

FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA (FED)

MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013



2013

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by DAI/FED.

FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 1 – 31, 2013

Program Title: Food and Enterprise Development Program for Liberia (FED)
Sponsoring USAID Office: USAID/Liberia
Contract Number: 669-C-00-11-00047-00
Contractor: DAI
Date of Publication: January 31, 2013
Authors: Nelson Kanneh

COVER PHOTO: ACDI/VOCA FtF Volunteer and local goat producers demonstrate how to give proper vaccinations

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	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
APDRA	Appaloosa Distance Ride Association
AWEP	African Women Entrepreneurship Program
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ED	Enterprise Development
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FtF	Farmer to Farmer
FtF	Feed the Future
GBCC	Grand Bassa County Community College
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
HR	Human Resource
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IP	Implementing Partner
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
KM	Knowledge Management
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LREC	Liberia Renaissance Education Complex
MDF	Market Development Fund
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NGW	New General Women
PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PUA	Peri-Urban Agriculture
R&RF	Rights & Rice Foundation
RFTOP	Requests for task order proposals
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SBA	Subah Belleh Associates
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistant
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TO	Task Orders

TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VES	Vocational Education Specialist
VMHS	Voinjama Multilateral High School
VTNFES	Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education Specialist

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS	2
GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF FED	6
BACKGROUND.....	7
SUMMARY.....	8
COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY.....	11
Project Planning	11
Task 1.3 Input Supply System Interventions	11
Task 1.5 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Rice	14
Task 1.6 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Cassava	14
Task 1.7 Peri-urban Vegetable Production	15
Task 1.8 Goat Interventions	15
COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE	16
Activity 2.3.A.i Profile Commercial Buyers and Activity, 2.3.A.ii.a – Profile and Select Lead Producers, FBOs, and Enterprises	16
Activity 2.3.A.ii.e – Targeted Technical Support	16
Activity 2.3.B.vi – Increase Enterprise Registration and Local Government Engagement	17
COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL HUMAN CAPACITY	18
Task 3.1 Creating Centers of Excellence	18
Ministry of Education (MoE), Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education (BSTVES) Services	18
Internship	18
Booker Washington Institute.....	18
School Garden in Kakata	18
MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	20
Monitoring visit reports by County.....	21
Special Studies	22
Indicator status table	23
Indicator Status Table- Year Two	23
M&E General Accomplishments and issues.....	24
Activities planned for February 2013.....	24
MARKET DEVELOPMENT FUND.....	25

FED STTA TRACK TABLE - NOVEMBER 2012	41
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION	42
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE	44
Training and Capacity Building	44
Compliance Monitoring of Other Activities	44
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	46
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION	49
APPENDIX I: SUCCESS STORY	50
Goat Owners Learn New Skills to Improve Herd Management	50
Big Boost for Gari Suppliers.....	51

GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF FED



BACKGROUND

The Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia is a USAID-funded initiative that began in September 2011. Through implementing a Liberian strategy which incorporates women and youth, FED will help the government of Liberia and the country 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.

This incentive structure will be built upon:

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

FED's activities will work with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the private sector to link communities to agricultural inputs (including improved seeds), extension services, nutritious food products, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, and appropriate education, training, and enterprise services.

Over the life of the five-year FED program, expanded market linkages will lead to substantial income and job growth and major 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 being targeted in the context of regional development corridors that foster intra- and inter-county commerce, simultaneously improving 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 technologies which boost agricultural productivity.

FED is implemented by seven partners including: Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Samaritan's Purse, Louisiana State University, The Cadmus Group, and the Center for Development and Population Activities.

SUMMARY

Increasing Agriculture Productivity and Profitability

In January 2013, the Input Supply Team visited Arjay Farm to meet with the outgrowers working in various communities in lower Margibi and upper Montserrado Counties. A series of meetings were held with the outgrowers to discuss their activity plans for 2013. The next plan of action for the 2013 cropping season. The equipment will be used by the outgrowers organized into farming groups by Arjay Farm. The following communities were visited: Kingsville/Montserrado, Doemon Town/Margibi, Fahn Seh Town Todee/Montserrado, and Harrisburg/Montserrado.

The Rice Officer visited Bong, Lofa, Montserrado, and Nimba counties to verify the farmer groups preselected for year two rice value chain activities and to identify potential areas for improved water management. During this period, the Rice Officer completed the selection of farming groups and seeds producers with a total of 144 farming groups and 17 seed producers selected. In Nimba, 33 groups were selected in 9 districts, 48 groups selected in 10 districts in Bong, 42 groups selected in 6 districts in Lofa, and 19 groups in 4 districts in Grand Bassa; 2 groups were selected in 2 districts of Montserrado County.

FED, in collaboration with the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) and New Generational Women (NGW), met to discuss the possibility of cultivating 75 acres of land for a cassava production project. The NGW project is designed to eventually establish a processing center for gari production. The organization's close proximity to market centers, ports, and airports can facilitate future export initiatives.

The Liberia Renaissance Education Complex (LREC) and FED are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the cultivation of cassava, assorted vegetables, and oil palm. Fisheries will also be included to fully utilize the entire land, which also has a swamp and to introduce in-land fish culture to the students.

Farmers interviewed thus far, have not yet commenced initial land preparation for cassava, but some have commenced land clearing for upland rice. This indicates that the concept of intercropping cassava with rice is not yet explained to these farmers. Some expressed the fear of the cassava overshadowing the rice and will not allow good growth for the rice crop. FED will commence sensitizing farmers on cassava rice intercrop system to avoid the clearing of two fields for rice and cassava; the technology for such cropping pattern will be demonstrated to them to facilitate this process. This would avoid unnecessary clearing and at the same time reduce the labor input as well as monitoring and supervision.

As part of FED year 2 workplan, the PUA team has started working with 51 groups in its six counties of interventions. Forty one groups out of the 51 groups were verified during a field visit to Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. During the visit, sites were identified for the cultivation of assorted vegetables; land agreements were signed with selected groups and land owners to ascertain access to land over an agreed period of time.

Stimulate Private Enterprise

A one day Buyer meeting was held in Ganta, Nimba County with the HANDS Project which is one of the major cassava producing and processing groups in Nimba. The objective for the meeting centered on cassava production and the processing of Gari in Liberia. The HANDS Project is willing and ready to jump start these activities by purchasing at the different agreed upon locations. Over 70 people attended, in addition to the FED Component Two Enterprise Development Specialist, Market Linkages Officer, Communication, and ED Assistant.. While still in Nimba County, the ED team visited six farming groups to ascertain information relating to their ongoing activities.

Subah Belleh Associates (SBA) completed the Stake Holder Profile surveys in the six counties. The total number of interviews conducted exceeded 500. SBA has prepared and submitted a draft report of their findings and has received feedback from FED technical team for presentation and finalization of final report shortly.

The Rights & Rice Foundation (R&R), an IQC holder, has completed Organization Strengthening training for nine groups (258 participants, 159 females and 99 males) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Bassa counties. A final report is expected the first week of February 2013.

Creating Center of Excellence

Component Three is in the process of responding to the MoE's BSTVSE request for financial and technical assistance to complete the National Diploma in Agriculture for Post-Secondary School's Job Readiness TVET mandate. The vocational teacher training specialist is taking the lead to follow through on a mutually agreeable way to move forward. In this request a document is to be created and approved so that Community Colleges and other post-secondary institutions will have a curriculum that is standardized for the country and meets the requirements of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) guidelines.

FED has begun actively contacting universities, community colleges and post-secondary institutions to offer 170 internship positions for the second phase of the FED-sponsored internship program. The University of Liberia, United Methodist University, Cuttington University, Stella Maris Technical University, BWI, GBCC, NCCC, LCCC are all considered for internship opportunities provided they have qualified agriculture and business senior and/or recently graduated students who can apply and pass a rigorous interview process.

During this period, field visits were conducted in two of the counties of FED's interventions, Bong and Nimba counties. Selected communities in these counties were visited, with farming groups interviewed, as well as meetings with field office staff. The objective of the trip was to capture the impacts of best management practices proposed from previously held trainings to staff and farmer groups. Farmers' views on yields from lowland rice and upland rice production as well as constraints and advantages were also noted. Communities visited include Yarnquellie (Margibi County), Duaita (Bong County), Whynor and Doumpa (Nimba County).

The Community Mobilizing Officer arrived in Liberia early January 2013 and began work by holding a series of meetings at the county level. During this period, the Community Mobilizer Officer, held meetings with Nimba county staff and discussed the importance of women and youth participation into FED interventions with current partners in Nimba.

