

SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE (SCI) PROJECT REPORT

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# 1.0 CHAPTER ONE OF THE SCI

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The SCI “food and Peace under COVID 19 “ is a six (6) month project that aims to support peace by increasing household food security and resilience of targeted population affected by COVID 19, in two (2) village communities in Koinadugu District Northern Sierra Leone.

Directly a total of fifty (50) farmers (35 women and 15 youths) and 300 vulnerable households members with an average of 6-7 people per household) will be targeted 70% of these beneficiaries are women. .The project support will target farm families who have been socioeconomically dispossessed and disadvantage by the outbreak of COVID 19 especially vulnerable rural farmers who were seriously affected and in dire need of support to regain their economic livelihood activities.

The intervention seeks to ensure protection of livelihood through trainings, provision of seeds and tools to local communities to enable people affected by COVID 19, re-enter production to enhance their food security by utilizing the available agricultural inputs, establish seed multiplication farms and seed banks as supplementary during and after the COVID 19 pandemic.. Thus enhanced their welfare and resilience; hence mitigate one of the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID 19 – food insecurity.

### 1.1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

As Sierra Leone is still recovering from the effects of COVID 19 epidemic, vulnerable rural communities bear the brunt of the negative socio-economic impact of emerging diseases and natural disasters including Ebola, flooding, mudslide and now COVID 19 which has significantly brought an economic crisis and rapidly laid bare the underlying inequalities and fragilities in the global food systems as food systems have been close to breaking point enhancing food insecurity. Contextual analysis reveal that the World Food Program (WFP) estimated in April 2022 that 1.1 million people, 13.4% of the population of Sierra Leone are facing acute hunger, meaning their lives or livelihood are at risk as a result of inadequate food consumption. In 2020 Sierra Leone was described as having an “alarming hunger level making 113 out of 117 countries in the global hunger index.

### 11.3 WHY PROJECT IS NEEDED

Food and Peace can be traced to many cultures and religion .In Christianity for example people eat together during meals, talking, eating and spreading the word of God. Rotary clubs use food for meetings and so there are many examples of food as an avenue of peacebuilding Food security and peace are inextricably linked. We cannot achieve one without the other. By integrating food security and peacebuilding initiatives, we can work together to ensure that hunger is neither a cause nor a result of conflict. Therefore the rehabilitation of agriculture has a central role to play in building and consolidating peace Implementing appropriate well-trained food security related interventions can build resilience to conflict not only by assisting communities and people to cope with and recover from conflict prevention, but also by contributing to build conflict prevention, mitigation and build trust and good will which supporting sustainable development in a more broader way The creating of self-employment by the project ,particularly for young people and the enhancement of livelihood in the agriculture sector will help reduce the risk of violence or relapse into conflict . It will also address the founding gap of shortage of agricultural inputs resulting to limited access by the vulnerable communities who were not reached during and after the COVID 19 lockdown. It will also support the affected women and youth to enhance their capacity to have knowledge and skills on food production for consumption and surplus for sale..

On the other hand, countries like Sierra Leone that experienced political conflict and war has meant lower food production and Ebola and COVID 19 has worsen food supply .The lockdown due to COVID 19 has caused a loss of livelihood , . As a result, people seem more worried about putting food on the table than COVID-19. A street trader recently told a journalist, ‘It is not the coronavirus that will kill us, but hunger!’ As this is just the beginning of the rainy season, support to the most affected farming families is expected to boost agricultural produce and lessen the POST-COVID impact on the communities

In Sierra Leone, even though government is trying to deliver food to those in the margins and NGOs are stepping up largely (NGOS are doing more than Government) it’s not enough .a prolonged continuation of lockdown nearly resulted in famine in Sierra Leone, leading to social unrest and violence At the same time food insecurity has promoted collaboration between a lot of local agencies that don’t always work together to provide for clients and communities this is a silver lining

In Sierra Leone, while food is a source of conflict for many, it has also been a source of peace for some by bringing people together during the period of isolation.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The outbreak of COVID 19 in Sierra Leone has disrupted agricultural activities and a decline in agricultural output in 2020 progressively (MAFFS Foods security brief COVID 19 25th May 2020). The disease affected farming activities and movement of agricultural produce due to lockdowns Therefore restrictions as a result of the outbreak of COVID 19 affected the food supply chains at all levels as farmers were unable to cultivate their farms and produce food crops. As a result most women and youth farmers whose livelihood depends on agriculture are now unemployed and do not have stable income.. In addition prices of food went high and most of the youth and women farmers ended up eating their seed banks and their farming businesses collapsed completely. Moreover these farmers were forced to use up personal savings or sell off key agricultural assets such as seeds and machinery which undoubtedly impact their potential to produce food. These scenarios have significantly challenged peace building and stabilization process related to food security and social cohesion.

