



FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA (FED)

BI-WEEKLY REPORT: DECEMBER 1-15, 2012



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COVER PHOTO: Payee Demonstration Rice Field, Nimba County

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

ACRONYMS

AEDE	Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BCCC	Bong County Community College
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science Technology, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CAC	County Agriculture Coordinator
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
ED	Enterprise Development
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FRC	Farmer Resource Center
GBCCC	Grand Bassa County Community College
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
IT	Information Technology
L/STTA	Long/Short Term Technical Assistant
LBBF	Liberian Better Business Forum
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micros/Small and Medium Enterprise
NCCC	Nimba County Community
PUA	Peri-urban Agriculture
R&R	Rights & Rice Foundation
RFTOP	Requests For Task Order Proposals
SBA	Subah Belleh Associates
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VMHS	Voinjama Multilateral High School
VTNFES	Vocational Training and Non-formal Education Specialist
VTTS	Vocational Teacher Training Specialist

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Geographic Reach of FED



BACKGROUND

The Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia is a USAID-funded initiative that began in September 2011. FED is helping the government of Liberia achieve food security — in terms of food availability, utilization, and accessibility — by building an indigenous incentive structure that assists a range of agricultural stakeholders to adopt commercial approaches and actively incorporates women and youth.

This incentive structure is being built upon:

- Improved technologies for productivity and profitability;
- Expanded and modernized input supply and extension systems;
- Commercial production, marketing, and processing;
- Enterprise Services; and
- Workforce and Human Capacity Development.

FED's activities work with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the private sector to link communities to extension services, agricultural inputs, improved technologies, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, and appropriate education, training, and business development services.

Over the life of the five-year FED program, expanded market linkages will lead to substantial income and job growth and increases in the production, processing, marketing, and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava, vegetables, and goats in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. These counties are part of expanding development corridors that aim to foster intra- and inter-county commerce, and improve food availability and access for all Liberians.

FED's methodology is market-led, value chain-driven, continuously dedicated to indigenous capacity building, and specifically focused on benefiting Liberia's women and youth. FED's approach aims to be collaborative, catalytic, and driven by the goals and objectives of our partner clients. It will lead to increases in incomes for rural households, new employment opportunities for Liberians, increased access to food and improved household dietary diversity scores for food-insecure Liberians, and the adoption of improved inputs, farming practices, and the modern technologies which will boost agricultural productivity.

FED is implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), supported by subcontracts with the Cadmus Group, International Fertilizer Development Center, Louisiana State University and Winrock International.

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MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ONGOING ACTIVITIES

COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

This report highlights activities carried out from December 1–15, 2012, which includes the following:

Task 1.1: Input Supply Interventions

Agro-dealers' capacity building is critical in order for them to adopt various technologies promoted for lowland rice, upland rice, cassava, vegetables, and small livestock production activities. From December 10-11, 2012, 12 agro-dealers, 4 District Agricultural Officers (DAO), 2 FED Extension Officers, 8 community-based facilitators, and 8 representatives from 5 farmer cooperatives were trained on agro-input supply at FED's office in CARI, Bong County.

Agro-dealers are being trained in establishing sales points at County and District levels, in conducting rapid input demand assessments in targeted communities, in running small agro-input shops through record keeping and adequate storage of agro-inputs, and in demonstrating the use of fertilizers and agro-chemicals to the farmers. They will be linked up to agro-input suppliers for the supply of the agro-input needed by farmers in FED target Counties, so that these inputs are available at community level at the beginning of the cropping season.

Capacity building for agro-input dealers is focused on addressing knowledge gaps for stabilized and/or increased rice, cassava, vegetable and small livestock production; but most of all, ensuring that the knowledge gained from FED demonstration sites is transferred to the farmers' own fields. In 2013, FED is targeting 300 smallholder farmers adopting and using the recommended agro-inputs on their rice fields, 600 on their cassava fields; 267 vegetable growers accessing improved inputs; and 96 goat farmers using recommended small livestock inputs.

