with a grant of $8,000, a portion of which is being used to purchase equipment for a new production plant. Overall, TILOFE’s annual gross sales increased from $1,800 prior to F2F assignments to $40,000. Annual net income rose from $800 to $7,500.
* During the pandemic, CRS fielded two local volunteers from hosts that had received F2F support. One volunteer was TILOFE group’s marketing manager, while the other served as director of Seloi Horticulture’s training center. The volunteers were deployed to support hosts HAFOTI and **Don Bosco Fuiluro,** respectively. As the result of technical support in compost production, Don Bosco Fuiluro increased its vegetable production by 50% which allowed it to feed its 200 resident students while also making a profit of $2,000. Don Bosco Fuiluro’s annual compost production went from zero prior to the assignments to 3.5 tons in 2023 when it used 1.5 tons to help produce 10,000 nursery trees. The school also established 1.5 hectares of elephant yam (konjac) using new and improved technologies introduced by volunteers.
* F2F host **Community Development Centre (CDC)** is a horticulture training facility serving unemployed youth in Baucau municipality. CDC needed financial resources to carry out its mission and turned to F2F for guidance on fundraising. Following a hugely successful two-week paired remote assignment, CDC submitted seven funding applications which led to a total of $229,337 in grants:

1. The first grant of $14,000 came from GIZ and was used to plant 38 different types of trees (3,600 in total) on CDC land. The objective was to learn about which trees can grow successfully in the local environment and create a local microclimate on the CDC compound.
2. The second grant came from the Government Agency SEFOPE and was used for mobile training activities on post-harvest handling and cost analysis, soil management, and composting. It also paid for the purchase of seedlings for 80 training participants from four villages. This grant was for $31,160.
3. The third grant, worth $35,163, also came from SEFOPE and was used to build a 12-by-20-meter auditorium.
4. SEFOPE also donated $28,050 to cover the cost of mobile training in post-harvest handling, cost analysis, seedling, and soil management, and composting in eight villages in Baucau, Viqueque and Lautem municipalities.
5. For its part, the FAO contributed $18,799.
6. The FAO grant combines with $45,978 from SEFOPE to finance the training of 134 people from the agribusiness sector on chicken and pig farming, horticulture, crop production and food processing.
7. A final SEFOPE grant of $56,187 paid for the construction of a new 12-by-34-meter office building for CDC.

## Uganda

Volunteers completed **126** assignments with **28** host organizations within the Agribusiness and Livestock country projects directly training **13,618** people (**48% women**, **27% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**30**), technology transfer (**67**), business/enterprise development (**20**), financial services (**6**), environmental conservation (**2**) and administrative assignment (**1**). Volunteers made **629** recommendations, **500** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **2,182** days of service and the hosts contributed **$70,455** toward assignment completion.

*Summary of Ethiopia Volunteer Assignments (FY19 – FY23)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **FY19** | **FY20** | **FY21** | **FY22** | **FY23** | **Total** |
| Agribusiness | 10 | 9 | 16 | 23 | 16 | 74 |
| Livestock | 6 | 6 | 11 | 12 | 17 | 52 |
| **Uganda Total** | **16** | **15** | **27** | **35** | **33** | **126** |

### Agribusiness

Volunteers completed **74** assignments with **17** host organizations within the Agribusiness country project directly training **8,516** people (**52% women**, **33% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**19**), technology transfer (**32**), business/enterprise development (**15**), financial services (**5**), environmental conservation (**2**) and administration (**1**). Volunteers made **329** recommendations, **270** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **1,309** days of service and the hosts contributed **$44,292** toward assignment completion.

### Livestock

Volunteers completed **52** assignments with **11** host organizations within the Livestock country project directly training **5,102** people (**42% women**, **18% youth**). These assignments focused on organizational development (**11**), technology transfer (**35**), business/enterprise development (**5**) and financial services (**1**). Volunteers made **300** recommendations, **230** of which have already been applied by hosts. The volunteers completed **873** days of service and the hosts contributed **$26,163** toward assignment completion.

### Major Impacts and Accomplishments:

### F2F host **New Kakinga Millers (NKM) Ltd**, a private agro-processing company, received a series of assignments over the life of the project. The first assignment focused on creating and maintaining soil health through mulching and crop rotation. A second assignment, which paired a US and a local volunteer, addressed the company’s accounting and record-keeping challenges. Through this assignment the mill transferred its existing records into a new online accounting system, which dramatically improved its stock management and business forecasting. It has also helped local farmers; Kakinga Millers began offering its farmers advance contracts, better pay, reliability from season to season, and market linkages to quality inputs like improved maize seed. The company is planning to open a vocational school for the current farmers’ children. During the period that CRS supported NKM, annual gross sales increased by over 40% from $2,109,985 to $2,971,422 and annual net income went from a baseline of $528,440 up to $732,424, an increase of almost 39%. The size of the company’s workforce almost doubled from 70 to 138 employees.