In Sierra Leone the question of food security and peacebuilding has an important gender dimension as women are responsible for 75% of farm work .Yet their lack of tenancy to land and women’s unequal access to essential agricultural development does not only increase hardships for women, it also places an extra burden on the entire agricultural sector, If women had the same access to productive resources as men they could as well increase yield on their farms by 20%( FAO 2011a)

## 1.3 GOALS and OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 GOAL: – Improving food security and resilience and reduce hunger across vulnerable households and communities crucial in mitigating the socio-economic effects of COVD19 in Koinadugu District northern Sierra Leone

This project implemented in Koinadugu district is not only reaching its overall goal of improving food security and reducing hunger by enabling households to eat two meals per day, but also built community social cohesion and created short term employment for women and youths. It also addressed the needs of youths and women differently in which most women and youth are more vulnerable to insecurity due to the gender division of labor in food production and this intervention helped reduce gender constraints in agriculture

1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: The small scale farmers improved their agricultural production with regards to quality and quantity through improve farm inputs and knowledge in post COVID 19

INDICATOR 1

At least 50% of farmers adopt at least 3 different innovative regenerative farming practices

INDICATOR 2

At least 75% of the 50 farmer families are using the seeds and tools provided to establish seed multiplication farms

The project supported accelerated response initiated by empowering 50 farmers (35 women 15 male youth with improved seeds and tools and low cost farming techniques and knowledge in crop production trough promoting sustainable agricultural practices that are productive and environmentally friendly which increased ecological stability of diversity for prolonged agricultural production. If food production can be sustainably increased household food security will improve meaning that families should have additional months of food. This method promoted the adaption of innovative regenerative agricultural practices which increased rice, groundnut and vegetable production

1.3.3 OUTPUT: Increased knowledge and production of farmers through improved inputs and agricultural practices

INDICATOR 1: Number of farmers trained

INDICATOR 2: Number of seed multiplication farms established

The increased establishment of rice ,groundnut and vegetable seed multiplication farms resulted from increased adoption of innovative regenerative farming practices( minimum or zero tillage, slash no burn, use of organic fertilizers/composting from zero waste, ecological pest management and plant spacing) and utilization of farm inputs(seeds and tools) The training on the establishment of seed multiplication plots is to show famers how they can produce high quality rice ,groundnut and vegetable as well as establish and manage seed banks

## 1.4 CHALENGES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

1.4.1 Climate change including climate variability and extreme challenging small scale rain fed farming system.

Crop land mitigation measures remains unexplored although many adaptation option also contribute to mitigation. Among these measures are soil management practices that reduces chemical fertilizer use and increase crop diversification, promoting of composting with zero waste, zero or minimum tillage, slash no –burn and use of crop residues as mulch

1.4.2 Vulnerability and gender equalities in agriculture.

The project targeted the disadvantage and marginalized women and youth including vulnerable households with limited access to improved farm inputs and training. By distributing input, the project met and identified needs and gaps that most small holder farmers in Sierra Leone are facing as a result of liquidity problems in the economy as well as challenges of high cost of agricultural inputs. The present gender plan seeks to operationalize the constraint opportunities for women and men identified during the gender analysis towards fully integrating 70% of women into this project. Needs assessment selection of project participant and impact studies have been carried out and will continue in gender sensitive manner. Throughout the whole project implementation equal participation of women and men in all project communities will be protected and monitored.

1.4.3 The huge number of already food insecure people, marginally food secured households are at risk of slipping into food insecurity.

The project mitigated this by distributing quality seeds and tools and low cost trainings on improve farming practices using local resources to increase food production and productivity. As a result the project established community seed and tool banks and linked them with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security for sustainable assistance to save and protect their lives and livelihood.