Objectives

The objectives of agro-dealers capacity building include:

1. Learning about the inputs recommended for the promotion of the 4 value chains promoted by FED (quality seeds, fertilizers, and agro-chemicals for crop pests and disease control);
2. Skills development on how to use them (how to conduct on site demonstrations even at a smaller scale);
3. Establishment and management of a small sale point (technical aspects, record keeping);
4. Preparation and use of extension/promotion materials using local materials and local languages;
4. Networking/Team building principles;
5. Working with farmers to achieve FED objectives and sustainability.

Outline of the main topics covered during the Bong agro-input supply training

Basics on Fertilizers Knowledge	Basics on Pesticides Knowledge
1. Fertilizers: (Jean Nyemba, Fofana) a. What is fertilizer and why do we need it? b. The correct application of fertilizer	2. Pesticides: (Jean Nyemba, Wienco) a. The main types of pesticide formulations b. Mode of action

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Consequences of wrong fertilizer application Nutrients of fertilizers d. Grades and content of different fertilizer e. Guidelines for handling fertilizer f. Fertilizer recommendations for some major crops g. Basics of plant biology h. Quality control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. How to read the toxicological band d. Parts of the knapsack sprayer e. Types of nozzles f. Pest and plant diseases in Nigeria g. Types of pesticides h. Hazards of pesticides i. Measuring and mixing pesticides j. Introduction to stored product pest k. How to apply storage pesticides l. Introduction to weed pest m. How to apply pesticides n. Pesticides recommendation
<p>3. Seeds: (Fofana)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Types of seeds b. Classes of seeds c. The characteristics of seeds d. Basic seed tests e. General guidelines for handling and storage of treated seeds f. Planting recommendations 	<p>4. Others: (Jean Nyemba, Wienco, Green Field)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are counterfeit and illegal agri-inputs? b. The consequences of counterfeit and illegal agri-inputs c. Why wear Personal Protective Equipment? d. How to wear Personal Protective Equipment? e. Why dealers should only sell genuine and legal agri-input f. How to recognize a counterfeit or fraudulent product g. How to recognize high quality seeds versus grain h. What type of PPE to wear
<p>5. Store management: (Jean Nyemba & Wienco)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to organize an agri-input store b. How to predict agri-input sales c. How to handle a spill of agri-inputs on the store floor d. First Aid e. The correct cleaning and destruction of empty packages f. Guidelines for buying agri-inputs g. Why empty packages of agri-inputs should not be reused h. Correct cleaning and destruction of empty pesticide containers i. How to dispose empty agri-input packages j. Safe transportation of agri-inputs k. What to do in case of an accident 	<p>6. Marketing: SME Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The four P's of marketing b. How to deal with customers c. The role of an agro dealer in the input market d. What is business planning? e. How to write a business plan f. How to develop a marketing strategy g. Who are your customers h. How to handle difficult customer i. Basics on financial management
<p>7. Credit: SME Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is record keeping and why should you do it? b. Types of records c. How to keep records on stock d. What is credit e. Importance of repaying credit f. Using your credit g. Time period and repayment schedule 	

A display of agri-inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, mineral amendments) and equipment (sprayers) was organized by Wienco during the training. This created a good opportunity to see and discuss safety measures and use.

Task 1.2 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Rice

During this period, the County teams focus was on the selection of farming groups and individual farmers' selection to identify new production areas. At the same time, harvesting continued in the four Counties, but FED has not received the information detailing the total area cultivated and quantity harvested yet. Currently there is an impact rice dehuller fabrication training and testing ongoing at Moonlight Garage in Gbarnga, Bong County.

Task 1.3 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Cassava

In keeping with the cassava value chain workplan, visits to sites in Montserrado County commenced with a team of two FED staff (Chief of Party and Cassava Value Chain Manager) to the New Generation Women Project in Clay Ashland. The team met Ms. Gertrude Cooper, the Chairperson, along with members of the New Generation group and took a brief tour of the initial 38 acres clearing to determine land suitability and potential areas for collaboration.