* Host **Kabeihura Farmers Limited (KFL)** is a family-run farm in southwestern Uganda devoted to tea, dairy, poultry, and fish production. This host was supported by six F2F assignments which helped the farm improve its business accounting, raise healthier livestock, and develop value-added products. KFL’s fish production has been challenged by the rising cost of feed and a 20-30% mortality rate among its catfish and tilapia. A F2F volunteer helped the farm staff identify local ingredients and formulas to produce their own fish feed and introduced new techniques for proper fish handling. The volunteer also taught the staff to feed the newly hatched tilapia methyltestosterone—a male hormone—ensuring they grew into large male fingerlings which are the most profitable. This earned the farm an additional $833 each month. Since this assignment, KFL has supplied 300 smallholder farmers with fingerlings and trained 70 fish farmers. Two assignments on poultry production in 2022 saw an increase in egg production and quality through the introduction of improved feed. An assignment on value-added dairy production helped KFL make improvements to the flavor of its yoghurt. These assignments helped KFL expand its business; as a result, another volunteer was brought in to strengthen the company’s accounting system. Overall, over the life of the project, KFL’s annual gross sales shot up to $975,943 from $217,271, annual net income increased almost six-fold from $63,932 to $361,111 and twenty new staff were added.
* **St. Anthony School for the Deaf** is a privately managed school for deaf and nonverbal children which was supported by the Feed the Future Uganda Youth Leadership for Agriculture (YLA) activity. Through YLA, F2F conducted a needs assessment of the school and identified potential funding sources to support the school’s financial sustainability. Based on the needs assessment, YLA granted the school $19,444 to procure a mill for processing maize flour. The flour was used to prepare meals for the pupils and flour by-products were repurposed as poultry feed. The school also received a grant of $12,486 from Deaf Way International which, along with $3,730 of St Anthony School’s own revenue sources, was used to pay for a power grid to be installed and to build a warehouse next to the mill. A final assignment in 2023 taught the school staff and students to improve and diversify their home gardening. As a result of F2F support, St Anthony School is processing maize and feed for the school poultry farm, the mill is reducing feeding costs at the school by 19%, and the students and staff have a more nutrient-rich diet.
* Following a series of coordinated trainings by F2F in credit management training, financial literacy, financial management, and the digitalization of operations and bookkeeping, Kasolwe Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) registered a 39% reduction in loan default and increased its loan portfolio from $105,555 to $116,724 due to improved and timely loan repayment. In addition, assistance for farmers’ financial literacy helped the SACCO increase its membership from 1,083 to 1,284 and its share capital increased from $22,284 to $23,007. By the end of the project, the annual value of rural/agricultural lending by the SACCO had increased from $23,995 at baseline to $160,453, loan recovery rate increased from 39% at baseline to 90% while the total annual number of rural/agricultural loans increased to 380 from 104 at baseline.
* Synchronized F2F training in business planning, leadership and record keeping for **Mahyolo Area Cooperative Enterprise** helped the cooperative gain the trust of donors and secure $56,497 from the Government of Uganda’s Agriculture Cluster Development Project to support its maize production, processing, and marketing activities. Mahyolo also received $4,166 for women’s development from The Columbia Project. During the final year of the project, Mahyolo procured a maize mill, and it now mills, packages, and sells maize flour as a new product. Annual net income went up from $9,123 at baseline to $43,461, an increase of over 370%.

## Flexible Assignments Outside Core Countries

CRS completed two flexible assignments, both in Togo. They were managed by the CRS F2F team based in Benin. The first assignment supported a cooperative called Savings and Credit Action for the Socio-Economic Development and the Development of Households (COOPEC-ADESEM) with training on best practices for developing a marketing plan. The second assignment helped GBEWA NGO write its five-year strategic plan for youth development. 78 people in total received training (29% women, 58% youth) during 32 days of service and the host organizations contributed $3,086 toward assignment completion.

# Major Impacts or Accomplishments and Lessons Learned Over LoP

**Community of Practice**

* CRS took the lead on two activities as part of the F2F Community of Practice. The first of these was the production of a series of videos highlighting the best examples of US and local volunteers working together during the COVID-19 pandemic on paired remote volunteer (PRV) assignments. The series included one ten-minute video[[1]](#footnote-2) featuring all implementing organizations and separate three-minutes videos[[2]](#footnote-3) for each implementer. International Executive Service Corps (IESC) also contributed cash and staff time toward this project, and NCBA CLUSA contributed cash.
* For its second Community of Practice activity, CRS hosted the Asia regional meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal in September 2022. The meeting was attended by USAID’s F2F Agreement Officer Representative, Peggy Carlson, and benefited from the participation of implementers from the Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project’s small grants program, Grameen Foundation (Philippines), the Center of Excellence on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Nutrition (Cambodia), and CRDF Global (Uzbekistan). Venture 37/Land O’Lakes and CRS also attended. The meeting followed the Africa Regional Meeting hosted in Kenya by IESC, which CRS attended in June 2022.

**Smalls Farms Conferences**

* CRS F2F hosted three Small Farms Conferences in 2022: in Ethiopia in May, Nepal in June, and Uganda in July. The purpose of these one-day conferences was to facilitate exchange and adoption of best practices, technologies and innovations among host partners and beneficiaries, and to facilitate linkages and collaboration among host partners and other stakeholders. One highlight of the conferences was the ‘marketplaces’ which were set up to provide a venue for participants to display their produce and view new technologies. The Small Farms Conference reports for each country were submitted as attachments with the FY22 annual report.

**Piloting of new F2F tools**

* CRS wanted to explore ways in which the organization can make its approach to programming more gender sensitive. CRS adapted some of its tools and created a new gender dimension for the organizational development index (ODI) tool. During the final year of programming, CRS piloted the tools which it intends to roll out in the next round of programming. There are two purposes to this venture: 1) to give host organizations a snap-shot of the degree to which they are gender-integrated, discuss with them actions they can take to become more gender-sensitive and offer to help them do that, should they wish, through F2F assignments; 2) to prompt hosts and volunteers to think about how they prepare for and implement F2F assignments, taking into consideration any potential gender-based constraints to participation. Such considerations include, for example, the timing and location of the volunteer trainings.
* A second tool that CRS piloted in the final year of the project was a micro small and medium enterprise (MSME) assessment tool. This tool is used to gauge the capacity gaps of enterprises that are seeking financing. CRS intends to use this tool in the next round of programming when working with hosts that are agribusinesses to identify ways in which F2F can help the hosts to become ‘financing-ready’.

