



# FEED <sup>THE</sup> FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



## FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) ACTIVITY FOR LIBERIA

### MONTHLY REPORT

JULY 2016



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Program Title:** Food and Enterprise Development Activity for Liberia(FED)

**Sponsoring USAID Office:** USAID Liberia

**Contract Number:** 669-C-00-11-00047-00

**Contractor:** DAI

**Date of Publication:** July 31, 2016

**Cover page photo caption:**

Members of a FED-supported Rice Business Hub stand in front of their new facility in Garmue, Bong County. FED has built 19 such hubs to support rice farmers and aggregators in post-harvest production activities such as processing, storage and distribution.

**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
AIIC	Agriculture Infrastructure and Investment Company
APDRA	Association Pisciculture et Développement Rural en Afrique
AVTP	Accelerated Vocational Training Program
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBF	County Based Facilitator
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CGCYWEP	Church Group Children Women Youths Empowerment Program
CILSS	Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CoE	Center of Excellence
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSWG	Cassava Sector Working Group
CYNP	Community Youth Network Program
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECREP	Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EO	Extension Officer
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FtF	Feed the Future
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GBCC	Grand Bassa Community College
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GCMC	Global Construction & Mechanical Company
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IBEX	Investing in Business Expansion Liberia
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Implementing Partner
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
KRTTI	Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute

LABEE IPG	Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-Agency Policy Group
LADA	Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity
LATA	Liberia Agricultural Transformation Agenda
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises
LINA	Liberia News Agency
LIPAS	Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
LRC	Law Reform Commission
LSU	Louisiana State University
LWDR	Liberian Women Democracy Radio
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MoP	Muriate of Potash
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NAPEX	National Apex of VSLAs
NDA	National Diploma in Agriculture
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NIC	National Investment Commission
NSB	National Seed Board
NSL	National Standards Laboratory
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
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
RSM	Rice Seed Multiplication
SDCA	Seed Development and Certification Agency
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
SWF	Stakeholder Working Forum
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TCi	Top Consulting, Inc.
ToT	Training of Trainers
TSP	Triple Super-Phosphate
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement

UEM	Universal Empowerment Mission
UL	University of Liberia
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET GOV	Veterinary Governance in Africa
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WAAPP	West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program
WAFP	West Africa Fertilizer Project
WASP	West Africa Seed Project
WFP	World Food Programme

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TABLES AND FIGURES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMPONENT ONE: INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>TASK 1A: INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE RICE VALUE CHAIN .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>TASK 1B: INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TASK 1C: INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE HORTICULTURE VALUE CHAIN .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TASK 1D: INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE GOAT VALUE CHAIN... ..</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SUBTASK 1.2 IMPROVED ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL INPUTS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SUBTASK 1.3: AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SUBTASK 1.4: YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SUBTASK 1.5: IMPROVING HUMAN NUTRITION .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH AND INVESTMENT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TASK 2: POLICY ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SUBTASK 2.1 ACCESS TO FINANCE .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL HUMAN RESOURCE CAPABILITIES.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ACTIVITY 3.1: ROLL OUT THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURE (NDA) IN ALL FOUR COEs.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ACTIVITY 3.4: ENHANCING AVAILABILITY OF TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR THE NDA .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>COMPONENT FOUR: CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>TASK 4.1: COMMUNICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>TASK 4.2: ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TASK 4.3: MONITORING AND EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## TABLES AND FIGURES

<i>Figure 1: FED training for upland rice farmers being in Gblah, Zoe Geh District, Nimba County .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 2: Trained personnel at Gorgopa Rice Business Hub in Nimba County .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Figure 3 Established cassava demonstration farm in William Dean town, Grand Bassa County .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Figure 4: AgriTrade CEO visits with farmers at a FED-supported vegetable cluster in July. ....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 5: Rain shelter established at Mawah farmers and vegetable varieties planted. ....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 6 Mineral salt lick fabricated by goat farmers in Sweegaye Town, Grand Bassa County. ....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Figure 7 Goat shelter constructed using local materials in Sweegaye Town, Grand Bassa County.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Figure 8 Marcus Ben commercial nursery in Gbesilla, Nimba County .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 9: Kotorwon VSLA group in Nengbein's Town, Nimba County. ....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 10: Boxes of textbooks for the NDA program have arrived from publishers in the US. The books will be distributed to the CoEs in August.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Figure 11: Reporters interview FED-supported farming groups in Nimba County during a four-day press tour in July.....</i>	<i>17</i>
 <i>Table 1 Lowland areas planted by county .....</i>	 <i>8</i>
<i>Table 2: Mineral salt lick distribution by county .....</i>	<i>11</i>