Currently, the Community Mobilizing Officer is working on developing a stakeholder profile database so that it can capture all components and activities that FED is doing with partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.

COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Project Planning

Agriculture productivity gantt charts for all Component One, year 2 activities were finalized during this reporting period.

Task 1.3 Input Supply System Interventions

During this reporting period the newly recruited IFDC- Liberia staff comprising of three Community – Based Facilitators and one Input supply Advisor were inducted in the FED Office/Monrovia. There were a series of field trips made by the new staff, led by the Input Supply Team Leader, in order to identify groups and individual out growers working under Arjay’s Farm in various communities in lower Margibi and Upper Montserrado counties. The team observed the delivery of farm equipment to Arjay Farm; the equipment will be used by the out growers organized into farming groups by Arjay Farm.

Major accomplishments and findings from the field trips:

Four locations where Arjay is conducting activities were visited between January 22-25, 2013 namely: i) Kingsville/Montserrado the location of the Arjay Farm; ii) Doemon Town/Margibi; iii) Fahn Seh Town Todee/Montserrado and Harrisburg/Montserrado;

1. Upland rice, lowland rice and cassava are grown in all the locations visited. The forest area is being reduced with the practice of slash and burn, and trees are used for charcoal production for Monrovia consumers;
2. The soils are depleted due to high pressure on natural resources and reduced fallow time (2-3 cropping seasons at the best);
3. De-stumping and accessibility are the major constraints for the use of power tillers, but will be discussed with the selected out growers;
4. The sizes of the rice stalks are reduced after harvesting. Using foot-operated threshers requires longer stalks. This will also be discussed with the selected out growers as this equipment is proposed to reduce labor time for rice threshing and to improve the quality of paddy for cleaning and/or milling.



Photo 1: Fanta Tamoriah and husband with their 2012 rice harvest

During the first visit in the various communities of the Arjay's Farm out growers, the farmers outlined the problems listed below as major challenges faced during last farming season: need of inputs and tools (seeds, cutlasses, hoes, bird nets, fertilizers, etc.) Other problems are associated with the incidence of the following pests (grass cutters and birds).



Photo 2: Stephen Slunteh and daughter threshing rice by using traditional method



Photo 3: Traditional rice storage of Mrs. Larsee Kpadeah

During the second visit, the following observations were made:

Observations:

- Farmers continue to select farm sites at random without necessarily taking into account the possibility of using power tillers.
- All farms visited will require de-stumping for power tiller operation.
- We observed that farmers often do traditional panicle harvesting for rice. This may be an issue for using foot-operated or manual threshers.
- Most farms are far from the communities due to land ownership and also the need to use trees for making charcoal.

Recommendations:

- Farmers receive orientation for site selection considering the topography which is important for power tiller use and FED has provided Power tillers for this intervention.
- Sickle harvesting should be promoted to facilitate the use of foot-operated threshers. The equipment has been provided by FED in this respect.
- Farmers should be educated on the importance of crop rotation, to reduce the practice of shifting cultivation.

Task 1.5 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Rice

During this period, interviews were conducted for the Irrigation Engineer position Mr. Patrick Farnaga was identified as the most qualified for this post. The Irrigation Engineer will work with the FED team to provide farmers with simple water management strategies for their rice fields. The Rice Officer visited Bong, Lofa, Monserrado, and Nimba counties to verify the farmer groups preselected for year two rice value chain activities and to identify potential areas for improved water management. During the period, the Rice Officer completed the selection of farming groups and seeds producers with a total of 144 farming groups and 17 seed producers selected. In Nimba, 33 groups were selected in 9 districts, 48 groups selected in 10 districts in Bong, 42 groups selected in 6 districts in Lofa, and 19 groups in 4 districts of Grand Bassa; with 2 groups selected in 2 districts of Montserrado County.

Task 1.6 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Cassava

NGW Project: During the period under review, regular meetings were held with AEDE and the NGW groups in Monrovia and Cooper Town, to discuss the possibility of cultivating 75 acres of land during this year.. The portion of land cleared earlier was found unsuitable and the project was advised to scale down its activities at the site, while a more suitable site is found.

A joint visit to the project site by AEDE, FED, and the NGW leadership to reach a consensus and chart a way forward was successfully carried out. All parties have fully understood FED's view to select a more suitable area for full scale production activities in keeping with the 75 acres target. Pending negotiation with the property owners, the new site has tentatively been accepted for large scale production. The NGW project is designed to eventually establish a processing center for gari production. This initiative is good, given its proximity to market centers, ports, and airports that can facilitate future export initiatives.

LREC - Duazon: The meeting with staff of the Liberia Renaissance Education Complex (LREC) to discuss the tentative concept note/suggestions sent out by Cassava Value Chain Manager of FED on the School's Agriculture Program and the School/Community Production Project went well. The meeting generated interests in the cultivation of cassava, assorted vegetables and oil palm, as well as the inclusion of fisheries to fully utilize the entire land, which also has a swamp and also introduce in-land fish culture to the students.

The School Community Agricultural Project commenced initial land clearing exercises on Saturday January 26, 2013. The FED team documented by videotaping the project's activities from the inception and will continue to capture each phase of activities as they unfold. The management team of the school along with students and parents were also in full attendance to work and grace the occasion.

Planting

Farmers: Farmers interviewed thus far have not yet commenced initial land preparation for cassava, but some have commenced land clearing for upland rice. This indicates that the concept of intercropping cassava with rice is not yet explained to these farmers. Some expressed the fear of the cassava overshadowing rice and will not allow good growth for the rice crop. FED will begin sensitizing farmers on cassava rice intercrop system to avoid the clearing of two fields for rice and cassava (the rice field can be used for growing both crops). The technology for such cropping pattern will be demonstrated to them to facilitate this process. This would avoid unnecessary clearing and at the same time, reduce labor input as well as monitoring and supervision. MoA extension agents should also be involved in this process.

Planting materials: The quest for planting materials still continues; progress has been made in the identification of possible sources, but there is still more work to be done. Finalizing the MOU between CARI and FED and the setting up of a rapid multiplication system would expedite implementation.

Value addition

Processors: During the course of identifying prospective farmers and improved planting materials, some processors were interviewed in Bong County. In keeping with the linking of processors with production and markets and vice versa, several processors were found in Bong County who are engaged in processing gari on a small scale using traditional methods. Most of these processors live in villages where cassava is grown and processing is being carried out on individual basis. Some of them are producing good quality gari, but could benefit from value addition training and possible linkage to input suppliers. Such credit scheme would enable them move a notch up the ladder and make them more competitive in marketing ventures.

Task 1.7 Peri-urban Vegetable Production

FED started working with 51 Peri- Urban groups in FED's six counties of intervention. Forty one groups out of the 51 groups were verified during a field visit to Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. During the visits sites were identified for the cultivation of assorted vegetables. Land agreements were signed with selected groups and land owners to ascertain access to land over an agreed period of time.

Brushing, clearing and field layout were carried out at these sites; to date 33 sites have carried out nursery construction and sowing of seeds. There is full crop establishment with bitter balls and cabbages at 3 of the 33 sites. Eight sites have been brushed, but not cleared and layout due to the lack of inputs available for destumping and layout.

Upcoming activities

- Work with DCOP for the finalization and the approval of the PUA activity plan;
 - Discuss with the FED Radio Officer to develop a strategy for radio programs for targeted beneficiaries; and
 - Work with Enterprise Development team to come up with the training needs for the groups and provide them with trainings that will have them take a more business oriented approach.
- Constraints**
- Late start of the off season production
 - Lack of input for the demonstration of new technologies and techniques

Task 1.8 Goat Interventions

In response to needs identified in the FED Goat Value Chain, the first Farmer to Farmer (FtF) Volunteer, Dr. Eran Raizman, Veterinarian, completed an assignment in on-farm training of FED selected Lead Farmer/Goat Producer groups in Shelter/Fencing and herd management in Nimba, Lofa, and Bong Counties. The training targeted twelve goat producer groups in each county, representing 175 goat producers with herd sizes ranging from 15 to 50 animals. The training involved goat shelter construction, fencing management, and basic herd health practices. These improved herd management techniques will be applied to 350 indigenous Liberian goats that are currently under traditional village production/management practices.