**Spreading the word about F2F**

One of the goals of F2F is to increase the U.S. public’s understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the U.S. and U.S. development programs. In addition to the many outreach activities completed by the volunteers, CRS had the opportunity to raise the profile of the F2F program in a variety of ways using savings made available by the lack of volunteer travel during the pandemic.

* + CRS collaborated with production company Peripheral Vision International to make three episodes of the N\*Gen television show, which is educational in nature and watched by millions of viewers across Africa. The three episodes sponsored by CRS each featured F2F hosts and shared best practices on soil conservation[[3]](#footnote-4), aquaculture[[4]](#footnote-5), and dairy farming[[5]](#footnote-6). In the past N\*Gen has also featured the USDA-funded Vines project, also implemented by CRS in Uganda.
  + Leveraging the capacity of CRS’ communications staff, CRS implemented a communications campaign in the final year of programming and produced a portfolio of ten host impact stories which have been shared with USAID[[6]](#footnote-7). These stories use both narrative and data to highlight the benefits gained by ten host organizations through a series of F2F capacity-building assignments. In the case of one host, Kabeihura Farmers Ltd in Uganda, CRS also made a four-minute video[[7]](#footnote-8).
  + In order to amplify the reach of F2F trainings, CRS produced 18 short capacity-building videos featuring F2F hosts replicating the lessons they learned through F2F volunteers[[8]](#footnote-9). These videos were disseminated through the KEIPhone app in Uganda and are available to more than 615,000 KEIPhone users. They were also pushed out in a targeted way to 100,000 users who are engaged in agriculture. While F2F assignments are normally bound to a specific time and geography, these videos allow relevant learnings to remain available to hundreds of thousands of viewers and be watched as many times as they choose. KEIPhone[[9]](#footnote-10) is a social enterprise that is working to bridge the digital gender divide by providing free smartphones and data to unconnected women.
  + In 2023, CRS made six videos featuring US volunteers carrying out their assignments and speaking about their experience with the F2F program. These videos are being used to highlight the value of F2F not just to host organizations but also to volunteers themselves. They will also be used for recruitment purposes in the next round of programming.

**Lessons learned**

*CRS learning agenda*

CRS set itself a learning agenda which consisted of three key questions:

1. Does our approach to working with host organizations to create and implement development plans advance impact at the host level? How can we improve on our approach?
2. How can our host-oriented approach to programming advance our objectives and have sector-wide impact (beyond hosts as described in our Country F2F Projects)? The program objectives include.
   1. Facilitating economic growth within targeted sub-sectors to influence value chains as a whole.
   2. Enhance sub-sector inclusiveness to expand participation to a broader range of individuals and communities.
   3. Increase the American public’s understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the US and US international development programs. How can we improve on this model?
3. How effectively has the program worked with cooperatives and the private sector and what lessons can we draw from this work? How can we be more strategic in our work to maximize our impact in these two key sectors?

The learning agenda was implemented by Open Development Aid LLC, who disseminated a survey to 18 (almost all) F2F staff, including the senior management team, country and HQ staff, and Heads of Programs (HOPs) involved in the F2F program. CRS provided the consultants with a list of 48 host organizations across all six target countries which included a mixture of high performing and low performing host-organizations as measured by their target achievements. The selection of volunteers to be consulted included a random sample of 60 volunteers from the CRS volunteer database including a mix of US volunteers and locally recruited volunteers and included volunteers from all target countries. A total of 77 respondents participated, representing the various stakeholder groups.

**Findings**

The following findings are taken from the final report submitted by Open Development Aid LLC:

Learning question 1 - *How the development plan approach advances impact.*

* CRS’ approach to working with host organizations was overwhelmingly viewed as very positive both by CRS and host organizations. Almost all (88%) host organizations felt that development plans resonated well with their organizational requirement and almost all (94%) staff believed that host organizations were satisfied with the level of collaboration in crafting these plans, with 69% indicating satisfaction and an additional 25% expressing high satisfaction.
* When examining the alignment of their technical expertise with the requirements of their assignments, a significant 85% of the volunteers believed they possessed the requisite technical knowledge to assist their respective host organizations effectively. This sentiment resonated with the host organizations as well, where 94% expressed satisfaction with the technical acumen and expertise of their volunteers. From the perspective of the CRS staff, 94% felt the volunteers dispatched to host organizations had the right blend of technical expertise and experience.
* 89% of F2F volunteers deemed their assignments as effective, with a standout 59% categorizing their experiences as "highly effective." This positive sentiment was reciprocated by host organizations, where 94% rated their engagements throughout the program's duration as effective, including 82% who rated them as “highly effective”.
* 94% of host organizations agreed that the F2F program ushered in positive shifts within host organizations, and within this cohort, 63% expressed strong agreement with this sentiment.
* Some volunteers voiced concerns, particularly about the limited feedback mechanism in place. They emphasized the need for understanding the long-term impact and outcomes of their assignments to holistically assess their effectiveness.
* 96% of volunteers indicated their satisfaction with their experience, with a significant portion (74%) expressing high satisfaction. Mirroring this sentiment, host organizations also reported a similar level of contentment. The survey revealed that 97% of these entities were satisfied with their interactions with F2F volunteers.
* A few volunteers observed that while their initial scopes of work were in line with hosts’ identified areas of need, the actual requirements often crystallized only during the assignment which meant that some preparation was lacking. With that said, 85%, indicated that their on-ground experience mirrored the original assignment they had signed up for.