## BACKGROUND

The Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Activity is USAID's flagship Feed the Future (FtF) Initiative in Liberia. The project was launched in September 2011. USAID FED uses an all-inclusive strategy incorporating micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), farmers, processors, suppliers, women, and youth, while partnering with the Government of Liberia (GoL) and local civil society to achieve food security.

USAID FED is increasing food availability, utilization, and accessibility by building an indigenous incentive structure to assist agricultural stakeholders in adopting commercial approaches.

This incentive structure is 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.

USAID FED works with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), civil society, and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs, extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and business development services.

As USAID FED enters the final stages of its fifth and final year of operation, it continues to expand market linkages designed to substantially increase incomes and job opportunities. USAID FED is also boosting the production, processing, marketing and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava and vegetables, as well as enhancing the productivity of goat farming in the counties covered by the program.

These initiatives are implemented in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. USAID FED focuses on these counties because they are situated along regional development corridors crucial to promoting intra- and inter-county commerce. These growth corridors are improving food availability and access for all Liberians.

USAID FED's methodology is market-led and value-chain driven, and committed to building indigenous capacity building with a specific focus on Liberia's women and youth.

USAID FED is implemented by a consortium led by Development Alternatives, Inc., along with Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and The Cadmus Group.



## COMPONENT ONE: INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY

### Task 1A: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Rice Value Chain

#### Improving productivity and profitability of upland and lowland rice

##### ***Provide technical assistance to upland and lowland rice groups:***

FED continued to provide technical assistance to FY16 upland and lowland rice beneficiaries through its field extension staff in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. Technical assistance primarily focused on weeding in the upland areas as well as swamp layout and planting in the lowlands.

##### ***Support 5,250 new rice farmers to apply improved technologies on 750 hectares of upland areas:***

By the end of June, the targeted rice farmer groups had planted 750 hectares of upland areas. FED Extension Officers in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties provided 175 upland rice lead farmers training on upland rice production techniques. FED fully expects to reach the target for numbers of farmers supported.



Figure 1: FED training for upland rice farmers being in Gblah, Zoe Geh District, Nimba County

##### ***Support 7,000 new rice farmers to apply improved technologies on 1,000 Ha of lowland areas:***

By the end of July, 475 hectares of lowlands had been planted. All pending lowland areas will have been planted by the end of August, with the target for numbers of farmers reached to be achieved.

**Table 1 Lowland areas planted by county**

County	Number of farmers	Number of hectares targeted	Number of hectares planted in June	Number of hectares planted in July	Total number of hectares planted year to date
Bong	1,400	200	157	14	171
Nimba	2,100	300	0	96	96
Lofa	3,500	500	111	97	208
Total	7,000	1,000	268	207	475

## Promoting embedded services by the private sector

### ***Technical assistance to aggregators, traders, processors, and rice business hubs:***

The nine new rice business hubs initiated operations during this reporting period. They are operating on an intermittent basis until the rice harvest begins in earnest later in the year. FED trained 45 beneficiaries (35 men and 10 women) in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties on how to manage and maintain the rice mills in the rice business hubs.

### ***Support aggregators with trucks on cost-share to support timely and reliable aggregation and transportation of paddy rice:***

In July, the Selma Agricultural Corporation reported that 45 metric tons of paddy rice was transported using the truck provided by USAID, generating US\$1,700 in revenue.

## **Task 1B: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain**

### **Improve productivity of cassava farmers**

#### ***Provide technical assistance and farming guides to FY13, FY14 and FY15 cassava groups to ensure they continue to apply improved practices and use improved varieties:***

FED continued to provide technical assistance to 300 FY16 cassava groups with an outreach of 6,000 farmers.