The FtF Volunteer was provided under a MOU signed between the USAID-FED Project and ACDI/VOCA Farmer to Farmer Program last October. Under the agreement, ACDI/VOCA provided a volunteer requested by the FED Project to address critical needs. FED's Goat Value Chain Leader, Dr. Dennis McCarthy, requested this FtF Volunteer to provide initial goat production management training for its participating Lead Goat Producer Groups which will implement Goat Pass-on Schemes in each of FED's designated counties over the next three years. The MOU represents a strategic partnership between FED and ACDI/VOCA in the provision of strategic expertise in assisting Liberian farmers targeted under each of the FED Value Chains including Rice, Cassava, Vegetable and Goat production.

COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

During the month of January, the Enterprise Development 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

A one day Buyers meeting was held in Ganta, Nimba County. Over 70 people, along with FED Component Two Enterprise Development Specialist, Market Linkages Officer, Communication, ED Assistance and the HANDS Project team attended. Discussion centered on cassava production and the processing of Gari in Liberia. The HANDS Project is willing and ready to jump start these activities by purchasing at the different, agreed-upon locations,. While still in Nimba County, the ED team visited six farming groups to ascertain information relating to their ongoing activities.

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 has prepared and submitted a draft report of their findings and has received feedback from FED technical team for presentation and finalization of final report shortly.

A survey form was created by the ED Intern; the objective was to create awareness within the FED six working counties on cassava preservation methods. In addition, the ED intern visited the field to test the survey form with producer groups in Margibi County and demonstrated the cassava preservation test.

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

Organization Strengthening Training

The Rights & Rice Foundation (R&R), an IQC holder, has completed an Organization Strengthening training for nine groups (258 participants, 159 females and 99 males) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Overall draft report was presented on 21 of January, 2013 and on the 28 of January a presentation was held at the office of FED. Final report is expected the first week of February 2013. Interims report and field report from FED team has pointed to the fact that the training was rewarding to the beneficiaries.

On January 25, 2013, the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment did a power point presentation at the FED mini conference room on the Baseline Survey that was conducted for the New Generational Women.

The objective of the survey was to establish a set of information on the social and economic status of men and women within the project area of Clay Ashland.

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, has conducted a joint outreach activity to communicate policy reform and fee standardization of the business formalization process and to introduce authorized agents in each of FED's six counties for SMEs and agriculture producer groups. There were 887 attendees which constituted 92% of the targeted number 960 (100%). The overall joint report of this activity is expected by the first week of February 2013.

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. To date, The Task Order proposal for the two activities (Second Organizational strengthening and Financial Management training) has been reviewed, and comments made and incorporated and has been approved in TAMIS. Activity is expected to commence the first or second week in February 2013 with 16 groups in the four primary Counties.

The upcoming Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Conference has been re-scheduled for the month of April 2013. The core objective for the conference is to highlight the reforms and policies implemented which are creating an enabling environment for the MSME sector to thrive and grow sector in Liberia by:

- Increase the flow of capital to MSMEs
- Enhance the capacity of the business owners/managers
- Build the productivity of the MSME
- Increase access to economic opportunities
- Broaden access to resources needed to respond to economic opportunities.

COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL HUMAN CAPACITY

Task 3.1 Creating Centers of Excellence

Ministry of Education (MoE), Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education (BSTVES) Services

Component Three is still in the process of responding to the MoE's BSTVSE request for financial and technical assistance to complete the National Diploma in Agriculture for Post-Secondary School's Job Readiness TVET mandate. The vocational teacher training specialist is taking the lead to follow through a mutually agreeable way to move forward. In this request a document is to be created and approved so that Community Colleges and other post-secondary institutions will have a curriculum that is standardized for the country and meets the requirements of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) guidelines. A panel of ten experts: five technical and trade specialists, three advisors and two facilitators will convene for a three day workshop to complete the National Agriculture Diploma Curricula. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is in progress and the forum to complete the national curriculum in agriculture will take place in February 2013.

Internship

Catherine Karmo, FED's Training Specialist, is actively contacting universities, community colleges and post-secondary institutions to offer 170 internship positions for the second phase of the FED-sponsored internship program. The University of Liberia, United Methodist University, Cuttington University, Stella Maris Technical University, BWI, GBCCC, NCCC, LCCC are all considered for internship opportunities provided they have qualified agriculture and business senior and/or recently graduated students who can apply and pass a rigorous interview process. The next phase of the FED Internship program is scheduled to start on February 20, 2013.

Booker Washington Institute

Classes resumed at BWI on January 7th. James Cooper, the Vocational Teacher Training Specialist, contacted the administration of BWI to re-invigorate the Memorandum of Understanding between FED and BWI. One healthy sign of cooperation is forthcoming and one activity that is due to begin on January 16th is a regular meeting of the Vocational Instructors with Mr. Cooper to assist them with instructional and practice based teaching.

The demonstration site for Peri-Urban Agriculture has not been well attended for the past few weeks. BWI has been facing challenges in technical staff. It is hoped that the next phase of FED Internship program will provide two well-qualified interns to assist with practical activities that relate to the curriculum.

School Garden in Kakata

On Wednesday, January 9th, the VTNFES met with the executive director of Green Coast Agricultural Program (GCAP) at the FED-BWI office. The MAWODA Elementary Public School established since 2009 runs from Kindergarten to Grade Six and has an enrollment of 462 students. Of this number, 215 are males while 247 are females. It is here we saw a good size field of cabbage and chili pepper growing along with a compost pit, a corn field in the making, and an elevated nursery bed.

The Founder and Executive Director, Aloysius Tamba, wishes to partner with FED to expand and improve the project. It is hoped FED can work with this highly ambitious and innovative group to grow and re-establish a previous Schools Garden Program that was active before the war.

Dr. Howard Williams of DAI arrived on January 21st to conduct in-depth interviews at BWI and Lofa County Community College business and agriculture department instructor needs. His strategy involved interviewing the Principal, the institution administrator, the head of departments, instructors, student leaders, recently graduated students, the BWI Alumni association and the Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) offices of the Ministry of Education.



Photo 4: Dr. Williams in conversation the BWI Agricultural Instructors

He wanted to find out what these various players in the educational system have to say about the perceived and real job readiness needs in Liberia. An overwhelming common theme emerged where Liberians are left behind neighboring countries due to the 14 year war, the practical application of the various subjects are not being done, and technology to teach is still like it was thirty years ago. Stress was placed on the responsibility of stakeholders, BWI Alumni included, to be actively involved in providing the means for BWI to move forward.

Following a completed report the STTA, Dr. Williams will recommend places and make contacts in the West Africa region which will be able to provide practical training for key instructors focusing on the four value chains, rice, cassava, goats and vegetables. The instructors who will be sent out for a period of up to eight weeks will then return to practice what they learned, train others to do likewise, and then return the following year for further training in theoretical learning.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the month of January, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team undertook the following activities:

- Data entry for the demo site rice survey was completed, with some verification of outlier data still in process. A draft analysis report has been prepared and distribution for review is awaiting further clarification of questionable data.
- GIS mapping for Enterprise stakeholders profile survey was completed and shared with the Enterprise Development Team.
- M&E Coordinators at the county level are collecting GPS coordinates for the new project site locations so that a map can be completed.
- Bids were opened for M&E Indefinite Quantity Contract and the MDF Technical Evaluation Committee finalized a selection of bidders. IQC contracting is in the final stages and when completed, Task Orders will be sent out for the RRA, individual rice farmer surveys, lead farmer surveys, and vegetable farmer surveys.
- Monitoring activities during the month focused on following-up the rice demo harvests, what groups will do with the harvested rice, visiting new sites, and observing various trainings, including the initiating of the goat value chain in some counties.
- Plans for follow-up monitoring activities in the counties are underway for the Enterprise Development MoCI Business awareness campaign, Teacher Training, Organizational Development training, food preservation training, and Youth and Business training programs.
- New staff candidate interviews commenced and will be completed the first week of February, with staff being hired before the end of next month
- Mobile data phone training was completed in all counties and trial collection and transmittal will be done in February.
- The M&E Manual is at the initial draft stage and will be sent to Component Team Leaders and Activity Managers for review.
- The PMP has been revised and will soon be resubmitted to USAID for approval; some Indicators have been removed as duplicates or are no longer applicable within FED
- The quarterly PIDS report on Indicator progress was submitted to USAID LMEP.
- A preliminary meeting was held to discuss reviving the market price survey. Contacts were made with MoA to explore collaboration with their market surveys. A revived survey will be completed in February, following additional meetings within FED and with the ministry.