Learning question 2 – *How a host-oriented approach has sector-wide impact.*

* An overwhelming majority of host organization respondents (94%) attested to the program's effectiveness in facilitating economic growth within their respective sectors. About 44% of CRS staff felt the program was "somewhat effective" in this regard, 19% considered it "very effective," and 31% labeled it as "effective.
* 76% of host organizations noted that they believed the program had supported boosting market engagement and 50% of these hosts emphasized the program's 'very significant contribution' to this growth.
* Most respondents believed that the number of host organizations in each country was too many to effectively manage given the limitations on staff. Most expressed that the program would benefit from decreasing this number in future and taking a layered approach to building host capacity through a series of assignments with each host.
* Respondents emphasized the importance of deliberate targeting, concentrating efforts on specific agribusinesses, commodities, and value chains to prevent the program from stretching its resources too thinly across a myriad of sectors.
* Creating synergies among host organizations was highlighted as a strategy that could amplify sectoral growth.
* A substantial majority of the volunteers, totaling 89%, indicated that their experience as a F2F volunteer enriched their understanding of development issues specific to their host country.

Learning question 3. *How to maximize our impact on the private sector and cooperatives.*

* Staff respondents were vocal about the need to intensify the program's emphasis on agribusiness and zero in on specific commodities. This refined focus, they believed, could drive tangible and more impactful changes in the agriculture sector.
* One respondent reported that the program leaned heavily towards collaborations with academic and governmental entities and said that this engagement pattern led to the inadvertent sidelining of vital stakeholders, such as cooperatives and agribusinesses.
* The size of these different organizational models was a frequent theme, especially as it related to program targeting and the need to reach more beneficiaries. One respondent noted that private enterprises were more often led by single individuals or small groups comprising 2-3 person which ensured quick decision-making – however this may have the unintended impact of limiting the reach and inclusivity of program activities.

*Other learnings garnered through the consultations.*

* The paired remote working model had its challenges, including unreliable internet connectivity and the inability to assess site conditions in person, especially during COVID-19 lockdowns. However, despite these challenges, it was especially well received. Around half of the host organizations (47%) reported having collaborated with a local volunteer during their F2F involvement, who was assisted by a US-based volunteer working remotely. Feedback regarding this collaborative engagement was predominantly positive, with a remarkable 94% of host organizations reflecting a positive experience and deeming their engagement successful.
* The process of volunteer selection and deployment was commended by 94% of the respondents for its efficiency and smoothness. Host organizations expressed their satisfaction with the engagement and deployment process. When it came to the need for additional support, 56% of respondents felt that host organizations generally did not require excessive help, while 38% observed a greater demand for support.
* When evaluating the role of CRS in the assignment, an overwhelming 96% of respondents believed the level of support provided by CRS had a positive impact. Similarly, 85% felt the support from the host organizations themselves enhanced their assignment and overall experience. The diligent planning, communication, and professional approach of CRS were frequently acknowledged. Volunteers particularly appreciated the effective logistical support, structured assignments, and an overall sense of feeling well-supported throughout their mission.
* The duration of volunteer assignments noted from respondents varied considerably, with 52% of the surveyed volunteers reporting that their assignments spanned 1-2 weeks, and 30% indicating their engagements lasted close to a month. In evaluating the adequacy of these timeframes, 74% of the volunteers believed that the duration of their volunteering was sufficient to achieve desired impacts. Host organizations echoed a similar sentiment, expressing satisfaction with the technical expertise brought forth by volunteers during their assignments. Only 9% felt the duration had a somewhat negative impact on the outcomes. However, certain challenges related to time did surface.

*Challenges*

Through the desk review stage, consultants reviewed a variety of challenges previously recorded including coordination, logistics and support, communication challenges, etc. Given the span of countries across the five years of implementation, as well as the impact of the global pandemic, the challenges were varied, and no singular challenge was identified as the most important or difficult in terms of program efficiency, effectiveness, or impact. Some of these challenges are outlined further below:

* About 22% of the volunteer respondents felt that communication or cultural barriers had a negative impact on their assignments. While this percentage is relatively low, it's significant enough to warrant attention.
* Specific to the volunteers, the program grappled with challenges like meeting niche expertise requirements and aiding volunteers in adapting to new environments. Some volunteers highlighted logistical challenges, like working predominantly from hotel rooms or infrequent visits to assignment locations.
* Some respondents pointed to language barriers and communication between host organizations and volunteers as a factor diminishing overall program effectiveness and satisfaction. This issue underscores the need to prioritize language skills during volunteer and host organization selection, as well as the benefit of local volunteers, translators and/or the need to find innovative ways to anticipate and mitigate these challenges so that they do not impact the engagement.
* Logistics, including travel and accommodations, represent another facet of challenges encountered by volunteers. Feedback from volunteers indicated occasional issues with living arrangements. The benefits of local volunteers became evident again, as they shared cultural identities with rural cooperatives and faced fewer logistical challenges due to their familiarity with the region.
* One of the primary challenges expressed by CRS staff was the large pressure to meet overly high target demands which overshadowed the ability for more targeted and meaningful engagement. While on the surface, partnering with many hosts might seem beneficial, it inadvertently led to less contact time with each host as well as reduced time and increased pressure on limited staff and other resources. This was recognized as an area already planned for improvement in a future F2F program.

# Overall Implementation Problems or Deviations from Expectations

**COVID-19 pandemic**

The largest disruption to programming was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Between mid-March and mid-August 2020 CRS halted volunteer assignments while arrangements were made to continue implementing under an alternative model. When assignments resumed August 2020, they were in the form of paired remote volunteer (PRV) assignments. Under this model, US volunteers provided remote support to local volunteers who carried out the work on the ground directly with hosts. Between August 2020 and April 2022 all assignments were conducted under the PRV model due to CRS-imposed travel restrictions, with the exception of one assignment in Nepal in November 2021 when the US volunteer was already traveling in that country.

