

## 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: Russ CL Zick
- b) State of Origin: Colorado, USA
- c) Host Organization: Gbonkolenken Farmers Association (GbonFA)
- d) Feed the Future Sierra Leone Entrepreneurial Agriculture for Improved Nutrition (EAIN) Activity; Rice Value Chain
- e) Assignment: IVS Irrigation Water Management and Control
- f) Dates of Assignment: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017
- g) Number of days worked: 19 days
- h) Tonkolili District villages and farmer associations trained included:
  - Matham - Tamaraneh FA (19.7 ha)
  - Methainkay - Bath-bana FA (22.6 ha)
  - Petifu Line - Faketin FA (12.0 ha).

#### 1.2.1 Objective 1 in SOW:

*Provide technical knowledge and skills to GbonFA staff and FBO members on Inland Valley Swamp Rehabilitation/Development for improved water control and management. By the end of the assignment GbonFA staff and FBO members will have improved knowledge and skills on surface irrigation, its importance and benefits on improving crop productivity, through control and management of water ways.*

- a) Progress with the objective: Motivations, methods and means of controlling irrigation water levels and flows were presented in lecture, printed handouts and discussion with farmers. Best water control practices, and the need for observation of field water conditions and pro-active farmer response were discussed. Current International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) knowledge including recent alternate wet and dry (AWD) water control regimes were presented to members of farmer associations in each of the villages. GbonFA staff participated in development of curricula, listened to lectures, read hand-outs and led classroom discussions with farmers on topics presented.
- b) Expected impacts/results: Both farmers and GbonFA staff have increase awareness of techniques, and practices in IVS water management and control. The role of water management in improving crop yields was stressed to increase farmer motivation to observe water movement, note changes in water control regime and the importance of taking positive responsive action.
- c) Recommendations: Continue farming the demonstration plots that were designated during the trainings sessions at each village. Leverage the demonstration plots to provide future trainings at critical events during the 2017 crop season calendar such as transplanting, fertilizing, flowering and harvesting while maintaining proper water levels throughout. Demonstrate the AWD water management regime.

#### 1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW:

*Provide technical training on the use of available improved equipment and machines for improved*

*construction and maintenance of drainage and irrigation structures for GbonFA staff and FBO members to improve water management systems on IVSs.*

*By the end of the training GbonFA staff and FBOs members will have improved knowledge and skills on the use of improved equipment and machinery. Participants will also be expected to increase their technical knowledge and skills on the construction of irrigation structures (canals and bunds) for good IVS cultivation.*

- a) Progress with the objective: Inspected and discussed donated equipment at the GbonFA shop. Upon request, proper operation and care was presented to GbonFA leadership and selected staff for selected equipment. Use of a donated GPS was practiced in the field. Mapping and charting of rice field and irrigation features was discussed and reviewed, including computer aids for mapping in Google Earth software to improve current practice of hand-drawing field charting. Area calculations in preparation for field size measurements was practiced, user instructions were downloaded, presented and used in field practice. During farmer training, notification of the host's equipment resources was publicized to facilitate increase farmer demand for using some of the power equipment such as tampers for bund re-enforcement and bailing pump for water transfer.
- b) Expected impacts/results: Increased use of mapping techniques to manage administration of field task planning and execution by the host staff. Increase in farmer requests for the use of host's equipment assets to rehabilitate field condition such as damaged bunds. Reduced incidence of crop damage from lack of rice field water controls. Improved deployment of donated equipment to avoid and repair bund and canal damage.
- c) Recommendations: Provide addition host training and support for other equipment donated for use in field rehabilitation, especially tilling, tamping and puddling power equipment. Support continued GbonFA activity to deploy equipment in the rice fields in service to their partner farmers associations.

### 1.3 Recommended future volunteer assignment

Provide experienced rice cultivation expertise to support farmers during the next major crop season events such as: continued field preparation and puddling in response to soil analyses of soil samples taken during the third week of April 2017; transplanting, fertilizer application and weed control; and follow up to AWD water management regimes, introduced during IVS water management training. Continue to maintain, upgrade and leverage the 3 demonstration plots designated during the trainings visits at the IVSs in participating villages.