1.4.4 Overwhelming demand for project support and activities in other communities not targeted.

The project mitigated this change by sensitization of communities that the project is a pilot case and will be expanded to other communities when funds are available. Also pert of the community seed banks were sold to master farmers in those communities on cost recovery bases

### 1.4.5 High unemployment rate among women and youth

The project provided short term employment for 50 women and youth farmers who were supported to established seed multiplication farms harvested and sold the surplus and enhanced income.

# 2.0 CHAPTER TWO OF THE SCI

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Food security under COVID 19 in Sierra Leone Edmond Kposawa

### 2.1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACK GROUND

The strategy to contain and mitigate COVID 19 transmission through strict mobility restriction imposed by government around the globe including Sierra Leone can be counterproductive to human security. This is especially concerning for both human and food security if such control measures without being accompanied by a sound social protection mechanism.

The purpose of this review is to investigate what has previously been researched about food security under COVID 19 and use the information to create new knowledge about food security.

Specifically the working paper asks:

1. What is the impact of COVID 19 on food security among the most vulnerable groups in communities?
2. What were the measures taken, between March 2020 – March 2021?

This working document combines literature, content analyses to explore the extent to which COVID 19 has impacted food security in Sierra Leone.

The initial findings suggest a unique opportunity for Sierra Leoneans modern history. Emergency financing under the ongoing small holder commercialization project emerged as a solid empowerment approach in supporting government COVID 19 response initiative with inputs, land mechanization services and extension services to support rice farmers. The World Bank financial social safety Net project also scaled up its cash transfer system to provide support to the most vulnerable households.

However, gaps in leadership, decision making and turning of cash distribution have compromised people’s survivability and therefore human security is at stake.

### 2.1.2 WHAT RESEARCH HAS BEEN DONE IN FOOD SECURITY UNDER COVID 19

Widespread mobility restriction imposed by governments around the globe can compromise access to food security due to disruptions and delay in the movement of goods and services.

However a better picture can be seen from world cereal production as the aggregative data suggests an increase in output by 1.9 percent (year to year) between 2019 and 2020 (FAO 2021 A). Nevertheless, as shown in a joint analysis from the Global Network against food crises and the food security Network (FSIN) carried out in April 2021, 155 million people across the globe were facing life threatening acute food insecurity in 2020 or up from 135 million in 2019. COVID 19 has affected global food security (FAO 2021 A) because the transmission of COVID 19 follows existing trade and transportation Network, and disruptions in those Networks have affected the economics of food supply demand (Barlow et al 2021). Finally one of the most significant human security concerns in the 21st century included the fear that a deliver in GDP of a single percentage point in an economic recession will eventual push at least 2-3 percent of the human population into poverty (Laborde et all 2020). The food and agricultural organization (FAO) supports that as of the beginning of 2021, there are 45 low – income food -deficit countries (LIFDCS) including 34 in Africa and 9 in Asia, that require humanitarian food assistance due to the combined risk of conflicts, climate – related shocks and the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic (FAD 2021 B).

This is a slight increase from the same period in 2020 and 2019 where about 44 and 41 LIEDCS required international food aid (FAD 2020). Such an increase in the demand for food aid is not a third – world phenomenon as it also emerged in the develop world including in Australia (Mickay et al. 2021) and the United States. (O’ Hara and Toussaint 2021) Nevertheless, pandemic do not strike society randomly, including COVID 19 (white head 2021). Also, the impact of COVID 19 on human security can be amplified by pre – existing unequal vulnerability and risks in LIFCDS, including low – to medium – income countries (LMICS). For example in Sierra Leone restriction has been to limit consumer’s access to supermarkets and other food retail outlets.

The real COVID 19 impacts have however been apparent in the context of food access. The mobility restrictions on people, goods and services have impacted on food supplies and the distribution of labor seeds, fertilizers supplies as transportation disruption continue. COVID 19 restrictions have impacted immediate access to food by consumers resulting from lockdown closure of food outlets, income losses and price changes. Thus, even though changes in global food prices during 2020 remained controllable in many countries (Devereuse et al 2020) COVID 19 has emerged as a worldwide threat to human security.

### 2.1.3 CONCLUSION

The devastating economic impacts of COVID 19 re-enforce the need for investment that preveal further outbreaks.