#### ***Recruitment of 6,000 new beneficiaries for FY16 cassava cropping cycle:***

By the end of July, 300 demonstration farms had been established in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. The demo farms will be ready for harvesting in June 2017.



Figure 2: Trained personnel at Gorgopa Rice Business Hub in Nimba County



Figure 3 Established cassava demonstration farm in William Dean town, Grand Bassa County

## **Task 1C: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Horticulture Value Chain**

### **Vegetable production and sales**

Heavy rains continued to adversely affect the production and sales of vegetables this month. This condition will continue until the end of the rainy season in September. Floods in lowland areas have forced farmers to cultivate on higher ground or to temporarily stop growing vegetables and shift to other income generating activities. However, vegetable farmers who expanded their rain shelters have maintained their production and sales. These include the Careysburg cluster and the Mawah clusters in

Montserrado County. In July, farmers in Montserrado County sold 12.3 metric tons of vegetables worth US\$22,000. In Margibi County, farmers sold 26 metric tons of vegetables worth just under US\$54,000.

## Strengthening farmer-market linkages and expanding markets

The Careysburg vegetable cluster continued to supply vegetables to the Royal Grand Hotel this month. FED also linked the cluster to Kaldi's Coffee Shop, located at the Royal Grand, to supply lettuce. The Mawah cluster continued to supply the U.S. Embassy and the Free Life Liberia (FLL) agribusiness vegetable integrator. Other FED assisted farmers sold to traders and integrators, and retailers in community markets such as Red Light, and to the consumers directly. Similarly, FED continues discussions with the Mamba Point and Cape Hotels to develop supply contracts with FED-supported vegetable clusters.



Figure 4: AgriTrade CEO visits with farmers at a FED-supported vegetable cluster in July.

FED began discussions with AgriTrade, a private sector agribusiness enterprise, to set up an export infrastructure for the vegetable clusters. AgriTrade visited FED clusters and committed to act as the lead firm for its exports. FED has developed a proposal for the vegetable export initiative, which will be implemented by the National Investment Commission (NIC), LADA, the agribusiness companies and VS Compagnie, the importer from Paris, who previously was provided several trial shipments of okra. It is anticipated that the proposal will be implemented in August. A representative from French-importer VS Compagnie is expected to visit Liberia in August or September. Discussions are also ongoing with Wealmoor Corporation in the U.K. for potential export opportunities.

## Technology introduction and adoption

Mawah farmers cluster completed the assembly of its rain shelter, which was constructed using locally supplied labor and a FED-contracted carpenter to assist with the construction.



Figure 5: Rain shelter established at Mawah farmers cluster and vegetable varieties planted.

## Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain

### Promote improved herd management practices

#### **Technical assistance to new and continuing farmers:**

FED field extension and Monrovia-based technical staff continued to provide technical assistance to the new and continuing goat groups. Technical assistance was provided to ensure that FY16 farmers construct goat shelters with locally available materials and fabricate mineral salt licks for better herd management.

#### **Train 3,928 new beneficiaries on herd management practices and mineral salt lick fabrication:**

By the end of July, 73 new beneficiary groups in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties had been trained on how to fabricate mineral salt licks and had received the required ingredients. Five remaining groups in Nimba County will receive mineral salt lick ingredients in August.

**Table 2: Mineral salt lick distribution by county**

County	Number of groups	Number of groups that have received salt lick ingredients
Bong	23	23
Nimba	26	21
Lofa	20	20
Grand Bassa	9	9
TOTAL	78	73



Figure 6 Mineral salt lick fabricated by goat farmers in Sweegaye Town, Grand Bassa County.

#### **Construction of goat shelters**

By the end of July, 29 goat producer groups had constructed 53 goat shelters (one in Bong County, 10 in Nimba, 14 in Lofa and four in Grand Bassa) using locally available materials. These shelters have been constructed by farmers at their own cost. Farmers are increasingly embracing the use of goat shelters after FED successfully demonstrated the shelters in herd management. As FED begins to draw to a close, it will be important for the Ministry of Agriculture, CARI and other implementing partners to continue to encourage farmers to adopt goat shelters for better herd management practices.