Monitoring visit reports by County

1. County Findings

M&E staff	Activity	Observations
Aaron Kokolie (Bong County)	Peri- urban vegetable farmers	Farmers, both male and female, are brushing fields preparing for the vegetable production. Nursery preparation is underway for pepper, bitter ball and kale seed.
	Goat	Monitored the Production training.
	Rice	Farming groups have completed harvesting, drying and weighing rice Due to the lack of storage facilities in some of the communities, the rice was packed outside.
Aagon Dahn (Nimba)	Soy flour storage facility	The group contracted to construct the facility have completed the work and turn over the keys to FED.
	Cassava	Livestock from nearby communities are plants; weeding is being carried out in some of the communities.
	Enterprise activities	One community has the intention of acquiring a power tiller and building a warehouse. They would like FED to assist with link to potential buyers.
	Assistance requests	One community is preparing a proposal to FED to add cassava and vegetable production to their rice activity. Several communities requested needs assessments from the Enterprise Development Team and also for FED to introduce lead farmers training.
Lewis P. Grimes (Lofa)	Vegetable Production	Sites for the production of vegetables are currently being cleared in preparation for receiving seeds for their nurseries. Seeds provided to the various sites are limited and farmers are asking that FED increase the quantity of seeds being supplied to them.
	Organizational Development training	Organizational development training was well received and requests have been made for training of additional groups.
Varney Kollie (Grand Bassa)	Organizational Development Training	Site visit was made to observe the training, collect the data and check on the attendance. GPS coordinates of new sites were taken Four farmer groups have collected fees to complete the applications for the Article of Incorporation. Four vegetable sites have begun their nursery preparation.
	Other activities	Observed MoCI farmer groups registration training, rice harvesting,

		participated in County Development Steering Committee Meeting.
General		Rice harvest, drying and threshing is not complete in all counties Year II farmer groups have mostly been selected Farmer groups have started clearing land and setting up nurseries for the upcoming planting season

2. County Accomplishments

Farmer groups in FED communities are generally enthusiastic in anticipation of Year two activities. There are 265 new farmer groups that have expressed an interest in participating in the various FED activities in Year two and 49 groups from Year one that wish to continue with new technology activities.

Most of the farmer groups have decided what they intend to do with the rice they have harvested. Farmer groups are generally very impressed with the results of the demonstration plots. Harvested rice is being repaid to FED, distributed to members for seed, some stored for later sale, and others still deciding what to do with the surplus.

Participants in the goat production training said that they were encouraged by the training. Some said that the training provided them with a greater understanding of management and productivity techniques.

Many of new communities selected for the Year two FED activities have started clearing land in preparation for start-up. Training of FED field staff in the effective use of mobile devices for collecting data was completed. This can be a useful tool for collecting and transmitting data.

Farmer groups were impressed with the yield results of their efforts on the demonstration plots and with the inputs FED provided.

3. County Issues

Monitoring trainings in different and faraway locations and follow-up on impact of the program is a challenge. As the project sites increase, distance and transportation will become an issue for M&E staff monitoring activities. FED needs to ensure that agriculture tools and seeds are distributed on time in Year two to keep up the momentum.

Some groups are still discussing what they intend to do with the money that will be generated from the sales of the rice. An issue for most of the farmer groups and communities is the lack of storage facilities for the surplus rice. This is critical to their efforts to hold rice for sale when prices are higher. A few have considered using funds from the sale of rice to build community storage facilities.

Some farmers are concerned about the possibility of applying the new technologies on their individual farms. According to many, the methods of land preparation and planting may be too labor intensive and time consuming.

Special Studies

The Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) will commence as soon as the IQC is finalized and contracts are issued to the holders. Task Orders (TO) have been prepared, as well as survey instruments, for the following surveys:

1. Individual farmer who participated in the Year one rice demonstrations

2. Vegetable farmers and the results from the demonstrations and from their own fields
3. Vegetable seedling producers and the producers who bought seedlings
4. Goat herders who participated in the Year one vaccination program.

Indicator status table

The Indicators reported by FED have been reduced from 26 to 19, with 11 being reported as FtF Indicators. The remaining eight will be reported as internal indicators for project tracking purposes. The table below shows the change in Indicators for the current month and the cumulative to date.

Indicator Status Table- Year Two

Please see below progress on the quarter indicators:

Indicator	FY 2013 Target	Quarter 1 Achievement	Quarter 2 (Jan 1-31) Achievement	Cum total FY 2013	Comments
Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG interventions (4.5.2-13)	30,000	423	127	550	Each farmer represents a rural household
Number of food security private enterprises (for profit), organizations and associations receiving USG assistance (4.5.2-11)	27,725	53	17	70	Out of the 17 receiving assistance 3 are continuing with FED in Year 2 and 14 are NEW groups
Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of FTF assistance (4.5.2-12)	190	18	2	20	2 new MOUs were signed between FED and two private manufacturers
Number of individuals who have received USG supported short term agricultural sector productivity or food security training (4.5.2-7)	M = 5,432 F = 3,932 Total =9,364	M =238 F =185 Total = 423	M=78 F=49 Total = 127	M =316 F =234 Total = 550	These are individuals who participated in various FED trainings
Number of individuals, organizations and institutions that have received training of a technical nature (3.1.2)	TBD	M=86 F=21 Total = 107	N/A	M=86 F=21 Total = 107	

Number of individuals that have received training on management and leadership (3.2.1)	TBD	M=88 F=122 Total = 210	M=42 F=29 Total = 71	M=130 F=151 Total=281	
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------	--

M&E General Accomplishments and issues

1. Accomplishments:

Interviews for new hire M&E Coordinators and M&E Data Entry candidates were conducted in Montserrado and Grand Bassa counties. Paper work including reference checks has begun for the successful candidates.

Mobile phone training was conducted for twenty (20) Staff, including M&E Coordinators, Extension Officers, Livestock Officers and Enterprise Development Assistants from all FED program counties. Staff can now efficiently use mobile phones to collect and transmit data for program purposes.

The PMP has been updated, with some indicators being dropped and annual targets updated and included in the PIRS information sheets. Upon approval from USAID, FED will report on a total of 11 FtF Indicators, plus another eight internal project Indicators.

The M&E Manual is being circulated in draft form to FED Component Team Leaders and Activity Managers for review. This manual will be finalized next month.

2. Issues:

The IQC process is in its final stages of approval. Following approval, Task Orders for special studies and surveys will be issued under the IQC.

Analysis of the rice survey data has produced some initial findings that suggest some yield data may be questionable. Those data sets are being reviewed and crossed checked for validation.

Participants in several trainings indicated that more groups need to be included in additional trainings (Organizational Development, goal) and that these and other trainings be carried out and followed-up on regular basis to reinforce and strengthen the participating groups.

Suggestions were made for more training of lead farmers.

Activities planned for February 2013

A field trip to Lofa will be taken with USAID staff in the first week of February 2013 and several tasks will be completed: M&E Manual, rice survey analysis, IQC and Task Orders for several surveys and initiating the surveys, Year two PMP and revised Indicators.

Monitoring and post-activity follow-up will continue for all ongoing and completed activities, with particular interest in how participants are using their training and applying new technologies. GPS coordinates for all new sites will be completed and updated on site maps drawn.