The following observations were noted:

- A large portion of the land is very rocky, with a roller-coaster hilly pattern
- Narrow valley bottom that is prone to flooding during the rains
- Marginal vegetation (5-7 years fallow)
- Inadequate labor force to cultivate 75 acres (60 acres cassava; 15 acres vegetables)
- Ideally situated land mass connected by dirt road (recently graded)
- 700 acres of land available for cultivation – a positive factor for future expansion purposes

In view of these observations, the New Generation members were advised to scale-down the initial phase of the project, and utilize the more suitable portion of land near the vegetable site to adequately utilize the limited labor force.

A follow-up visit on December 13, 2012 was agreed to and FED committed to work with the Peri-urban and Enterprise sections to develop a path forward.

The Peri-urban Value Chain Specialist and the Cassava Value Chain Manager traveled to the New Generation Women project in Clay Ashland. The Enterprise Development team and the New Generation Women's project leader, Ms. Gertrude could not go due to other engagements. However, upon arrival at the project site, FED staff were taken to the field by one of the members, Mr. George, to tour the other side of the farm as planned. Consistent with our findings on the other side of the farm, the soil structure remains the same – shallow topsoil, with underlying rocks. The FED team did identify a flat terrain that looked satisfactory for growing both cassava and vegetables. An on-the-spot physical soil check also confirmed our initial observations.

Given the large investments already made on this land, FED agreed to work on the suitable land, but limit our participation at this time to just 2 hectares of demonstration land for both cassava and vegetables (1 hectare of each). Depending how the demonstrations go, FED will determine if expansion is necessary. During the first

round of demonstrations, FED will introduce modern technologies for cassava and vegetables production, as well as dissemination of improved planting materials.

The FED team also suggested the cultivation of rice on the remaining portion of the land and maybe, potentially providing the organization with improved upland rice varieties (NERICA series, with high yields and shorter duration).

Task 1.4 Peri-urban Vegetable Production

During the reporting period, the Peri-urban Agriculture team accomplished the following activities:

- 40 PUA sites identified for 2013 production;
- 23 MOU's signed with 23 groups in Bong, Montserrado, and Margibi Counties;
- Site clearing and land preparation is ongoing at the above sites;
- The PUA team visited the New Generational Women's project in Clayashland to provide technical support for their vegetable program;
- Monitored Kakata and BWI demonstration sites for soil amendment is ongoing;
- Completion of the training of two Monrovia-based in the manufacture of biomass-fired vegetable dryers;
- Development and testing of a vegetable dryer without a fan to reduce capital and operating costs, potentially making the dryer more profitable and affordable;
- Meetings with the Bong and Nimba County Enterprise Development Officers and treadle pump manufacturer in those counties to discuss and preliminarily determine ways of increasing pump sales;
- Tube well performance assessments performed in Bong and Nimba counties and potential ways of improving that performance determined; and
- Monitoring of the ongoing training of vegetable seedling producers in Bong, Margibi, and Nimba counties.

COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

During the month of December 1-15, 2012, the Enterprise Development (ED) team accomplished the following activities:

Activity 2.3.A.i Profile Commercial Buyers and Activity, 2.3.A.ii.a – Profile and Select Lead Producers, FBOs, and Enterprises

Stakeholder Survey Project

Subah Belleh Associates (SBA) completed the Stake Holder Profile surveys in the six counties. The total number of interviews conducted exceeded 500. SBA was scheduled to prepare a draft report of their findings by December 7, 2012. The presentation of their findings has been rescheduled to a later date in January 2013.

Activity 2.3.A.ii.e – Targeted Technical Support

Organization Strengthening Training

Rights & Rice Foundation (R&R), an IQC holder, is currently conducting the first round of Organization Strengthening training for nine groups (267 participants, 189 female & 78 male) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Bassa counties. To date, R&R has completed the training for two groups in Bong County and two groups in Grand Bassa. Training with two groups in Nimba County began December 10, 2012 and training for two groups in Lofa County will begin January 6, 2013.