#### **Kidding and mortality rates:**

A total of 269 new kids (122 male and 147 female) were born this month. FED-supported goat production intensification sites produced 2,561 kids since October 2015. In July, one doe was reported dead in Grand Bassa County and two in Bong, attributable to diarrhea. After mortality, the total herd size by the end of July in FED-supported goat production intensification sites was 19,138 animals (11,431 does, 5,079 bucks and 2,628 kids).



Figure 7 Goat shelter constructed using local materials in Sweegaye Town, Grand Bassa County.



## **Establish Nucleus Breeding Herd Center at CARI**

### ***Renovate the quarantine facility at CARI for housing the nucleus breeding herd:***

In July, Tallobenku Engineering completed the conversion of the quarantine facility at CARI to a goat nucleus breeding herd center. The facility will be handed over to CARI in August.

## **Provide assistance to MoA in the control of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR)**

In July, BRAC Liberia submitted a final report of the post-vaccination test results for the PPR vaccination campaign. Two hundred blood samples were taken in June and sent for testing. Of the 200 samples, 92 were randomly selected for testing using the ELISA Plate Reader provided to the Ministry of Agriculture by FED prior to the campaign. Those tests showed that the animals vaccinated during the campaign had built immunity against the PPR virus disease. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will send its technical experts to train MoA laboratory technicians and also to analyze and publish the test results.

## **Formalizing livestock marketing**

### ***Goat sales:***

A total of 151 goats (107 bucks and 44 does) were sold for US\$11,955 in July. In total, 1,685 goats have been sold for a total of US\$167,564 since October 2015. The current sales achievements represent 55 percent of the annual sales target of US\$305,074. In August, FED will facilitate a goat marketing event in Lofa County.

## **Subtask 1.2 Improved Access to Agricultural Inputs**

### **Increase access to improved seed and good planting material**

#### ***Support to commercial production and marketing of cassava cuttings:***

FED's Input Supply team visited commercial cassava nurseries in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties to assess the status of planting and survival rates of improved cassava cuttings varieties distributed to 80 commercial cassava nurseries. The full analysis of this data is currently in progress and will be reported in August. The initial assessment shows that the survival rates may be affected by delayed planting by farmers. Cuttings must be properly stored and planted within three to seven days of preparation to ensure they are viable. Some farmers were observed to have planted cuttings well beyond the acceptable storage time.

## **Increase access to agricultural inputs for farmers**

### ***Promote embedded financing for inputs through agro-dealers and aggregators:***

FED and LADA agreed to hold joint awareness campaigns to promote adoption of inputs through agro-dealers and aggregators. The joint awareness campaigns will be conducted in August using print and broadcast media. The campaign will enable farmers to have contact information for the trained and certified agro-dealers trained by LADA in June.

### **Promote organic fertilizer mix/efficient use of inorganic fertilizer**

#### ***Provide Technical assistance to farmer groups to adopt composting at farm level:***

The Mawah vegetable cluster in Mount Barclay expressed interest in cost sharing in the acquisition of a compost shredding machine. FED's horticulture value chain team is following up with the group to secure the 50 percent cost share. The Mawah vegetable cluster is one of the clusters participating in the vegetables-for-export initiative. The shredder will be available in August.

#### ***Provide technical assistance to Centers of Excellence to promote fee-based soil testing using the soil science laboratories:***

FED Project Manager Emmanuel Lincoln trained soil lab technicians in the community colleges on how to use the laboratory equipment provided by FED for soil analysis. Trainings were held in Nimba County Community College and Lofa County Community College. Lab technicians in Booker Washington Institute and Grand Bassa Community College will be trained in the beginning of August.



Figure 8: Marcus Ben commercial nursery in Gbesilla, Nimba County

## **Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support**

### **Create access to and availability of standardized extension material**

#### ***Print and disseminate extension materials and farmer guides:***

FED communications and technical teams continued to revise and copy edit 28 extension materials that will be printed and distributed to the MoA, lead farmers, extension officers, LNGOs, the private sector and other development partners who may be interested in replicating copies. Because of the number of materials, the revisions have taken longer than expected. These materials will be distributed electronically and on CDs to lead farmers as well as to stakeholders during FED's planned Agribusiness Expo scheduled in September. Hard copies will be printed for those lead farmers and extension agents without computer access.