Surveys and studies will set the baseline of the value chains for the project, with Year one being established as that baseline.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT FUND

During the month of January 2013, the MDF approved one new activity under Component One, two new activities under Component Two, and one new activity under Component Three. In summary, from the beginning of the program through January 2013, FED has generated and approved **53** activities, totaling **\$2,014,707.34** in budget estimates. There are another **32** activity concepts covering all three Components, totaling **\$5,728,781.18** in budget estimates that have been proposed and are in the approval process. Below are two tables: Table A gives status and budget estimates; Table B summarizes completed and ongoing activities follows below (please note that completed activities are shaded in grey)

TABLE A:

Status	#	Estimated budget
Approved	37	\$1,682,036.34
proposed	32	\$5,728,781.18
Completed	15	\$265,643.00
Closed	1	\$67,028.00

TABLE B: FED Activity Table – APPROVED ACTIVITIES

Activity Name	Numb	Description	Start Date	End Date	Approx. Value (USD)	Location (county, district)	Activity Status
COMPONENT 1							
Rice Production and Processing Demonstration	C1-MDF-01	26 sites/partnerships with farmer associations in training by module (site selection, rice variety selection, land preparation, fertilizer application, seedling production, transplanting, and irrigation, weeding, harvesting, and post-	5/21/12	10/31/12	\$ 57,244	Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing

		harvest). In addition, labor-saving production technologies (rotary weeders, power tillers) will be demonstrated.					
Water Well Drilling	C1-MDF-02	Assess local conditions for the installation of tube wells, including a technique that increases the recharge rates of existing shallow wells, and train the FED project technical trainer and workers from two local enterprises in the manual installation of tube wells.	5/24/12	08/31/12	\$ 2,000	Bong, Montserrado, Nimba, Margibi	Ongoing
MoA Participation at Scientific Conference of the Global Cassava Partnership in Kampala, Uganda	C1-TRN-03	Enhance MoA's knowledge of climate change concerns for the cassava sector by funding the attendance of their program officer at the Scientific Conference of the Global Cassava Partnership in Kampala, Uganda.	6/18/12	6/22/12	\$ 3,500	Montserrado	Completed
Training Private sector on Soil Testing processes and procedures	C1-TRN-04	Enhance soil testing services in the private sector by partnering with a company that is currently providing soil testing for engineering services but who would like to expand soil testing to the Ag sector. FED will provide training on how to test soils while the company will provide the soil tests required by the FED program so extension agents can make fertilizer recommendations.	5/28/12	9/30/12	\$ 10,145	Montserrado	Completed
Training and Demonstrations on	C1-MDF-06	Train 1000 farmers on 22 FED cassava demonstration sites, upland rice out-growers,	09/24/12	11/30/12	\$ 64,000	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

Integrated Soil Fertility Management/ISFM		members of 3 cooperatives, 20 extension staff and 12 agro-dealers. The total ISFM demonstration coverage is 150 hectares covering all FED sites (60x50) per plot.					
Capacity building for the safe use of authorized agro-chemicals in Bong and Lofa	C1-MDF-08	Collaborate with input dealers in organizing sensitization, awareness creation and demonstrations for the safe use of authorized agro-chemical and equipment. Conduct two demonstrations of innovative tools, inputs (fertilizer, chemicals, etc.) in Lofa and Bong.	7/24/12	8/15/12	\$ 5,000	Lofa, Bong	Completed
Arjay Farms Out-grower Expansion	C1-MDF-11	Work with Arjay Farms in expanding and training additional out-grower staff. In addition, provide Arjay with the necessary tools and training in order to process the significant increase in rice seed.	6/18/12	10/15/13	\$ 111,520	Montserrado	Ongoing
Vegetable Seedling Special Study	C1-MDF-13	Identify approximately 30 independent vegetable seedling producers in the focus counties (5 per county). Then conduct mini-survey with 30 producers to collect data on each production sites' setup and location, scope of seedling production and sales, inputs and costs for production, as well as challenges in producing and selling vegetable seedlings. Based on the survey determine the best candidates to be trained as commercial	6/5/12	7/02/12	\$ 1,475	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, Margibi	Completed

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		vegetable seedling producers through the FED Vegetable Seedling Program.					
Food Consumption Patterns & Expenditure Among Peri-Urban Farmers (FCPE) Special Study	C1-MDF-14	A mini survey of a sub-sample of the FED Baseline Survey of households that was conducted between February and May 2012. The Baseline sampled approximately 85 households involved with FED in the peri-urban areas of Margibi and Montserrado Counties. The specific objective of this survey is to characterize the following: types of food consumed (dietary variety) and types of food sources by household head type, main livelihood of household head and household size; estimate average household food expenditure and share of different food types in total food ; and consumption shocks and coping strategies.	5/21/12	6/29/12	\$ 583	Montserrado, Margibi	Completed
Soy Flour Compost Distribution	C1-MDF-15	Collaborate with OICI on the transfer of 485 MT of spoiled soy flour that was imported by OICI but is unfit for neither human nor animal consumption. FED will work with local partners on using the soy flour for compost on FED and partner sites. A warehouse will be constructed to store the soy flour.	7/9/12	12/31/12	\$ 50,000	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Completion of National Peste des Petits Ruminant (PPR) Vaccination	C1-MDF-18	Assist MOA with effective completion of the National PPR vaccination campaigns at the County level. Significant	7/2/12	10/15/12	\$ 132,000	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado,	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

Campaign		EU/AU/IBAR provided vaccines remain unused due to closure of program.				Nimba	
Biomass-fired Testing and Possible dissemination	C1-MDF-19	The aim of this activity is to test, demonstrate and, depending on the results of the testing and demonstrations, promote the commercialization of biomass-fired vegetable dryer.	11/16/12	12/18/12	\$4,800	Montserrado	Ongoing
Vetiver Expansion Program	C1-MDF-20	Develop plant materials that are effective at stopping soil erosion. Establish small nurseries of Vetiver at the county offices to be eventually planted out at demo sites to assist with soil erosion.	6/29/12	10/31/12	\$ 5,630	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Cassava Demo Site Training and Cultivation – Phase I	C1-MDF-21	22 sites/partnerships with farmer associations to increase farmers' capacity to increase the production of cassava, expand network of out grower farmers in cassava, and build sustainable and profitable cassava farming operations for cassava farmers in the target counties.	6/18/12	10/31/12	\$ 39,700	Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing
Phase I, Youth Nutrition Program	C1-MDF-22	Build Demonstration site to build and increase overall nutrition at orphanage. Train Orphanage leaders and kids in vegetable farming and input supplies and provide technical assistance on goat health.	6/29/12	12/31/12	\$ 32,853	Montserrado	Ongoing
Vegetable seedling production and sales	C1-MDF-24	Motivate farmers to invest in vegetable production by training seedling producers in use and promotion of improved inputs and on how to provide technical	8/15/12	01/31/13	\$ 90,510	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		information services to farmers.					
Johnsonville Women Agriculture Project	C1-MDF-25	Improve the water management system through the construction of peripheral canals to collect and control water from the catchment areas and the construction of peripheral bunds.	7/23/12	10/22/12	\$ 3,106	Montserrado	Ongoing
Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS)	C1-MDF-26	Partner with the Government of Liberia on the 2012 CFSNS goals to provide baseline food security and nutrition information that will underpin the measurement of progress in the implementation of PRS II and UNDAF 2013-17. The main objective is to ensure availability of timely and appropriate high quality food security and nutrition data to inform policy and programming.	7/16/12	12/14/12	\$ 28,000	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
One day technical consultative workshop on livestock interventions in Liberia	C1-MDF-29	Assist the MOA in achieving a sound understanding of development interventions in the livestock sector by arranging a meeting to identify donor funded interventions currently under implementation in the livestock sector and facilitating relationship building among participating organizations.	9/6/12	9/6/12	\$ 2,825	Montserrado	Completed
Soy Flour Compost Production Training	C1-TRN-30	Collaborate with Sangay farm based on their knowledge and experience in compost production to train lead cassava farmers from Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Lofa counties in compost production and its application.	8/16/12	8/30/12	\$ 5,633	Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Lofa	Completed
T-shirt for Cassava,	C1-	Increase awareness of FED	8/21/12	9/30/12	\$ 11,193	Bong, Nimba,	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