## 1.4 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. Arrange soil analysis on soil samples collected and formally present results of analysis to village farmer associations	Contact Njala, find funding source, drop-off samples, schedule publicity and distribution of sample test results.	CRS	Sample analysis complete and result available 1 week prior to transplanting
2. Develop demonstration field action plan, schedule of events, work task estimates, periodic crop inspections and reviews. Engage village assistance. Engage Njala research.	Produce schedule which includes village inputs.	GbonFA lead with CRS support	1 week prior to transplanting
3. Acknowledgement of participation/Certificate	Create participant certificates	CRS	For display at transplant event
4. Formalize integration of the pre-planting training event as a growing season long, comprehensive support program.	Schedule series of growing season training events	CRS lead with GbonFA support	1 week prior to transplanting
5. Hold a regional GbonFA support network event.	Schedule a workshop for training and networking, similarly to the periodic market in Petifu Line	GbonFA lead with encouragement and support by CRS	Announce before transplanting begins, hold event at opportune time after transplants are established
6. Provide training to GbonFA staff on appropriate use and care of donated equipment	Prepare list of staff training sessions in collaboration with GbonFA	CRS	Ongoing beginning now during rice field preparation, continuing periodically until all useful equipment is deployed in on-demand service by GbonFA
7. Establish culture of measurements for confirmation of results and reporting in program monitoring and evaluation.	Prepare list of useful, appropriate program measurements	CRS lead with GbonFA input	First draft of program measurement prepared before transplanting
8. Leverage demonstration plots with crop life events, such as preparing the soil, transplanting, flowering, pest and disease controls, AWD demonstrations, water, soil and harvest measurements.	Prepare training and demonstration schedule to be held in designated rice demonstration plots	GbonFA with guidance, oversight and review by CRS	Schedule issued to participating villages prior to transplanting

### 1.5 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training (Classroom-field 2-hr sessions) (105 total attendance over 3 days, 3 training sessions)<sup>1</sup>
- b) Through direct hands on practical assistance (Use of host equipment) (3)
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs (5)
- d) Training/assistance by field (Local leadership by association chairpersons)

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	22	17	5
Employees	2		
Clients/ Suppliers			
Family Members			
Host volunteers	3		
Total	27	22	5

### 1.6 Gender

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

The host promoted and encourage female participation by being inclusive of both chairmen and chairladies during introductions, articulating problems, providing written hand-outs and presenting closing remarks. During training all ladies participated as students on equal footing with men. Ladies also ate prepared meals together with male training participants.

However, it is important to note that meals prepared for all trainees, host staff, CRS volunteer was cooked and delivered by women, who in some cases were also supervising some young children. Except for traditional food preparation roles. Females participated similar to other participates receiving instruction, curricula hand-outs and visiting the rice field to observe and discuss field conditions.

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

CRS could provide support for some form of child attendant so that other women may be more able to put aside daily chores in order to increase female participation in a training event.

### 1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$: Total \$ 150

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

### 1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ - Total \$ 75

- a) Meals \$100
- b) Transportation (\$0)
- c) Lodging (\$0)

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<sup>1</sup> Attendance sign-up sheets attached in Appendix. Typical attendance at a training session, 11; range 8 to 14 people per session. Total of 9 sessions (3 sessions per village).

- d) Translation – provided by host staff without fee. (\$0)
- e) Other Host hours spent arranging, scheduling, coordinating total series of trainings (80 hours)

#### 1.8 Host Profile Data:

Did you obtain any data that supplements or corrects the data in the existing host information as detailed in the SOW? Please list it. NO new information disclosed.

#### 1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

- a. Support the GbonFA host initiative to set up demonstration plots in each of the villages as a focal point for on-going training, demonstrations and technical support centers programs. This includes arranging soil sample lab analysis testing as an immediate follow up on the soil samples that were collected during the IVS Water Management training, April 2017.
- b. Institute a set of actual field measurements to improve monitoring and evaluation of impacts of host activities and initiatives in order to structurally improve program effectiveness and model good practices in continuous program improvement methods.
- c. Reinforce the basic message of the IVS water management training, that the farmer needs to observe changing water conditions in the rice field and take action to adjust canal and rice field water levels and flows throughout season calendar in order to maximize crop yields.
- d. Proactively nurture and support engagement between farmer cooperative service providers like GbonFA, the government Ministry of Agriculture and rice farming educators and researchers at Njala University.
- e. Add a formal project milestone event to revisit the scope of work (SOW) together with the Program Coordinator, Volunteer expert and Host representative after completion of introductory orientation meetings with the host in order to reaffirm and/or agree on SOW, appropriateness of training content and training schedule. Plan the event so that the proposed training content is reviewed and finalized, as well as the training schedule and venue arrangements.
- f. During introductory meetings with the host and their farmer clients, preview the training objectives and arrangements to assure the client's expectations are aligned with the proposed delivery of training to the clients. Despite statements to the contrary, the expectation that participants would be compensated for participation persisted, resulting in a dispute and some disappointment for some training participants.
- g. During introductory meetings with clients problems were identified to the host and CRS service providers. Although done informally, an action plan was created in response, which addressed some of the village farmer's concerns. I believe this was effective in establishing a rapport between the service providers and the village farmers. I recommend considering adding this step to establish good will at the beginning of future training programs. In this instance, farmers

in all three villages expressed concern about timely receipt of seed rice and fertilizer. By furnishing a portion of seed rice some acknowledgement of farmer's concerns was affirmed and partially addressed.