The PRV was a good learning experience for F2F and reflected the program’s resilience and adaptability. In the case of CRS core countries, we learned that Ethiopia has many highly qualified local volunteers whose dependence on US volunteer support was minimal, while in Timor-Leste local volunteer capacity was more limited and some hosts were, correspondingly, reluctant to receive trainings from local volunteers. Benin posed a challenge in terms of communication between local and US volunteers due to language differences. Despite the imperfections of the PRV model, it allowed F2F to continue operating and often led to strong, lasting partnerships between volunteers, which the PRV video[[10]](#footnote-11) illustrates. It also affords the opportunity to participate in F2F to those US volunteers who are unable to travel as well as to those local volunteers whose expertise can serve the program well.

The switch to PRVs had an impact on CRS’ targets. The initial life of project target of 700 volunteer assignments was reduced to 535. However, with budget savings made during the pandemic, CRS was able to adjust its programming in the final year and add additional assignments. By the end of the project, CRS had completed 567 assignments.

Finally, the specific target pertaining to the number of women volunteers was affected by the pandemic because it was much more challenging to recruit local volunteers who were women in our six countries, largely due to the restrictions imposed by gender norms such us women being less able to spend time away from their homes.

**Conflict in Ethiopia**

A second major challenge that CRS faced over the course of the five years was the conflict in northern Ethiopia. CRS has some hosts located in the conflict zone. Ever since the conflict erupted in November 2020, CRS has been unable to field volunteers to Tigray and northern Amhara. In addition to missing out on volunteer support, some hosts found themselves direct victims of the war. One host’s facilities were taken over by one of the warring parties and all their assets were stolen. As a business they are still trying to recover from this blow.

Some minor implementation challenges arose such as national elections being held in Timor-Leste which meant that volunteers were advised not to travel at that time. Heavy rainfall made reaching some communities very difficult in Nepal due to unsafe roads and the threat of landslides. When western Uganda faced the potential spread of Ebola, some implementation areas had to be avoided for a time. All these issues, however, were resolved through adequate planning.

# Summary of Progress Toward Indicator Targets

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Farmer-to-Farmer Program Standard Indicators** | **LoP target** | **Achieved** | **% Achieved vs LOP** |
| Number of Volunteer Assignments | 535 | 567 | 106% |
| Number of Women Volunteers (US and local) | 214 | 119 | 56% |
| Number of New Volunteers | 267 | 289 | 108% |
| Number of Persons Trained (Total) | 33,517 | 32,056 | 96% |
| Number of Women Trained | 17,428 | 14,671 | 84% |
| Number of days of volunteer service | 9,630 | 9,378 | 97% |
| Number of New Host Organizations Assisted | 159 | 211 | 133% |
| Number of Outreach Activities (Worldwide Total) | 1400 | 1,562 | 112% |
| Annual Gross Sales | $46,000,000 | $81,563,646 | 177% |
| Annual Net Income | $3,100,000 | $11,516,216 | 371% |
| New/improved products and services | 170 | 254 | 149% |

# Comments & Recommendations

**PRV model** – The PRV model afforded an opportunity to some US volunteers who are unable to travel to participate in F2F. It also led to some strong collaborations and lasting relationships between US and local volunteers. For this reason, CRS recommends that a portion of future assignments be allowed to be implemented as PRVs.

**Measuring the length of assignments** – USAID should reassess the way implementers calculate assignment dates because some volunteers take weeks of personal time off after their assignments end. Under the current system, the start date of an assignment begins when a volunteer leaves the US and ends when the volunteer arrives back in the US. If a volunteer takes personal days after the assignment and before returning to the US, the start date is shifted forward by the number of personal days taken, while the end date remains the same (the date on which the volunteer arrives back in the US). A problem arises when the number of personal days taken exceeds the number of days the assignment lasts. In that case, the official start date of the assignment ends up being after the assignment has actually finished. One suggested solution is to define the last day of the assignment as the last day that the volunteer is with a F2F team member in an official capacity.

**Encourage implementers to do Training of Trainers (ToTs)** – In order to bolster the sustainability and reach of the technical assistance transferred by volunteers, implementers should be encouraged to take a ‘training-of-trainer‘ approach. Under this approach, the host assigns one or two people to be trained by the volunteer at the start of the assignment and, for the second half of the assignment, the trainees implement the training under the supervision of the US volunteer. This way, the host staff learn to be trainers and can replicate the training after the US volunteer departs.

# Annexes

1. PERSUAP Reporting Tables
2. Summary of Volunteer Assignments
3. Buy-ins
4. Associate Awards

## PERSUAP Reporting Tables

### PERSUAP Implementation Experience

Over the period covered by this report, CRS complied with USAID F2F environmental compliance guidelines. All assignments were completed in accordance with USAID guidance and in adherence to applicable country-specific environmental laws and policies.