## Subtask 1.4: Youth in Agribusiness

### **Provide technical assistance to 25 youth agribusinesses enterprises towards production of high value vegetables and cassava tuber**

#### ***Provide 25 peri-urban agribusiness enterprises with technical assistance, extension services and access to pesticides and chemicals for Integrated Pest Management through agro-dealers:***

In July, the 25 peri-urban agribusiness enterprises harvested 1.2 metric tons of vegetables from 15 hectares, which they sold for US\$3,500. Since October 2015, these enterprises have sold 41.5 metric tons of vegetables for US\$61,500.

#### ***Train 25 peri-urban agribusiness enterprises on improved cassava production methods and practices:***

In July, the 25 clusters received 30 kg of peanut and 36 kg of cowpea seed and were trained on intercropping of peanut and cowpeas for ISFM. The youth groups began weeding and maintenance of individual cassava fields under the supervision of lead farmers. FED extension officers continued inspections of planting on 70 hectares of individual farmer's field and 25 hectares of demo sites.

### **Support the development of sustainable operations of 126 youth agro-enterprises**

#### ***Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as transport service providers:***

In July, 49 tuk-tuk operators had generated US\$9,800 in revenue from the transportation of agricultural and other commodities. These enterprises have generated just under US\$190,000 since they established the enterprises.

#### ***Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as power tiller service providers:***

Seventeen hectares were tilled by power tiller operators supported in FY15 by FED. It is anticipated that the 30 power-tiller operators will till an additional 671 hectares in August to fulfill their pending cost-share obligations.

## Subtask 1.5: Improving Human Nutrition

### **Implement diet behavior change strategy**

FED distributed copies of nutrition teaching aids to lead farmers in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties this month. By the end of the reporting period, 283 teaching aides had been distributed to lead farmers (178 in Nimba County and 105 in Bong County). It is anticipated that the remaining 517 teaching aides will be distributed across the six counties before the end of August.

## COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

### Task 2: Policy Enabling Environment for Private Sector Growth

#### Policy Reform Activities via Technical Working Groups and 10% Cassava Composite Flour Policy Development

Review of the two pieces of draft legislation, the cassava composite policy and domestication of ECOWAS protocols for inputs, is close to completion. Agriculture Policy Expert Dr. Roland Massaquoi is finalizing the draft Cassava Composite Strategy Document for distribution in August 2016. The development of the strategy to date required a review of policies within the greater West African context and an analysis of the regional options pursued in specific East and Southern Africa. Preliminary findings were presented to MOA in June and meetings with key stakeholders, including MOA officials. Discussions were initiated in July to address acceptance, endorsement and sustainability of the policy in Liberia. The strategy document will be presented to a working group jointly supported by MOCI and MOA at the FED office in August.

The ECOWAS draft acts for seed, fertilizer and agro-chemicals that were finalized in June are under review by the Law Reform Commission (LRC). The FED Agriculture Policy expert met with the LRC in late July 2016 with the aim of receiving approval for the final draft acts from the LRC. FED expects approval of the final drafts in early August. FED will continue to support the process during the project's implementation period, but with the departure of FED, MOA will act as the champion of the policy to drive future initiatives and present the draft acts to the GoL through onward submission to the Cabinet.

### Subtask 2.1 Access to Finance

#### Village Savings and Loan Associations

The Universal Empowerment Missions (UEM) submitted a final report on its work supporting 350 female-led VSLA groups. As part of that final report, UEM gave a power-point presentation to FED's Monrovia office, which outlined the group's achievements during the 10-month contract period. However, FED's Access to Finance Officer discovered some errors in the data provided in the final report. In order to verify the numbers, the Component Two team conducted a field visit to targeted VSLA groups in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Montserrado and Margibi Counties. The team findings were compared with UEM report and working with UEM, the final report numbers have been corrected. UEM is currently revising the report for submission to FED in the beginning of August.



Figure 9: Kotorwon VSLA group in Nengbein's Town, Nimba County.



This month, FED extended 21 individual consultant agreements to assist the VSLA groups in the absence of EDUCARE and UEM contracts, which ended in June. The individual consultants will work with the VSLAs until August 31. The 21 staff will continue with the reporting and monitoring of the 373 VSLA groups previously trained by EDUCARE. In June FED hired additional 14 consultants to take over from UEM 350 groups. The total number of individual consultants is now 35. The total number of VSLA groups supported by FED through EDUCARE and UEM is 723, representing more than 21,000 women.