- h. I would like to recognize the CRS team for providing professional and smooth support at venues and throughout all transitions, I felt completely safe, comfortable, well-cared for and appreciated. In addition, I was quite surprised at the sensitivity of the host team to matters of gender and disability equality, the stakeholder concerns of village farmers and ultimate delivery of the training content in order to assure thorough understanding of the training curricula content and lessons.

#### 1.10 Press Release

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VOLUNTEER CONTACT:**

Russ C.L. Zick, PE  
(303) 697- 8751 [U.S]  
flowengr@msn.com

**CRS CONTACT:**

Nathaniel G. Lamin  
Program Coordinator  
[nathanielg.lamin@crs.org](mailto:nathanielg.lamin@crs.org)  
[232] 076 777 548

## **Denver Area Volunteer Travels to Sierra Leone to Share Skills with Local Farmers**

**Farmer-to-Farmer program promotes economic growth and agricultural development in Sierra-Leone**

**DATELINE: Freetown, Sierra Leone, April, 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Russ C.L. Zick**, a professional engineer from **Denver, Colorado, USA**, travelled to **Sierra Leone** for **3** weeks to share his technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Zick's assignment is part of Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Farmer-to Farmer (F2F) program named Entrepreneurial Agriculture for Improved Nutrition (EAIN). The program promotes smallholder entrepreneurship, development of Sierra Leone's productive Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) natural resources and increased rice production, which is a staple crop providing daily nourishment to Sierra Leoneans.

"S" "Knowing that the leadership and management skills learned by these farmer leaders would go a long way in improving the social and economic conditions of Mapaki community in the Tane Chiefdom, Tonkolili District and Sierra-Leone as a whole, gives me a sense of deep satisfaction" said.

Farmer-to-Farmer matches technical expertise of U.S. professionals to farmers, farming cooperatives, agri-businesses and agricultural universities in developing countries to assist in improving agricultural productivity, accessing new markets, and increasing their incomes from local farm produce.

In a world where 80% of food is produced by farmers working on small farms or fisheries, the movement to share proven farming and business skills can improve the quality and quantity of the world's food supply. For communities in the developing world who often struggle to



produce enough food, this can improve access to a reliable source of food and better nutrition. For the farmers, it can strengthen their path to prosperity.

The goal of Horatio G. Sam-Aggrey assignment was to strengthen the capacity of the leaders of the Tayorgbo Agriculture Business Centre and its constituent farmers' groups. He worked with 21 Farmers-based organizations leaders who required capacity building in the area of clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities, conflict resolution, and enhancing group cohesion. Most of **Horatio's** time was spent in the Mapaki Community, Tonkolili district in Northern Sierra Leone working with the Tayorgbo Agriculture Business Centre. It is my conviction that my work would make the leaders more responsive to the needs of their organizations and members. I also expect a stronger group cohesion as a result of the training sessions.

This is Horatio G. Sam-Aggrey's first volunteer assignment with Farmer-to-Farmer and is one of nearly 100 assignments that focus on improving approaches to local agriculture practices, expanding production of quality food crops and nutrition in Sierra Leone. The program, funded by the U.S. government has been running for nearly 30 years.

CRS is partnering with five U.S. institutions to tap into the rich diversity of the U.S. agriculture community: the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Foods Resource Bank, National Association of Agricultural Educators, American Agri-Women, and the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

The volunteers travel to Sierra Leone for anywhere from one to six weeks.

"We are certain that this program will be beneficial not just to the farmers in Sierra Leone but also to the volunteers from America and other parts of the world," said Bruce White, CRS' Director for the program. "It's going to make the world a little bit smaller and a whole lot better for everyone involved."

For more information, visit [farmertofarmer.crs.org](http://farmertofarmer.crs.org)

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**Catholic Relief Services** is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. CRS' relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV, health, agriculture, education, microfinance and peacebuilding. For more information, visit [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) or [www.crsespanol.org](http://www.crsespanol.org) and follow Catholic Relief Services on social media: [Facebook](#), Twitter at [@CatholicRelief](#), [@CRSnews](#) and [@CRSnoticias](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#).