### PERSUAP Reporting Table

Of the 567 volunteer assignments completed, 163 were PERSUAP Type I and 13 were Type II. There were two Type IV assignments. The table below lists all Type I and Type II assignments that were completed over the LOP. All assignments not listed in this table fall within the Type 3 category.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assign. (Trip) Number** | **Volunteer Name** | **Country** | **Project** | **PERSUAP Assignment Type** | **Work Directly with USAID Mission or Mission-Funded Project (Type IV)** |
| R-E-1 | Michael Colegrove | Timor Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-4 | Leah Grace Tewksbury | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-5 | Roberts David | Ethiopia | Livestock | IV | Yes |
| R-E-6 | David Ringuette | Timor Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-7 | Paul Sommers | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | Yes |
| R-E-8 | Jenson Arleen | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | Yes |
| R-E-14 | Jennifer Elegbede | Rwanda | Maize | II | Yes |
| R-E-16 | Gary Ruegsegger | Uganda | Livestock | II | Yes |
| R-E-21 | Jonathan Moyle | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-22 | Tara Wilfong | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-24 | Roger Engstrom | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-27 | Charles Mitchell | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-32 | Ilan Bar | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-34 | Joshua Idassi | Benin | Cashew subsector | I | N/A |
| R-E-36 | Ayelework Awoke | Ethiopia | Crops | IV | N/A |
| R-E-39 | David Ringuette | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-48 | George Wilson | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-49 | Dennis McCarthy | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-50 | Richard Cates | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-54 | Ann Hazelrigg | Nepal | Crops | I | N/A |
| R-E-57 | Robert Kettelkamp | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-60 | Russ Wallace | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-61 | Reza Rafie | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-62 | Norbert Soltwedel | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-63 | Herman Kandel | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-64 | Joel Ransom | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-65 | Anita Shek | Benin | Cashew | II | N/A |
| R-E-73 | Leon Moyer | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-75 | Daniel Halsey | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-79 | Thomas Zimmer | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-85 | Joseph Krawczyk | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-87 | Robert Owen | Benin | Cashew | II | N/A |
| R-E-90 | Jonathan Moyle | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-91 | Matthew Arthur | Benin | Cashew | II | N/A |
| R-E-97 | Chelsea Johnson | Timor-Leste | Modernizing agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-99 | Todd Flynn | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-100 | Gary Ruegsegger | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-102 | James Conley | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-105 | Robert Owen | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-106 | Tiffany Stoker-Riggs | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-112 | Aboubacar Diagne | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-113 | Mary Taylor | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-114 | Daniel Miller | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-115 | Roger Engstrom | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-118 | Carrie Waterman | Uganda | Agribusiness | I | Yes |
| R-E-122 | Karen Jacobsen | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-124 | Brian Kibirige | Uganda | Livestock | II | Yes |
| R-E-126 | Emile Padonou | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-131 | Willibrodus Usfnit | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-132 | Kibret Biharu | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-134 | Innocent Labiyi | Benin | Cashew | II | N/A |
| R-E-137 | Belete Shenkute | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-141 | Camel Hegbe | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-144 | Bruno Agong | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-145 | Moriaque Akplo | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-145 | Agustinho Ximenes | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-147 | Zaquel Amaral | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-150 | Richard Nyirinkwaya` | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-152 | Jerome Ruhanga | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-158 | Jerome Ruhanga | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-160 | Andrew Gashayija | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-161 | Jean Marie Sentaru | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-163 | Esther Muhimakazi | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-164 | Paulo Silva | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-170 | Agostinho Manico | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | I | N/A |
| R-E-181 | Ambroise Hakizimana | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-183 | Esther Muhimakazi | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-185 | Irene Arayo | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-186 | Shambhu Dhakal | Nepal | Crops | I | N/A |
| R-E-187 | Shambhu Dhital | Nepal | Crops | I | N/A |
| R-E-193 | Oli Hadji | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-195 | George Nyombaire | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-196 | Shukuru Bizimungu | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-197 | Jean Marie Sentaru | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-201 | George Nyombaire | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-202 | Zaquiel Carmo | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-203 | Alexis Rudasingwa | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-205 | Richard Nyirinkwaya | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-208 | Feyisa Fantessa | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-209 | Jerome Ruhanga | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-210 | Jean Marie Sentaru | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-214 | Richard Nyirinkwaya | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-215 | Athanase Hategekimana | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-238 | Irene Aryemo | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-253 | Athanase Hategekimana | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-256 | Meena Chidi | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-257 | Ivonia Deus | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-258 | Kahoza Mugimba | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-260 | Ivonia Deus | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-266 | Athanase Hategekimana | Rwanda | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-267 | Daniel Laney | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-275 | Aline Ingabire | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-275 | Aline Ingabire | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-279 | Leopoldino Martins | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | I | N/A |
| R-E-281 | Joachine Idibu | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-285 | Diriba Gondere | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-290 | Raju Kadel | Nepal | Livestock | I | N/A |
| R-E-291 | Ramesh Humagain | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-292 | Chet Upreti | Nepal | Livestock | I | N/A |
| R-E-293 | Ram Pradhan | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-296 | Wilfred Eneku | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-298 | Aline Ingabire | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-299 | Dossa Agbangba | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-303 | Alemayehu Sufe | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-306 | Godfrey Okoth | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-307 | Patrick Inaku | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-309 | Jesugnon Akowanou | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-310 | Zipporah Waithaka | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-311 | Juliet Alieto | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-312 | Addisu Chemeda | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-314 | Arun Khanal | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-315 | Dossa Agbangba | Benin | Soybean | I | N/A |
| R-E-318 | Kahoza Mugimba | Uganda | Livestock | I | N/A |
| R-E-319 | Hortencio Amaral | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-324 | Pemba Sherpa | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-326 | Rojino da Cunha | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-327 | Theodule Aikpando | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-328 | David Luseesa | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-338 | Jesugnon Akowanou | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-361 | Alganesh Tola | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-358 | Jeffrey Knowles | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-370 | Mary Matava | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-373 | Aboubacar Diagne | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-375 | David Ringuette | Uganda | Agribusiness | I | N/A |
| R-E-372 | Raymond Weil | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-379 | Addisu Chemeda | Ethiopia | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-384 | Amsalu Aga | Ethiopia | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-386 | Chantal Muhoza | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-394 | Yabi Akpata | Benin | Soybean | I | N/A |
| R-E-407 | David Tingley | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-409 | Jason Reed | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-418 | David Blomquist | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-419 | Russell Wallace | Rwanda | Maize | II | N/A |
| R-E-424 | Daniel Miller | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-426 | Eric Pawlowski | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-431 | Gary Ruegsegger | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-435 | Henry Cotter | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-437 | George Kegode | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-438 | David Tingley | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-446 | Esther Muhimakazi | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-455 | John Bliss Jr | Nepal | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-456 | Irene Aryemo | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-457 | Jonathan Moyle | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-459 | Chet Upreti | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-460 | Cherinet Olana | Ethiopia | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-462 | Daniel Miller | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-464 | Robert Owen | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-465 | Govind KC | Nepal | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-466 | Dennis McCarthy | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-468 | David Ringuette | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-471 | Saphan Muzoora | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-474 | George Kotch | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-475 | Aude Kouderin | Benin | Soybean | II | N/A |
| R-E-478 | Ramesh Humagain | Nepal | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-484 | Brian Boman | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-490 | Norah Gulaita | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-492 | Tiffany Stoker-Riggs | Rwanda | Horticulture | II | N/A |
| R-E-493 | Richard Cooke | Timor-Leste | Modernizing Agriculture | II | N/A |
| R-E-495 | Daniel Laney | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-505 | Irene Aryemo | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-507 | Rangaswamy Muniappan | Nepal | Crop | II | N/A |
| R-E-519 | Christopher Vincent | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-522 | Bruce Bailey | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-523 | Crissandra Lee | Ethiopia | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-524 | Khusi Tiwari | Nepal | Crops | II | N/A |
| R-E-526 | Robert Owen | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-530 | Ali Beker | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-535 | DeVonne Jackson | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-539 | Mandy Shelby | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-542 | Joseph Dalton | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-545 | Sushil Paudyal | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-547 | Badege Bishaw | Uganda | Agribusiness | II | N/A |
| R-E-552 | Diego Calderon Barragan | Ethiopia | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-557 | Daniel Miller | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-560 | Dannica Wall | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-564 | Amrit Bart | Nepal | Livestock | II | N/A |
| R-E-565 | Dave Blomquist | Uganda | Livestock | II | N/A |