up and lowlands rice, and vegetables demonstration trainees	MDF-31	programs in targeted communities by production of a FED t-shirt to be distributed to those who are participating in FED activities.				Grand Bassa, Lofa	
Training in treadle pump manufacturing and tube well installation	C1-MDF-32	Train metal workers and other artisans in the production and installation of treadle irrigation pumps and tube wells, which are relatively low cost and highly productive irrigation equipment.	8/16/12	2/28/13	\$ 5,110	Lofa, Margibi, Nimba	Ongoing
Vegetable and Cassava Processing	C1-MDF-34	Train local manufacturers in producing low-cost, efficient cassava and vegetable processing equipment. Provide portable cassava mill and other processing equipment allowing for easy transportation from one location to another.	9/24/12	12/15/12	\$ 8,200	Montserrado, Bong	Ongoing
Agro-dealers capacity building	CLIN01-MDF-0036	During FY 2012, a total of 12 agro-dealers and input suppliers were identified. Their capacity and products currently available for distribution in Liberia were assessed. These 12 change agents form the initial target group for our interventions, opportunities for expansion of the distribution network and identification of new input supply enterprises will continue to be explored.	10/29/2012	9/30/2013	\$45,000	Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado	Ongoing
Impact Rice Dehuling	C1-MDF-40	Introduce low-cost, locally made rice dehulling equipment available to rice producers and consumers, making profitable processing businesses a possibility and improving access	11/07/12	12/18/12	\$4,200	Montserrado, Bong, Nimba	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		to markets.					
Three day technical consultative workshop on livestock interventions disease extension support in Liberia	CLIN01-MDF-0045	In order to effectively manage the development of the National Livestock Sector, the MOA needs to instruct all Livestock sector extension staff in issues of animal health and prevention in Liberia. The FED has received invitation for its project County Livestock Extension staff to attend a planned workshop in animal disease diagnosis and prevention scheduled for Dec 17-19, 2012.	12/17/2012	12/19/2012	\$2,825	Montserrado	Completed
COMPONENT 2							
Business Management Skills Training	C2-TRN-01	Stimulate agribusiness growth by conducting a business management training that will help attendees to identify their business skill strengths and weakness; develop a stronger business plan; learn about the various component of managing a successful agri-business; and present an action plan to develop and manage a profitable agriculture business.	5/23/12	6/8/12	\$ 14,527	Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Nimba	Completed
Formation of National Cassava Sector Coordinating Committee	C2-MDF-02	Facilitate the establishment of a sustainable system for coordination, advocacy and information dissemination within the Cassava sector as agreed in the National Cassava Sector Strategy document.	6/1/12	9/30/12	\$ 10,075	Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing
Enterprise Development Pilot Program	C2-TRN-03	Prepare various producer groups in Nimba to meet the minimum standard requirements as Business Associations (Business	7/2/12	10/31/12	\$ 31,620	Nimba	Completed

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		registration and establishing bank accounts as well as putting in place good financial system) through a training workshop.					
Computer literacy training for From God to Man Farmers Association	C2-TRN-04	Provide basic computer training to ten community members in the village of Doumpa. The computer training will enhance the capacity of the farmers association to efficiently manage the association	7/12/12	9/12/12	\$ 1,700	Nimba	Completed
Stakeholder Profiles	C2-MDF-05	Provide baseline and profile data on lead producers, agro-input dealers, processors, transport and logistics companies, and buyers (including markets) that support the four value chains: rice, cassava, vegetables, and goats in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi.	8/6/12	12/31/12	\$ 54,500	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Business Skills Training for SMEs	C2-TRN-06	To stimulate the Agriculture sector FED will work with approximately 25 participants representing 12 SMEs on the following: key considerations when writing a business plan; applying a simple process to write a business plan effectively; coordination of various company departments and resources in the process of writing the business plan; and drafting of business plan document.	7/18/12	9/7/12	\$ 4,870	Bong	Completed
Mentorship program for Business Plan Development for SMEs	C2-TRN-07	Market Research training, Telephone follow-ups with various groups, Market Analysis & Development of Marketing	7/25/12	10/31/12	\$ 21,480	Bong, Montserrado	Completed

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		Plan training, Development of Production/Operational Plan training, Development of Financial Plan training, and finalization of each partner's business plan.					
Welekamah Farmer Based Organization	C2-TRN-08	Build the capacity of Welekamah to operate more effectively as a business through a training workshop which will address the topics of customer service, selling techniques and farming as a business.	1/4/12	1/6/12	\$ 1,770	Bong	Completed
New Generational Women/AEDE/ Chevron	C2-MDF-09	Build the capacity of a predominantly women cooperative group to produce pepper and cassava farms with value addition components to increase incomes and food security for farming families of Upper Clay Ashland in rural Montserrado County. Activities include completion of a Baseline Survey, provision of good governance training, provision of literacy training, provision of agricultural skills training, provision of financial management training, provision of business management and marketing training.	10/1/12	9/30/13	\$ 13,719	Montserrado	Ongoing
Enterprise Development Pilot Plan And Gender Concept	C2-TRN-10	Prepare various producer groups in Grand Bassa to meet the minimum standard requirements as Business Associations (Business registration and establishing bank accounts as	8/7/12	8/11/12	\$ 8,020	Grand Bassa	Completed

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		well as putting in place good financial system) through a training workshop that also addresses problems and constraints that female members face and stresses the importance and benefits of addressing those problems.					
MSME-FED Partnership Formalization Outreach Program	C2-MDF-13	In support of MOCI, conduct an outreach campaign that will better inform and encourage the public (Farmers Association, Agriculture input dealers and value chain actors) to register their businesses and also inform them about the benefits associated with the registration process.	9/7/12	12/31/12	\$ 69,702	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Pilot Youth Business Plan Competition for Institutions	C2-TRN-15	FED will pilot a Business Plan Competition which includes a training component for Seniors and recent graduates of business and agriculture programs at the following institutions: BWI, Cuttington University, University of Liberia, Nimba Community College, and Grand Bassa Community College. Three top winners will be eligible for assistance from FED with implementing their business plan.	10/29/12	12/28/12	\$ 19,592	Bong, Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong	Ongoing
Organizational Strengthening	C2-TRN-18	After conducting a robust needs survey and assessment of FBOs, FED will provided targeted FBOs with organizational strengthening training to improve organizational and management	10/30/12	2/28/13	\$ 112,001	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		practices, communication skills, financial management skills, human resource development skills and gender inclusiveness.					
Video Workshop	C-2-MDF-19	FED, in partnership with USAID FACET, will provide training on taking and presenting low-cost video. This training will target selected agribusinesses and organizations doing agriculture extension work, as well as MoA and FED staff. Video content will target areas where there are gaps in knowledge in the goat, cassava, rice, and vegetable value chains. By providing this training we will provide additional technical tools and knowledge to strengthen Liberian agribusiness and community groups' ability to address their target audience.	12/03/12	12/08/12	\$19,305	Montserrado	Approved
MSME Conference 2013	CLIN02-MDF-0020	The Government of Liberia with the support of LBBF and IFC will bring together 150-200 MSMEs, banks, MFIs, and civil society for 3 days conference which will be based on the four pillars of the MSME policy: Legal and Regulatory Reforms; Access to Markets; Access to Finance; and Building Skills and Knowledge. The conference will allow the government to take stock of the MSME sector in Liberia, deliver key training workshops to assist	11/06/2012	02/08/2013	\$40,000	Montserrado	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		them in all stages of development, and examine practical steps that other key players including banks, micro finance institutions, and concessionaires can take to promote sustainable growth leading to employment creation and jobs.					
Second Organization Strengthening Training	CLIN02-TRN-0021	The key program objective for organizational strengthening is to consolidate the organization and strengthen its leadership and governance structure. It also aims at ensuring the direct participation of its members, including networks and associates of Agriculture commercial partners in the sector development and implementation.	12/15/2012	03/15/2013	250,000	Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Lofa	Ongoing
Financial Management	CLIN02-TRN-0023	Organizations and individuals assisted by donor projects often abandon the activity when donor funding ends, rather than continuing development of productive enterprises; frequently organizations are initiated for the primary purpose of capturing donor funding. For example, donor projects have stimulated swampland rice cultivation using a model of payment for product with seeds rather than cash. Despite profitability (reported by donors) growers stopped cultivation when the project	12/10/2012	03/10/2013	\$80,000	Grand Bassa, Nimba, Lofa	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		ended. Observers attribute this to lack of growers' ownership of the activity, lack of personal investment and lack of financial literacy.					
Financial Management Training	CLIN02-TRN-0023	The objectives of Financial Management training and mentorship are to: 1) Learn terms and functions of a basic financial management system 2) Learn organizational roles and responsibilities for maintaining a financial system 3) Learn to execute basic monthly financial record keeping 4) Learn to compile a forecast basic budget, profit and loss statement, cash flow (level permitting)	12/10/2012	03/10/2013	\$83,967.00	Nimba, Bassa, Lofa, Bong	Ongoing
Value Chain Consultancy	CLIN02-MDF-0024	The objective of this is to provide guidance, mentorship, and momentum to the Market Linkages Officer and other Enterprise Development Team members on the implementation of the following activities:	1/14/2013	2/28/2013	\$70,000.00	Montserrado	pending
COMPONENT 3							
Agro-Business Internship Program	C3-MDF-01	Partner with universities and vocation schools in establishing a 3 month internship program for selected students and place them in Agro-business organizations.	6/1/12	11/30/12	\$ 67,028	Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Staff Training and Curriculum Roundtable	C3-TRN-02	Conduct two-day training for BWI Department of Ag and Admin staff as well as all staff at	6/11/12	6/22/12	\$ 2,000	Montserrado, Nimba	Completed