### **Supporting BSPs to establish ESCs**

Top Consultants, Inc. (TCI), a FED-contracted consulting firm providing technical assistance to FED-supported business service providers (BSPs), successfully concluded awareness campaigns for the Enterprise Service Centers (ESCs) in early-July. The campaign was part of TCI's efforts to build the capacity of the BSPs as they transition to fee-based ESCs. The awareness campaign included radio jingles, banners, t-shirts, appearances on radio talk shows, as well as traveling road shows to communities, towns and districts of Margibi, Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. FED has extended TCI's contract to August 5 to allow time for the consultant write a comprehensive report on its deliverables. FED expects to formally graduate the BSPs to full-fledged ESCs in a ceremony at the upcoming Agribusiness Expo in September.

## **COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL HUMAN RESOURCE CAPABILITIES**

### **Activity 3.1: Roll Out the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) in All Four CoEs**

FED implemented several activities this month to continue to empower the four Centers of Excellence (CoEs) at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) and the three community colleges of Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Bassa Counties to become self-sustaining after the project's closedown. In July, FED contracted a local Grants Development Consultant, Thomas Kanneh, who is advising and training the CoEs on the development and procurement of grants and other outside funding sources for the centers' future implementation of the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA). Kanneh conducted training sessions in July on grant proposal writing for administrative and faculty staff of the CoEs at LCCC and NCCC. The training sessions will continue at the BWI and the Grand Bassa County Community College through mid-August.

In addition, FED Soil Consultant Emmanuel Lincoln conducted training sessions on soil testing for laboratory technicians at the Lofa and Nimba County Community Colleges from July 12 to 23. The consultant will continue similar sessions at the Booker Washington Institute and the Grand Bass County Community College. The sessions will also run through mid-August. These trainings are designed to assist the CoEs to expand use of the soil science labs from strictly student educational mechanisms to provision of fee-based soil analysis services to their communities to generate income and promote sustainability.

## Activity 3.4: Enhancing Availability of Textbooks and Reference Materials in the COEs to support NDA

### Task 3.4.1: Procure additional textbooks

Textbooks and reference materials for the four FED-supported CoEs arrived in Monrovia in mid-July. This includes 12 textbook titles and eight reference guides. FED is currently preparing for the distribution of these textbooks and reference materials to the centers in early-August. The teaching aids will supply COE libraries and support faculty and students of the NDA program. Library renovation is completed at LCCC and NCCC, with minor upgrades remaining at GBCC and BWI to be completed in August.



Figure 10: Boxes of textbooks and reference materials for the NDA program have arrived from publishers in the U.S. The books will be distributed to the CoEs in August.

## COMPONENT FOUR: CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES

### Task 4.1: Communications and Knowledge Management

#### Press tour to Bong and Nimba Counties

FED's facilitated a four-day press tour in Bong and Nimba Counties in mid-month. Five Liberian journalists from the print and broadcast media participated in the press tour, including reporters from the *Daily Observer*, *New Democrat*, Liberian News Agency, Truth FM and Liberian Women Democracy Radio. The journalists met and interviewed farmer beneficiaries at five different sites in Bong and Nimba Counties for information on how they have benefited from FED activities in each of the value chains.



Figure 11: Reporters interview FED-supported farming groups in Nimba County during a four-day press tour in July.

In interviews, FED-supported farmers told reporters they have acquired improved skills, tools, power tillers, fertilizer and other skills that have helped them enhance production. However, the farmers explained that challenges for small-holder farmers in Liberia include limited access to markets, and lack of credit and storage facilities. FED field staff explained to the reporters that it is expected that some farming organizations will transition to LADA for further assistance in these areas.

## Articles published/aired on FED's activities in July 2016:

<u>Title of article published/aired</u>	<u>Name of media institution</u>	<u>Date published/aired</u>
USAID FED Unveils Business Package	Capitol News	7/25/2016
20,000 Women Benefit from Microloans	Liberia News Agency	7/24/2016
Three Counties to get USAID-FED Rice Mills	Liberia News Agency	7/20/2016
USAID FED's Improved Farming methods Increasing farmers' Yield	Liberia Women Democracy Radio	7/25/2016

## Planning for Liberia Agribusiness Exposition

The entire FED team, including Component Leads, technical staff, the COP, the DCOP and Communications, began planning this month for the Liberia Agribusiness Exposition, a public event to be held in Monrovia's City Hall on September 13-14, 2016.