### SOWs in IPM and Safer Pesticide Use

No volunteer SOWs in IPM and safer pesticide use were undertaken for the CRS F2F regional program, country program or country project area. These differ from the individual assignments addressing pesticide use with specific hosts, which are included in the table above.

### Needs for a PERSUAP Amendment:

There was no identified need for a PERSUAP amendment to add pesticides.

### Certifications of Assignment and Office Compliance with PERSUAP Guidelines:

Listed below.

### PERSUAP Compliance: F2F Assignments

This certifies that all volunteers have received the F2F Environmental Brochure and further certifies that the following has been provided to or developed by the relevant volunteers:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Type I SOWS** | **Type II SOWs** |
| **Provided to Volunteer** | * Safer Use Action Plan (SUAP) * Attachments A-G * Environmental Brochure for F2F volunteers * Host country list of approved and registered pesticides * Executive Summary or Summary of Findings of the F2F Pesticide Safety Assessment for the specific country or PERSUAP questionnaire * SUAP briefing with F2F field staff * List of IPM practices and tools, forms, protocols, plans from previous volunteers * Relevant Material Safety Data Sheets (filed in field office) if an F2F volunteer may provide advice (training, recommendations) on fumigation (at processing facilities or warehouses): - USAID’s Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Fumigation of Title II Food Aid Commodities found here: <https://www.usaidgems.org/fumigationPEA.htm> | * SUAP * Environmental Brochure for F2F volunteers * Executive Summary or Summary of Findings of the F2F Pesticide Safety Assessment for the specific country * SUAP briefing with F2F field staff |
| **Developed/ Provided by Volunteer** | * Any pesticides that the F2F program should be able to recommend or use which are not included on approved lists * Recommendations for additional support on pesticide management practices * Recommendations or feedback on local IPM or pesticide practices witnessed * IPM practices, tools, forms, protocols, plans, etc. for mitigating negative environmental outcomes * Report on pesticide availability and how it corresponds to pesticides in F2F PERSUAP * Material safety data sheet for any pesticide or active ingredient used or recommended | * Recommendations for additional support on pesticide management practices * Recommendations or feedback on local IPM or pesticide practices witnessed * IPM practices, tools, forms, protocols, plans, etc. for mitigating negative environmental outcomes * Report on pesticide availability and how it corresponds to pesticides in F2F PERSUAP |

### PERSUAP Compliance: F2F Offices

This certifies that during this FY, all F2F staff have reviewed the F2F Environmental Brochure for staff and the following have been updated and kept on file:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Home Office** | **Field Office** |
| **Documents Updated and on File** | * F2F environmental brochure for staff * PERSUAP with attachments * Any USAID Mission or sector wide PERSUAP(s) for relevant country or sector | * F2F environmental brochure for staff * PERSUAP with attachments[[11]](#footnote-12) * USAID Mission or sector wide PERSUAP(s) for relevant country or sector (if available) * Host country list of approved pesticides * Material Safety Data Sheets for relevant pesticides2 * Tools, forms, protocols, plans, etc. developed by volunteers * Volunteer-recommended IPM practices |

## Summary of Volunteer Assignments

## See separate attachment

## Buy-ins

CRS did not have any buy-ins over the course of the project.