### 2.1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government may need to support food supply chains to ensure that they function smoothly in the face of the crises in other to stabilize food system so that they can support food security and nutrition.
2. Nationwide governments should encourage local communities and citizens to increase local food production (including homes and community garden) minimize food waste and refrain from panic buying.
3. Social protection mechanism for the poorest and most vulnerable people during the COVID 19 crises need to be employed that incorporate provision on the right to food. These mechanisms should provide essential assistance in the short term and support livelihoods in the long term.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The theories to food security require three components adequate and reliable supply access to the supply and ability to utilize the supply to gain nutrition.

There are various theories used in and developed from the knowledge of the understanding of food insecurity but according to Scanian (2003) and Nord (2014) there are 7 predominantly theories. In exploring theories concerning food security Neo-Malthusean theory argues that food security and sustainable development are intrinsically linked (Scanian 2023). Food security exist if a household has supply available and means to get adequate food to maintain Nutrition needs of its members (Neff 2008) Scanion 2023 describes urbanization theories and expanded that society may be favoring urban development at its own detriment. More people moving to urban centers decreases the diversity (number of producers) of the food supplied to urban centers. According to the techno – ecological theory which sees food insecurity as being caused by the improper, inadequate or non harnessment of Technology and human ingenuity for the aim of solving food production problems (Boserup 1965, Kuma Berry and Cline, 1980 Binswanger, Deininger Feder, 1993 Simon 1998 Okoya, 1995 Scanian 2003 Peter, the dependency and world system theory which views food insecurity as a product world trade imbalance, food aid politicians and the extent to which development between goals are pursued (Petras 1981, Tausch and Heshmalt, 2010 urbanization theory which proposes that the root causes of food insecurity is the uneven distribution of development between urban and rural areas. It believes that for food security problems to be eliminated from the planet, development in the rural areas have to increase at a rate of greater than the role inherent in urban areas (Fox 2012, Szabo, 2015, QZIZAN, Raid and Hassin, 2016 and Drebold 2017), the social stratification theory which posts that food insecurity is as a result of social stratification and imbalance that comes as a result of that stratifications (Pyakuryal 2001 Azarrkieve, 2015, ha 2017, safe 2018.

Food is an inter disciplinary concept with numerous economic political and social consideration sociology is particularly well suited for examining it with strength from using multiple theories and testing such proposition with rigorous methods to determine the most proximate explanations for the dynamics of hunger.

Research has shown that how sociology can contribute to understanding the socio – political roots of hunger. There is great potential for future comparative sociological research on food security that build upon recent works that have established sociologies place in this arena, traditionally dominated by research overly concerned with production and supply and not enough with conflict stratification and inequality that are most essential to hunger.

## 2.3 CHANGE THEORY AND HOW IT WAS APPLIED

The change theory was use to evaluate the project, as evaluation would be needed to gain a better understanding of how and why the theory of change work or did not work.

### 2.3.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The outbreak of COVID 19 exposed a lot of Sierra Leoneans especially those in rural areas to vulnerabilities such as hunger and of course increased poverty.

To help mitigate one of the negative socio-economic impact of COVID 19 epidemic, Future In Our Hands Sierra Leone (FIOH-SL) implement a six (6) month SCI Project to improve household food security and research through training and provision of basic farm inputs in two communities in Koinadugu District.

In August 2022, an evaluation was conducted after the intervention to learn from beneficiaries and also to observe the impact made so far. The report reflects the findings of the assessment conducted based on the criteria of the evaluation. It also presents recommendation to improve management response and project planning process.

### 2.3.2 EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose is to access programs to date against target out puts and outcome as attained in the project proposal.

### 2.3.3 SCOPE OF WORK

To assess the criteria of evaluation and the project indicators has been the primary scope of work. The project staff used different tools and methods to access the criteria as well as project indicators field visits were made in the two project locations to collect data through interviews, meetings and careful observation.

The data collection exercise took two (2) days period followed by analysis and reporting.