The Expo will showcase successful FED interventions by highlighting improvements in food security, value chain enhancement and enterprise growth. The event will bring together major Government of Liberia officials, representatives of the donor community, the private sector, and FED beneficiaries.

Planning for this event is being conducted in close collaboration with the MoA and USAID.

## Task 4.2: Environmental Compliance

The Cadmus Group, which was hired to conduct FED's Environmental Sustainability Assessment, submitted its final report this month, outlining the existing environmental compliance documentation and processes established for the project. The report included a review of relevant project documentation, in-country field work and consultations, and offered a detailed look at the primary issues and areas of concerns.

The report established that FED received clearance from USAID/Africa's Bureau Environmental Officer across all FED activities in each of the project's four value chains. Both the Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP) and a Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUA) were prepared as required in the Initial Environmental Examination. The report also identified challenges over the life of project implementation, including the departures of both in-country specialists brought on board to support environmentally sound and compliant implementation. Although FED is preparing for closedown, the project is considering the report's recommendations as a strategy for better environmental sustainability.

### Task 4.3: Monitoring and Evaluation

Close coordination with USAID continued regarding efforts to ensure that complete and reliable FY2016 data can be reported in FED's Annual and Final Reports, as well as for the Mission's annual FTFMS and PPR reporting October-November. This included a two-hour meeting between FED staff, the FED COR and a Bureau of Food Security M&E advisor on July 19. The FED COP also submitted to the COR a memo detailing some of the challenges faced in the smallholder survey and proposed steps to manage those challenges, which include inadvertent exclusion of some farmer groups from the sample and duplications in beneficiary lists. As part of the proposed steps, the Senior Survey Advisor is engaged in the process of cleaning the problematic FED beneficiary listings. This effort was complicated because the spellings of names and locations in the listing often varied greatly. FED also hired a data entry clerk to enter a backlog of data.

The M&E team completed the first round of the smallholder beneficiary survey field work on July 9. The purpose of the survey is to obtain FY2016 data for USAID reporting purposes for the following indicators: 1) gross margin; 2) incremental sales; 3) technologies applied; 4) hectares (ha) upon which new technologies are applied; and 5) ha under improved irrigation/drainage. The first round of the smallholder survey generated FY2016 data for rice, vegetables and goats for continuing beneficiaries that started working with FED in FY 2012 through FY 2015, and have continued to receive assistance in FY2016. In light of the no-additional cost extension received in June, the smallholder survey of the cassava value chain was moved to the last week of September since peak sales begin in August. In the fall survey, the survey teams will also survey a sample of new FY 2016 beneficiaries, who will have by then had a chance to implement new technologies and increase their yields, reduce losses and generate at least some sales.

At the end of the smallholder survey effort, data for 1,055 upland rice farmers and 362 vegetable farmers were collected, for a total of 1,417 smallholder surveys to date. The survey teams included 10 enumerators in Bong County, led by FED M&E Officer William Massaboi, and 10 in Grand Bassa, led by M&E Specialist Joseph Morris.

FED staff also continued work on compiling a spreadsheet of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) beneficiaries in preparation for the FED Enterprise Beneficiary Survey to be conducted in August. Because a large number of enterprise beneficiaries have cell phone numbers and August is a month of heavy rain, a phone-based survey approach will be employed followed by in-person interviews with non-respondents and those who do not have cell phones. FED is exploring the use of interactive voice recognition technology (IVR) for the survey, a technology frequently used in tele-marketing. A pre-recorded voice would introduce the survey and ask questions to which the respondent will enter numbers in their keypad for yes, no, and other result. The data entered would then be uploaded into a spreadsheet to compile and analyze results. A text message will go out in advance to prepare beneficiaries for the survey call. FED hired an IT expert to help backstop the effort and plans to subcontract a company for providing the IVR software after an open competition to select the best bidder. USAID agreed to this approach with the condition that a sample of IVR respondents is interviewed in-person to verify reliability of results.