Pilot Youth Business Plan Competition

Twenty-eight out of 43 youth who submitted an executive summary as part of the youth business plan competition have been selected for the second stage of the competition. The 28 youth represent seven business ideas from Montserrado County and four business ideas from Bong County. The youth in Bong County will complete the first phase of training December 13 and the Montserrado youth will finish their training at the Monrovia FED office on Saturday December 15, 2012.

Future Training

The ED team released two requests for task order proposals (RFTOP) for Organization Strengthening and Financial Management training for 16 producer groups (216 males, 231 females) in FED's four primary counties on November 30, 2012. The RFTOP is seeking to hire IQC holders to conduct the training for these groups for the period of three months. Bids were turned in on December 13. Training will commence in January, 2013.

Activity 2.3.B.vi – Increase Enterprise Registration and Local Government Engagement

Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) Joint Activities

FED, in collaboration with MoCI, is conducting a joint outreach activity to communicate policy reform and fee standardization of the business formulization process and to introduce authorized agents in each of FED's six counties for SMEs and agriculture producer groups. The campaign will air radio jingles in nine dialects on 15 local county radio stations followed by six town hall meetings and the distribution of flyers detailing the formulization process and fees. The first town hall meeting was conducted in Grand Bassa County on November 28, 2012 with the participation of 180 attendees, MoCI representatives, and FED staff. The campaign continued in Bong on December 4 with 120 attendees and in Nimba on December 6 with 130 attendees. The campaign will continue to Montserrado on December 13 and Margibi on December 15, wrapping up with Lofa on December 18.

Future Activities for December

- Second Organizational Strengthening Training and Financial Management Training RFTOPs
- Youth Business Plan Competition (phase two, training and mentorship)

Task 2.4 Use of ICTs in Stimulating Liberian Agri-business

From December 3-8, FED hosted a Video in Agriculture Workshop to strengthen agricultural outcomes in the rice, cassava, vegetable, and goat value chains. This workshop was conducted in partnership with the USAID FACET program that provided training and program materials. USAID FACET is implemented by FHI360.

25 attendees participated in the workshop. Participants included:

- Ministry of Agriculture communications and extension staff;
- FED peri-urban agriculture specialists, communications, and enterprise development staff;
- Farmer organizations;
- Agribusiness enterprises; and
- Organizations performing extension services.

COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL HUMAN CAPACITY

Task 3.1 Creating Centers of Excellence

During this reporting period, the Component Three team hired a Vocational Teacher Training Specialist (VTTS), James Cooper. He will be based at the FED-BWI office and promote effective vocation education among the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) instructors there as well as the four other centers of excellence, Lofa County Community College (LCCC), Nimba County Community College (NCCC), Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC), and Bong County Community College (BCCC). His expertise is in vocational education and will work with the Short Term Technical Advisors (STTA) of component three. The two other positions for NCCC and GBCC remain unfilled until the start of 2013.

Student Leadership Training

The Vocational Training and Non-formal Educational Specialist (VTNFES) and the Training Specialist Catherine Karmo, conducted a day (five hours) student leadership workshop at the Grand Bassa Community College on December 13th. Twenty seven (27) students were in attendance and the topics covered were:

1. Defining Leadership
2. Establishing Vocational Student Leadership Chapters emphasizing public speaking and conducting successful meetings.
3. Personality Identification as it relates to Leadership
4. Chapter Operations

This workshop is part of a larger set of modules with a goal of equipping student leaders to be effective in their careers. A certificate of completion will be issued after all ten modules have been completed.

Internship Guidance

The VTNFES completed his task of working with the drip irrigation intern, Nakie Sur, at FED Bong County. During this month the intern seeded and transplanted the five crops: Watermelon, Lablab bean, Tomato, Chili Pepper and Okra. The Super Bucket Drip Irrigation kit



Photo 1: Super Bucket Drip Irrigation Field

began operation and insect barriers (insect netting sewn together to be 6 feet wide and draped over steel rod 8 feet long) placed over the beds. Further, a portable chicken pen (chicken tractor) was locally built and provided for the display. This pen can house up to six light breed laying hens (or 5 hens and one rooster). It will assist with soil fertility, weed and insect control as it is moved up and down the three feet wide rows on a daily basis.