### 2.3.4 FRAMWORK OF THE EVALUATION

The process was guided by a framework designed by the staff. The project indicators and criteria of the evaluation were used as the basic to structure key questions and methods for data collection. The table below is the framework of the evaluation which captures project results indicators and methods of data collections.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EXPECTED RESULTS | INDICATOR | METHOD |
| The small scale farmers improved their agricultural production with regards to quality and quantity in post COVID 19 | INDICATOR 1  At least 50% of farmers adopt at least 3 different innovative regenerative  farming practices  INDICATOR 2  At least 75% of the 50 farmers families are using the seeds and tools provided to sustain their agricultural production | Participant  survey  FGD |

Table i: Framework of evaluation

### 2.3.5 APPROACH METHOLOGY

A combination of participatory and non participatory methods was used drawing learning from a range of project beneficiaries. The evaluation exercise includes field visits to all projects sites through documentary evidence. At the field level individual interview and focus group discussion (FGD) went on currently among the beneficiaries.

### 2.3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

A mixed methodology approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection method were used.

### 2.3.7 DESK REVIEW

Internal documents were reviewed with reference made to the project proposal beneficiary lists work place and project narrative report.

### 2.3.8 IN – DEPTH INTERVIEW

Through key informant in-depth interview were conducted with key stakeholders including local leaders and staff of partners organization. A total of 10 key informants (5 per village) were interviewed.

### 2.3.9 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD)

Groups of beneficiaries were interviewed in FGD’s. A total of 32 project participants were interview. 4 groups were engaged (2 per village each of 8 participants) one for women and another for youth were held in each of the participating villages.

### 2.3.10 FIELD SURVEY

Field Survey was held with project beneficiaries using standardized questionnaires were administered to 32 participant’s respondents.

### 2.3.11 LIMITATION / CHALLENGES

* There was an overwhelming participation in the evaluation exercise expecting that they will receive another round of assistance.
* The evaluation team was exposed to some participants who could not communicate in the common Krio dialect. As a result volunteer interpreters stepped in to translate the interview.

## 2.4 METHODS AND DESIGN

The project approach was that of the Right Based Approach (RBA) which is peoples centered and was developed through a bottom – participatory approach in an effort which promotes strong ownership by beneficiaries for interventions aimed at poverty reduction and also increased the project impact. The project model places a particular emphasis on collaboration and coordination approach, thus ensuring greater synergy between the efforts of all stakeholders and maximize sustainable project outcome at all levels. Moreover the majority of human and material resources needed to implement the project came from target communities and will remain with in their communities thus contributed to greater longer sustainability.

For effective collaboration and integration the project worked with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security to provide technical backstopping in the training of farmers. The project built the capacities of poor rural farmers which increased their agricultural production.

The Farmer Field School Approach (FFS) recommended by the Government of Sierra Leone and the FAO, as a cost – effective extension methodology was used to enable farmers acquire more understanding about their agro – ecological system. Through the farmer field school training farmers were able to identify opportunities for improving agriculture production and ways to address some production constraint. The participatory designing of field experiments based on the needs of farmers helped to ensure adoption and replication of best practices. The farmer to farmer extension approach helped to create learning. The project target group had been involved in a series of consultative meetings prior to the preparation of this proposal document. Their inputs and responses have formed the bases for this proposal design. The target communities have been involved in needs assessment survey. I and the community jointly identified and selected project participants using set selection criteria and also took part in the participatory monitoring of project activities that involved mainly key informants. Prior to the implementation of the project, I organized a review and planning meeting with the project participants and key community stakeholders. During their meetings the communities assisted and developed simple indicators of success that they were used to monitor the progress of the project.

The project ensured that target groups have defined roles and responsibilities and working committees involving target groups are formed. I focused more on supervising and capacity building of the target groups and their communities through awareness raising training, monitoring, coaching and monitoring.

The target groups were mobilized and trained in methodology that gave them skills to continue the project activities after the project ends. Through the challenges of gender constraints in Agriculture and a range of behavior change communication strategies which this project built upon, men and women of different sub – groups and generations learnt how to analyze and address the negative effects of unequal power relation between men and women. FIOH – SL had been very gender sensitive at both institution and programmatic level. The present gender plan was operationalized the constraints and opportunities for women and men identified during the gender analysis towards fully targeting 70% of women into this project. Agenda policy exists and it is functional. Needs assessment selection of project participants and impact studies have been carried out and will continue to be done in a gender sensitive manner. The project benefited all gender group targeted irrespective of sex, age, status, color, and physical disability. The project reports surveys and monitoring report disaggregated by gender clearly showed the program addresses the concern/issues of the different gender groups.