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

discussion at BWI and Nimba		the Nimba Community College on instructional development and delivery. A curriculum review with all stakeholders will also be conducted.					
Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI): Building a Center of Excellence	C3-MDF-04	BWI lacks the resources and training to be a Center of Excellence for Liberia. Curriculum has not been reviewed nor improved for several decades. Staff need to be re-trained, and infrastructure for the Library and Department of Agriculture is poor, with inadequate facilities and equipment for teachers and students. FED will work with BWI on the following: 1) Upgrade BWI to become a Center of Excellence 2) Upgrade curricula and equipment for BWI's agriculture department. 3) Create an environment conducive to learning and to the pursuit of excellence in agriculture.	6/15/12	9/30/12	\$ 120,550	Margibi	Ongoing
Food Processing and Preservation Project	CLIN03-MDF-0005	As a result of the 15 year civil war, most basic agriculture products currently sold domestically are imported from nearby neighboring Countries. Additionally, the lack of skills and techniques for food processing and preservation are minimum and therefore the farmer must sell all fresh produce	9/20/2012	4/30/2013	\$92,532.14	Montserrado, Bong, and Nimba	Ongoing

**FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013**

		immediately and any surplus represents an economic loss. This loss of income dissuades Liberian youth from becoming actively engage in agriculture as an economic livelihood.					
FED World Food Day Participation - Child Art Competition	C3-MDF-06	Meaningfully involve youth in agriculture and business development in order to prepare them to participate more fully in economic development and food security. This will be done through partnership with Child Art to arrange an art competition among school children on the theme of World Food Day, culminating in a final awarding ceremony at the World Food Day event being organized by the MoA.	9/10/12	12/15/12	\$ 16,935	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Instructor Survey and Vocational Education Instruction	CLIN03-TRN-0010	FED is active in four community colleges and the BWI. In order to know the needs of instructors, an assessment will take place. Based on the assessment vocational instructor education will take place.	12/03/2012	12/16/2012	\$3,000.00	Margibi, Grand Bassa, Nimba	Ongoing

FED STTA TRACK TABLE - NOVEMBER 2012

The below STTAs that completed their assignment and are still contributing to the accomplishment activities for the month of November:

Name	Position	Partner	Dates	Summary
Agatha Johnson	SME Training Specialist	DAI	November 2012	SME training to C2 identified firms

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and Logistics

Achievements

During the month of January, FED continued to provide effective administration and logistical support to program and administrative staff, while assuring contract compliance.

Staff Recruitment, LTTA:

During the period under review, we were glad to have on board our new Deputy Chief of Party/ Technical. The below staff were recruited to fill vacant positions. Two interns were recruited from the last Internship Program, an Internship Impact Assessment Officer and Internship Institutional Outreach Officer. Also, Six Community Based Input Supply Officers were hired for Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa on a six months contractual basis. Orientations for these staff are currently ongoing.

New Hires Name

1. Mardoe Moore - Internship Impact Assessment Officer - Monrovia
2. Tenesee K. Moore - Internship Institutional Outreach Officer – Monrovia
3. Duraman A. Fahnbulleh - Marketing Officer - Monrovia
4. Ame Atsu David- Market Linkage Officer - Monrovia
5. James S. Harris - Caretaker/Office Assistant - Monrovia
6. Maxwell B. Saypay - IT Assistant - Monrovia
7. Krubo Boway - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Bong
8. Emmanuel B. Zeh - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Bong
9. Allenton S. Galakpai - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Lofa
10. Gabriel L. Kerkulah - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Nimba
11. Frank T. Tosah - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Grand Bassa
12. Samuel Z. Kwaizah - Community Based Input Supply Officers - Bong

Ongoing Recruitment

Recruitment is currently ongoing for the following positions

- i) Community Program Officers
- ii) M&E Coordinator/Assistant
- iii) Access to Finance Officer
- iv) Nutritionist
- v) Agro Technician
- vi) Irrigation Engineer
- vii) Agronomist
- viii) Receptionist

Other activities

- The HR Team has sent out the performance management plan out for staff and supervisor to start their performance review.

During the month of January, the Operations Manager visited two county offices and below are recommendations from his visits:

- There is a need for the construction of a shelter to house the motorcycles at the Nimba county office;
- There is a need for the construction of gazebo to be used for outdoor meetings and other purposes at the Lofa county office;
- The FED stolen sign board should be replaced at the Bong county office junction.

FED delivered ten pieces of power tillers, ten pieces of manual threshers and three pieces of motorcycles to Arjay Farm on January 29, 2013.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Training and Capacity Building

Mr. Patrick Hall, Environmental Specialist, worked with the FED team for a 2 week STTA in January. The purpose of the visit was to provide capacity support to the office in Monrovia and participate in regular quarterly compliance monitoring. The trip covered from the period 16-25 January 2013.

Compliance Monitoring of Other Activities

During this period, field visits were conducted in two of the counties of FED's interventions, Bong and Nimba Counties. Selected communities in these counties were visited, with farming groups interviewed, and meetings were held with field office staff. The objective of the trip was to capture the impact of best management practices proposed from previously held trainings to staff and farmer groups. Farmers' views on yields from lowland rice and upland rice production as well as constraints and advantages were also noted. Communities visited include Yarnquellie (Margibi County), Duata (Bong County), Whynor and Doumpa (Nimba County).

In a meeting with cooperative lead, Sylvester Kpenneh, in Yarnquellie, FED's best practices were gradually been integrated into activities. As an example, planting beds arrangement was made to prevent nutrients run-off in most cases, while the introduction of Vetiver grass served as added improvement to erosion control. Other areas visited mostly involved lowland rice production site with communities expressing satisfaction in the yield from newly introduced methods. However, the need for more water management was greatly stressed.



Photo 5: Compliance Specialist, Patrick Hall in Duata, Bong County



Photo 6: Rice Irrigation, Duata, Bong Co.

Meeting with FED activity

leads and focus arms provided greater insight into way forward for the effective monitoring of activities as well as paving the way for the integration of environmental management information into trainings. M&E has agreed for a full utilization of the field M&E Coordinators to be trained in aiding reporting at field level. The review of MoU for an environmental management focus has also been expressed. The Environmental Officer has observed that one way that guarantees environmental performance is to have IP have awareness of their environmental responsibility.

Issues Arising:

- Training of field extension staffs and field offices in general on the EMMP.
- Training of community based agricultural producers on environmental management.
- Introduction of environmental trainings at FEDs associated institutions

FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA
MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2013

- Inclusion of M&E coordinators into environmental compliance monitoring.

Planned Activities:

- Training of field extension staffs and field offices in general on the EMMP in April 2013
- Training and Inclusion of M&E coordinators into compliance monitoring in April 2013.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The month was full of advancing activities started in year one. Most activities related to special studies and reporting, acquiring information from staff, and improving data storage and accessibility.

Special Studies and Reporting

To help staff understand the benefits of Knowledge Management (KM) in line with FED goals, several technical leads were approached and brief meetings were held explaining what KM is, and what is needed to ensure its goals are met, and vice versa. From those various discussions several needs were express, and information was shared to better inform KM on how to move forward with ensuring information is captured and shared.

KM is currently working along with the M&E to conduct a Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) as part of FED special studies initiative. This process will commence once the IQCs for M&E team has been completed.

Improving Data Storage and Accessibility

TAMIS

Ongoing changes are taking place in TAMIS and two sections are being redone by KM, with inputs from communications. One of the difficulties FED is currently facing is creating an information sharing platform that various components can utilize for sharing information internally and externally. Thus, KM created a folder on the public drive that is accessible by all staff, and will be used as a focal point for information sharing. Staff received an email with detail instructions on how to store files in the KM folder on the public drive.

In addition, external information will be store in the KM public folder in the future that will aid with the knowledge building of staff.

To enhance external entities knowledge about FED's activities in Liberia, a contact list has been consolidated and will be placed in the contacts section in TAMIS, which will be used to disburse information externally.

General Update

There is a need to reach more staff and help them understand the role of KM. In February, KM plan to have a presentation for staff to help them understand how to optimize their use of KM.

Working with MDF and M&E to ensure all administrative and logistical activities related to the finalizing the IQCs are completed as per the timeline provided to implement the RRA activity.