## Associate Awards

### **Liberia - Agriculture Sustainability Activity**

**Country** Liberia

**Project Title** Agriculture Sustainability Activity

**LOP Budget** $2.93 million

**Obligated Amount** $2.93 million

**Start Date** July 22, 2021

**Completion Date** September 1, 2022

**Objectives**

The Agriculture Sustainability Activity’s goal was to increase the availability of domestically produced and processed rice and cassava in Liberia by meeting the following strategic objectives:

* Women and men farmers increase sustainable rice and cassava production in target areas.
* Target processors increase rice and cassava processing.
* Other work identified through the closeout of Feed the Future Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA) is completed.

**Role of Volunteers**

The project fielded 50 volunteer assignments (7 in-person and 43 PRV) to provide short-term technical assistance to 121 cooperatives and associations, 26 private enterprises, and one NGO. In total, 3,807 people (2,228 women) were trained over 760 days. The assignments helped increase the availability of domestically produced and processed rice and cassava by providing support on the following topics: business and financial management, rice post-harvest handling and storage, good agriculture practices in rice, cooperative governance and management, marketing strategy, irrigation, contract farming, good agricultural practices for cassava, and cassava post-harvest management.

**Lessons Learned**

Agriculture Sustainability Activity was able to quickly field a high number of paired remote volunteer assignments due to the number of available staff supporting the project. The project had two field offices, each with two staff, allowing the team to quickly develop scopes of work and oversee assignments. A designated in-country recruiter managing local volunteers helped increase collaboration between the U.S. and local volunteers. Additionally, volunteer recruitment opened to third-country nationals, allowing the project to find volunteers with cassava and rice experience, crops not commonly grown in the U.S.

### **Sudan - Bina’ Aljusur, or Building Bridges, Project­­­**

**Country** Sudan

**Project Title** Bina’ Aljusur, or Building Bridges, Project

**LOP Budget** $19,578,496

**Obligated Amount** $11,103,464

**Start Date** October 1, 2022­­

**Completion Date** September 30, 2026

**Objectives**

Bina’ Aljusur will enhance sustainable, inclusive, and broad-based economic growth by creating new commercial bridges in the agricultural sector, linking the formal private sector with rain-fed farming communities in Darfur and Kordofan by meeting the following strategic objectives:

* Producer groups increase productivity and income in inclusive private sector-led market systems.
* Organized farmers and pastoralists have increased food security and productivity of their production systems.

**Role of Volunteers**

F2F volunteers will implement up to 110 assignments (20 U.S. in-person\*, 20 regional in-person, 70 PRV) over the course of the project. As always, the assignments will be demand-driven, but CRS anticipates that some topics will be related to expanding business-to-business platforms, training farmers in business management skills, supporting seed production systems, and technical support on natural resource management. Since the project includes a matching grant mechanism for locally based enterprises, volunteers will help the enterprises develop their proposals.

\*Since the outbreak of conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in April 2023, CRS no longer has a presence in Khartoum, which is where US volunteer assignments were planned to take place. Therefore, while the conflict persists, no US volunteers will be sent on assignment to Sudan. However, they will be afforded the opportunity to participate through PRVs.

**Lessons Learned**

N/A.

### **Myanmar - Cultivating Rural Opportunities for Productivity Strengthening (CROPS)**

**Country** Burma

**Project Title** Cultivating Rural Opportunities for Productivity Strengthening (CROPS)

**LOP Budget** $14,300,000

**Obligated Amount** $7,650,000

**Start Date** June 28, 2023

**Completion Date** June 27, 2026

**Objectives**

The objectives of the CROPS project are:

* Sustain agricultural production and productivity of key food security crops.
* Maintain and improve agricultural market linkages.
* Increase household and community resilience through locally appropriate modes of asset creation and protection.

**Role of Volunteers**

In consultation with USAID, CRS will identify priority needs for areas of technical knowledge transfer based on the prioritized value chains and corresponding interventions, to identify technical specialists including local university students/youth and retired specialists, and via the exploration of matching US-based volunteers to engage remotely with Burma-based counterparts. CRS will seek out opportunities to engage youth and women in initiatives that impart technical and leadership skills. Given the current technical capacity gaps in agricultural extension, CRS will explore strengthening the extension capacities of agricultural cooperatives and partners operating in the Activity locations or ZOI. Technical support from F2F volunteers will be used to build the technical skills of local agri-input traders, often the first source of farm advisory for communities.

**Lessons Learned**

* Applying an adaptive management approach to programming during conflict, the quick decision to use FSP and only the Bankak App for cash transfers to pay the project's suppliers/traders including enumerators was very effective and helped CRS implement the planned activities in timely manner.
* Use of local markets, especially local traders, to provide critical agricultural inputs to the vulnerable farmers and SILC groups, was successful as it shows that during such conflicts, local markets play a critical role in maintaining local value chains.
* Engaging trusted a person from the local community to work as the community help desk focal person during the agricultural input distribution was very effective in capturing communities’ feedback and concerns about the distributed items and the distribution process. The local communities felt comfortable and confident to give feedback or report in the local dialect.

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpCrw4kpMMs [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXzZqRLwROo [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r2liHRCMmI [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdCRaaRX89c [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itLHN1cmnss [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. https://farmertofarmer.crs.org/publications/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K2fdpUpAXk&t=4s [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. https://vimeo.com/showcase/10834843 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. https://www.keiphoneglobal.com/aboutus [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpCrw4kpMMs [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. 1 If governed by F2F PERSUAP, Type IV SOWs should follow requirements for Type I, II or III SOWs, as most relevant.

    2 It is recommended that these documents be translated into local languages for distribution to relevant hosts and partners. Please note if they have been translated (in whole or in part), and if not, why. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)