Vocational Agricultural Educational Specialist

Dr. M. Craig Edwards of Oklahoma State University Arrived on December 2nd, 2012 to provide technical assistance to the needs of the Centers of Excellence, Booker Washington Institute (BWI), Nimba County Community College (NCCC), and Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC). Appendix A details the schedule of the STTA. The Vocational Educational Specialist, Albert Bass, spent a considerable amount of time with the STTA. His expertise in Liberia education and agriculture provided a wealth of information for the FED team and stakeholders. Dr. Edwards finished his work on December 15th and departed for Oklahoma on Sunday, December 16th.

Topics that Dr. Edwards presented included the following.

- **Brief introduction & overview:** Some questioning/probing on prior learning, expectations, and interests
- **“What is Good Teaching?”; “Why?”:** The Question Answer and Discussion (Q-A-D) teaching method was modeled w/ a worksheet handout provided (A Think-Pair-Share approach combined w/ Q-A-D was used at NCCC & GBCC)
- **Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (“Cycle”):** the Q-A-D teaching method was modeled w/ handouts provided
- **“Tyler’s 4 Questions”:** the Q-A-D teaching method modeled w/ handouts provided
- **Question-Answer-Discussion (Q-A-D) as a teaching and learning method:** (PowerPoint presentation)
- **Assessing student learning: Test development** - PowerPoint using Q-A-D w/ accompanying PPT. handout (interactive w/ some blanks to fill) (BWI & NCCC)
- **Elements of Lesson Planning incl. the development & use of measurable learning objectives** (Bloom et al.; Mager): PPTs. and companion handouts (NCCC & GBCC only; Note. Some teachers had received training previously on these topics and others not)
- **4 Steps in Introducing a Lesson: “Setting the Table for Learning”;** PPT. and companion handout (NCCC & GBCC only)
- **Learning Styles & Multiple Intelligences (the latter per H. Gardner, Harvard University):** PPT. presentation w/ accompanying handout (GBCC only due to a related request, i.e., “differentiating instruction” – “students 14 to 70 in the same classroom”)

Also included in the workshops were the following topics:

- (a) **Forms of teacher evaluation** – self, student peer, & supervisor; some discussion about forming a mentoring/peer evaluation program, especially for the new, inductee teachers;
- (b) **Importance of review, reteach, systematic reinforcement** to the delivery of high quality instruction.

During his time he encountered a few female teachers, of the three professional development workshops presented, two women participated at BWI, six at NCCC, and one at GBCC. The student body ratio of men to women is much higher than the instructor male-female ratio.

A recommendation that Dr. Edwards has strongly put forth is to develop school’s composting facilities as project-based learning centers emphasizing an array of curriculum integration learning opportunities: agriculture, science,

math, business, IT and communications, even Art, etc. (This stresses CONTEXT, relevance, use of locally available materials, and environmentally sustainable practices, etc.)

In this model, Math or Science-CTE model (“7-Element approach”) could be a useful model for implementing a project-based, curriculum integration approach (see National Research Center for Career and Technical Education [NRCCTE, USA]; www.nrccte.org; also see related *Journal of Agricultural Education* publications, Parr, Edwards, & Leising [3] and Young, Edwards, & Leising [2])

He will be reading and analyzing the questionnaires completed by the teachers and a formal peer-reviewed paper will be available at a later date.

Monitoring and Evaluation

During the month of December 1-15, 2012, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team accomplished the following activities:

- Data collection for the Rice Crop Yield survey has been completed;
- Data entry for the rice crop yield survey will commence at the end of this week;
- Data collection for the teacher’s training at the Booker Washington Institute was completed;
- Monitoring and data collection for the teacher’s training is ongoing at the Grand Bassa Community College;
- Field Site visit was done jointly with the Technical Coordinator on the construction of the Soy Flour warehouse at the Nimba Community College;
- M&E procedure manual is currently being drafted;
- Mobile data collection training is currently ongoing in Grand Bassa County; and
- M&E observed one of the MoCI/FED business registration awareness meetings in Nimba.