Knowledge Management Activities

Month	Counties	Activities
January 2013	Monrovia	External Meetings Met with MOCI,WFP, and MOA

	<p>Meeting was intended to find out if WFP and MOA has done anything in the past on RRA/PRA. What are some challenges they face, and lesson learned. What materials do they have pertaining to Liberia policy relating agricultural produce? Exporting, Importing, prices, etc. What is being done in the market price sector?</p> <p>Results</p> <p>MOA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with the Planning Department and Assistant to the Minister • Acquire the annual report and Cocoa production strategy for Liberia • Policies relating agriculture are still being cultivated, and ministry hope to have the policies review and ready for implementation next year • No information on market price as of now <p>MoCI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the Director of trade • MoCI is still in the process of creating concrete policies to guide how they conduct business externally and internally. Recommended I speak with AWEP representative. • Met with African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) representative, and discovered they are working along with women farmers, producing products ready for sale on the local market. They were connected to Melanie from enterprise development as requested. <p>WFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are currently in the process of implementing a Market price survey at the national level along with LIGIS. They proposed FED meet with them and state how all three entities can collaborate on doing the market price survey. Robert was connected with WFP contact. Recommended follow up with LIGIS. <p>LIGIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 30 minutes of waiting I discovered the individual who I had the appointment with left for class. However, I was told there are several studies currently being conducted at LIGIS for market pricing, and assessment of agricultural products. <p>Internal Meetings</p> <p>Catherine- meeting was intended to create synergy with the Training Technical Lead. Results :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on staff capacity building survey to better understand staff needs and limitations. • Organize special studies to understand what are some techniques and resources available in Liberia that could be used by FED technical team. <p>Patrick- to inform the environment team how KM functions.</p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

		<p>Results :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered the IEE and the EMP documents, helpful to technical leads for environmental guidelines and implementation. • Concluded it will be ideal to work with the RRA team and include some vision regarding the environment. • Shared document for FED publications series <p>Alia and Jonathan -to finalize outstanding issues.</p> <p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluded KM will lead the new process on ensuring STTAs are properly oriented upon arrival in Liberia. <p>Nelson and Alia-how KM and Communication can collaborate.</p> <p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize publication series setup • KM will assist when requested with marketing materials, reporting, editing, etc.
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

The Community Mobilizing Officer arrived in Liberia early January 2013 and began work by holding series of meetings at county levels. During this period, the Community Mobilizing Officer held meetings with Nimba county staff and discussed the importance of women and youth participation into FED interventions with current partners in Nimba. The Community Mobilizing Officer was able to meet with 10 groups and it was very apparent that FED needs to figure out a way to centralize a stakeholder database that could be used and updated by everyone in FED's TAMIS.

Currently, the Community Mobilizing Officer is working on updating FED's stakeholder profile database so that it can capture all components and activities that FED is doing with partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.

APPENDIX I: SUCCESS STORY



SUCCESS STORY

Goat Owners Learn New Skills to Improve Herd Management

Collaboration between FED, FtF and Tarlo Farm results in knowledge sharing and application of best practices in the goat sector



ACDI/VOCA FtF Volunteer and female goat producers demonstrate how to give proper vaccinations.

Photo Credit: Dennis McCarthy - FED

“FED has identified a positive and more possible market for Lead Farmer/Goat Producer groups in Nimba, something which is highly unique.” Rev. Nerwah Tarlo, Executive Director of Tarlo Mixed Farm, and a partner on the FED project.

In an effort to continue strengthening the goat value chain, the USAID-Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia and the USAID-funded Farmer to Farmer (FtF) program, collaborated to bring Dr. Eran Raizman, a veterinarian, to provide on-farm training to FED’s selected Lead Farmer/Goat Producer groups in Nimba, Lofa, and Bong Counties. The training targeted twelve goat producer groups in each county, representing 175 goat producers with herd sizes ranging from 15 to 50 animals. The training involved goat shelter construction, fencing management, and basic herd health practices. These improved herd management techniques will be applied to 350 indigenous Liberian goats that are currently under traditional village production/management practices.

The FtF Volunteer was provided under a Memorandum of Understanding Agreement (MOU) signed between the USAID-FED Project and ACDI/VOCA Farmer to Farmer Program last October. Under the agreement, ACDI/VOCA provided a volunteer requested by the FED Project to address critical needs. FED’s Goat Value Chain Leader, Dr. Dennis McCarthy, requested this FtF Volunteer to provide initial goat production management training for its participating Lead Goat Producer Groups which will implement Goat Pass-on Schemes in each of FED’s designated counties over the next three years. Dr. McCarthy stated: “this partnership between FED and ACDI/VOCA represents a unique opportunity to capture and focus comparative advantages of both programs on a critical Feed the Future mandate.”

Othello T. Mahn, the Farm Manager at Tarlo Mixed Farm admonished his colleagues to take the new knowledge gained in animal husbandry and apply it to improve their goat farms.

Rev. Nerwah Tarlo, Executive Director of Tarlo Mixed Farm and a partner of the FED project is excited about the great opportunities in the goat sector, “FED has identified a positive and more possible market for Lead Farmer/Goat Producer groups in Nimba, something which is highly unique.”



SUCCESS STORY

Big Boost for Gari Suppliers

Great potential for gari producers/suppliers as well as major access to market and profitability in Liberia



USAID HANDS project Super garri product

“For over a year, as farmers, we have been involved with cassava farming and processing but, getting to the market and finding the right customers have been a major constraint”. Esther Darwon, the Executive Director of Zoegeh Farmer Association, says.

The U.S. Agency for International Development Food and Enterprise Development Program for Liberia (USAID FED Liberia) has added value to cassava farming in Nimba with the execution of a market linkage activity between cassava farmers and processors and an institutional buyer. The program, which brought together more than 75 local cassava farmers and processors, was held at the Ganta Concern Women Center in Ganta, Nimba County on January 15, 2013. The meeting was co-facilitated by the FED Nimba County Manager, Horace Yansine, the FED Enterprise Development Team and Nimba County Agriculture Coordinator Samuel Kerleah.

FED's Enterprise Development Specialist, Melanie Bittle says the meeting was intended to identify major cassava producers and gari processors who could meet the immediate demand of a large institutional buyer seeking locally produced gari. This type of linkage activity has the potential to boost productivity of cassava in FED's project areas and maximizing the utilization of the root crop, thereby promoting food security and improving the incomes of farmers and processors.

Speaking at the program was the Country Representative for the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH), an implementing partner of the USAID funded Health, Agriculture, Nutrition, Development and Sustainability (HANDS) project, Noli Jocson. He says his project is implementing an integrated food security program that centers on local production and direct distribution of fortified Super Gari (a blend of gari, soy flour, and added nutrients) that will help reduce the prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children under five and improve nutritional and health status of pregnant women. Currently, the HANDS project sources 15-20 metric tons of gari from their own processing centers in River Gee and Grand Gedeh, but are in need of an additional 20 metric tons on a monthly basis to meet the demand of their program. According to Noli, the HANDS Project is interested in purchasing clean and well-processed gari in 40kgs bags from processors in the Nimba County area and can arrange for pickup at four different locations. He also challenged producers to supply a minimum of 100 bags of gari on a monthly basis. Noli gave the producers and processors instructions on quality, standards for clean and hygienic processing, and for selecting proper processing equipment. The FED project also invited Standard Garage, a local equipment manufacturer and FED beneficiary to present the type of cassava processing equipment they are currently manufacturing in the area.

“For over a year, as farmers, we have been involved with cassava farming and processing but, getting to the market and finding the right customers have been a major constraint”. Esther Darwon, the Executive Director of Zoegeh Farmer Association, says. She explained that since FED Liberia program was introduced to farmers, many of them can now boast of numerous success stories. “Learning new farming methods, meeting potential buyers for our products, writing small business plans to obtain loans are among many things we have learned,” she joyously disclosed.

For his part, Rev. Nerwah Tarlo, Executive Director of Tarlo Mixed Farm and a beneficiary of the FED project feels excited and impressed about the great opportunities that FED has brought to Liberia: “FED has identified a positive and more possible market for cassava growers/producers, something which is highly unprecedented,” he noted. Rev. Tarlo used the occasion to dispel the notion that the village method of manually processing gari is not unhygienic and unsophisticated. “Although the processing of the product itself is tedious, and labor-intensive, once there are regular potential buyers and possible market for gari, farmers will be encouraged to produce more, thereby encouraging other individual farmers and cooperatives to get involved in the sector,” he admonished.

Market linkage activities such as this between farmers, producers and buyers is unprecedented in Liberia as the majority of the farmers have had to take their products to the markets themselves. FED’s intervention of creating the market link is a welcoming development and will further enhance and stimulate agro-business development in the country.