A theory of change, explaining how an intervention is expected to produce a result was designed. The theory of change was a justification for the M /E. Monitoring to track what has changed and link that back to the theory of change. This was followed by an evaluation of the project to gain a better understanding of how and why the theory of work or did not work and the intermediate outcome and ultimate outcomes expected to occur during the six (6) months intervention.

The project designed possible risk which could affect the implementation of the project and how to manage or address these risks.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | RISK | MANAGEMENT |  |
| 1. | Poor participants of project beneficiaries | Community inclusion | will |
|  |  | facilitate participation | of |
|  |  | beneficiaries leading ownership | to |
| 2. | Adoption of project innovative practices and sustainability | Introduction of income generating (seed multiplication farms and marketing centers)  opportunities | |
| 3. | Outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic that leads to lack income | Communities will be encouraged to practice hand washing and use of face mask | |
| 4. | Local communities do not buy in the project concept/ideas | Involvement of local authorities in the project implementation | |
| 5. | Unpredictable weather condition due to climate change may affect agricultural productivity | Innovative climate smart agricultural practices and water retention technologies that are adopted to draught shell | |

Table ii: Risk management analysis

# 3.0 CHAPTER THREE OF THE SCI

## 3.1 INTERVENTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### 3.1.1 Activities Implemented

A1.1.1 Identification, selection, and documentation of project participants in two communities in Koinadugu District

In January 2022 I organized a community consultative meeting in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security, traditional Authorities / leaders and the Koinadugu District Council to identified, selected and documented the project participant / beneficiaries based on a selected criteria such as:

* Access to farm land and involvement in farming, must have access to land free from conflict and most have had history of farming in the following crops in the last two years planning seasons, groundnut, rice and vegetables.
* Scale of operation and desire to continue. Must have being engaged in farming over the years and there are stakeholders in the community to testify that.
* Crime free able bodies young person must be within the age bracket of 15 – 35 years with criminal record against him or her.
* Female headed households / widows engaged in farming activities during and after COVID 19 pandemic.
* Adaptation of modern farming practices should be able to move from slash and burn agriculture to innovative regenerative farming practices such as slash no burn, use of organic fertilizers, zero or minimum tillage and agro – ecological pest control.

Based on the above, the beneficiaries were selected through a participatory process with community included themselves identifying those whom their knowledge to be most marginalize vulnerable using locally set criteria of vulnerability and marginalization.

As a result 50 farmer families (35 females, 15 males) were identified and selected from two farming communities in Koinodugu District Northern Sierra Leone. Following the identification and selection of beneficiaries, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held with beneficiaries to and sensitized them in the importance of participating in the project the value of their voices and opinion and encourages them to make key decisions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SN | COMMUNITY |  | BENEFICIARY | | TOTAL |
| Male | Female |
| 1. | Mamudia Koro |  | 8 | 18 | 26 |
| 2. | Kromasilia |  | 7 | 17 | 24 |
|  |  | Total | 15 | 35 | 50 |

#### Table iii: Beneficiary profiling

A1.1.1.2 Organize and train 50 farmer families on cultivation of food crops in two (2) selected communities

The 50 targeted farmers were organized into two Farmer Field School (FSS) (25 per community) and trained on climate smart agricultural farming process using permaculture practices.

The objective of the training was at the end of the training service farming should understand:

* What permaculture is and the three (3) principles/ethic of permaculture and its importance.
* Identify western traditional agricultural practices that are against permaculture.
* What are regenerative climate smart regenerative agricultural practices?

A four day training session (2 per each community) were conducted in 2 project operational villages comprising of 25 farmers each. The trainings were facilitated by trained project staff in collaboration with MAFFS with 85% practical oriented conducted in their local languages.

DAY 1 started with prayers followed by introduction of participants and climate setting (establishment of ground rules). A brief overview of the training was delivered by the Director of FIOH – SL. During his overview he told participants that for farmers affected by the socioeconomic effect of COVID 19 pandemic which has affected household food security as a result of lockdown. It will provide trainings and farm inputs to 50 farmer families in two communities in Koinodugu District.

Following these participants were put to a pre-test on the knowledge and understanding of the regenerative / agro-ecological farming principles using permaculture principles.

The training methods used were brainstorming, video shows and small group presentation and practical sessions.

During the training the facilitation and participants shared learning on the following.

What do you mean by permaculture?

* Farming without burning the bush
* Permanent soil cover
* The use of organic fertilizers
* The use of mulch as soil cover
* Farmers no using chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticide  It means sustainability and benefits all people.

After this session, the facilitator shared the following working definitions of permaculture. The type of farming system that takes care of the soil resources and return back the surplus to rebuild the soil resources through natural process

This is a permanent agriculture that is designed to follow the diversity and resilience of the natural ecosystem.

What are the three (3) principles/ethics of permaculture?

1. Taking care of the earth / soil – This means the use of organic fertilizers and agroecological pest management and not the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
2. Taking care of the people – This means taking care of all people around usual make sure our projects benefit these people.
3. Returning the surplus – This means returning the surplus as to how farmers used kitchen waste, wood waste or organic materials as compost or mulch after this

Importance of permaculture

1. It is cost effective as farmers relied on natural processes to promote growth and not use of expensive chemical.
2. It generates soil fertility through increase in bio-diversity.

What are the western/traditional agricultural practices that are against the principles of permaculture?

1. Deep tillage using tractors
2. Slash and burn agriculture 3. Use of inorganic fertilizers
3. Use of agro-chemical such as pesticides and herbicides.
4. Large scale cutting of wood for domestic use in traditional three stone cooking fire and export purpose.

DAY 2 started with prayers and recap of day 1. Facilitator and participants also shared learning on the adoption of regenerative climate sensitive agricultural practices to increase food production and productivity.

These practices are as follows:

1. Slash no burn and use of zero / minimum tillage
2. Use of organic mulch as permanent soil cover – farmers should make sure they add layer of organic mulch after planting eg. With leaves, straw, wood chips, shaded back of trees and grass clippings.
3. Use of raised beds were caught as ideal for permaculture gardens

PRACTICAL SESSION

During day 2, farmers also were trained on the preparation and application of compost with zero waste

STEPS IN COMPOSTING

1. Duck a good compost bin
2. Locate a sport with sunlight
3. Keep a compost bin in a shady area
4. Add kitchen and yard waste
5. Continue to add layers until your bin is full. Wet the compost timely
6. Turn the compost
7. Harvest the compost

Evaluation

At the end of the session the facilitator administered a test to the 50 participants and compared it to the pre – test at the beginning of the training. It was analyzed and proved that 60% of participants were knowledgeable in climate smart agricultural practices and the principles of permaculture.

A1.1.3 Procurement and distribution of seeds and tools to kick start farming activities in two communities in Koinadugu District.

Prior to procurement of seeds participants were given the opportunity to select their desired seeds types. Three seeds were requested by the community – seed rice, groundnut and vegetables as a result of these, the project procured 20 bushels of seed rice (50kg) of Nerika variety 10 bags per community20 bushels of groundnut and 20 packets of assorted vegetable seeds (pepper, okra and cucumber). Tools such as 25 cutlasses (big and small, 25 hoes (small and big) and 20 watering cans were also procured and distributed.

The project used two strategies in seeds and tools distribution. Seeds were distributed to individuals rather than pooled at the household. Tools were distributed to each farmer field school (FFS) as a strategy to establish tool banks.

A1.1.4. Establishment of seed multiplication farms in selected communities

Following the distribution of seed and tools, the project supported the 50 farmers to establish two seed multiplication and demonstration farms (one per community) using regenerative climate smart agricultural practices. As a result two community seed banks were established (one per community) 50% of the process were used to generate income, 25% were used to set up small scale community seed banks while 25% were used for household consumption.

Alongside 50 household farmers were established to improve household food security.

3.1.2 How do these relate to your original plan?

The activities implemented were the same activities in the project original plan which followed the six month plan of activities.

3.1.3 How did this deviate from the plan?

There was no deviation deserved and noted.

## 3.2 KEY FINDINGS / IMPACT

I coordinated the implementation of all the activities, design the theory of change and evaluation of the outcome and the achievement of specific objectives. Monitoring of outputs (and miles stones) during the regular monthly monitoring and reported in internal monthly reports and document and report, the findings at the end of the project.

95% of the 50 benefiting farmer families are using the seeds and tools provided to sustain their agricultural production.

Almost all respondents, (100%) confirmed receipt of farm inputs. Among the respondents who admitted to have received farm inputs from the project analysis indicates that 98% reported that they have used the inputs for cultivation while 2% of respondents kept their inputs in store. As further analysis reveals that 98% of the respondent were in agreement that their farming activities will continue with the tools and seeds received.

Also monitoring and evaluation results analyzed that 45% of the farm families received seed rice, 39% groundnut while 25%% received assorted vegetables seeds including pepper, okra and cucumber.

### 3.2.1 RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

 The project targeted the poor and vulnerable households most with limited access to improve inputs and trainings. By distributing inputs, the project met and identifies needs and gaps that most small-holder farmers in Sierra Leone are facing as a result of the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic, and liquidity problems in the economy as well as challenges of high cost of agricultural inputs.

### 3.2.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

 The trainings were highly effective as more than 87% of these that received the trainings from before confirmed having adopted the practices on their current crops.

### 3.2.3 EFFICIENCY OF THE PROJECT

* Distributing inputs on time increased resource use by beneficiaries
* The project efficiency was also enhance through the adoption of innovative regenerative climate smart agricultural practices (use of local material in crop production were appropriate and where an enabling environment made this possible e.g. working through government line ministry and existing local structures.

### 3.2.4 TECHNICAL IMPACT

At the end of the six months of the project, as a result of 4 training sessions in innovative regenerative climate smart food production system, household’s technical impact in the production of nutrition food increased and this improved the food security and nutrition of the 300 farm families in project designated areas

### 3.2.5 SOCIAL IMPACT

By the year 2022, the constituencies involving 50 farmer families participating in community mobilization meetings for the effective formation of farmer field schools yielded an important social impact in the target communities as women and male youth get the chance to in cooperation in the FFS groups. .

The creation of jobs by the project for young people and the enhancement of livelihood in the food security sector helped to reduce the risk of violence.

SUCCESS STORY 1 - Effect on household livelihood security (seed distribution). From the initial small amount of seeds received we have managed to multiply the seed and planted two more times comments from farmer field school (FFS) chair persons at Mapoli Village Konike Sanda Tonkolili District who received rice, groundnut, and assorted vegetable in 2001. In all FIOH – SL operational villages, participants reported that the seeds and tools distribution in April 2001, May 2002 led to an increase availability of food (mainly rice) and income mainly (groundnut) at the household level. The distribution enabled us to bring more land into the production. This should been seen replied FFS chair persons in the context that pre – project was during the COVID 19 outbreak when people were not able to form properly and yields would have been not existence.

SUCCESS STORY2 - Effect on access to and control of household resources.

We the women of Koromasilaia Falaba District are now “proud” we had control over our own farm inputs (seeds) and got our benefit from the harvest of the project farms. Our Husbands used to respect us only at night, but now we contribute to household resources. However, the overwhelming feedback from the women involved in the focus group discussion was that the individual distribution of seed has led to women having more control than before over household resources in general. In most cases women said they had some or total control over the income from the groundnut traditionally grown by women increased independence one man in Mamudia Koro related how he had told his wife one morning to get ready to go to the farm only to be met with her response – farm whose farm? I am going to my farm however, there were no reports of negative consequences such as wife beating, divorce or argument and in fact women reported increased harmony with their households as there is now enough food in the household even during the hunger period (July, August and September).

# 4.0 CHAPTER FOUR OF SCI

## 4.1. General Conclusion

Adoption of innovative strategies and the enabling environmental helped increase project efficiency despite challenges experienced.

The project was implemented in line with community needs and mandates of national priority needs (food security). The activities and result were timely and cost effective and proved to be effective efficiency and show visible signs of impact and sustainability

Strategic action needed to be taken to help mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of COVID 19 pandemic in Sierra Leone (food security). The background to the project justifies the need for the intervention because as rightly described in the project proposal, human conditions were deplorable in Sierra Leone from the inception stage of the project. On the other hand, the government was overwhelmed with the appalling situation even though they had clear strategies in place to fight the disease. The decision made to implement the project in Koinodugu District was appropriate and the agricultural support of the project serves the needs of the beneficiaries to enhance food security. It is based on this reality I concluded that the project was relevant to the problem it seeks to address.

## 4.2. Recommendation / implication for policy

The recommendations presented here can be considered for management imposed to maximize the impact of the project while making sure deliverable are met and learning is well documented.

The agricultural support (trainings, distribution of farm inputs, seeds, and tools) came in at a time needed. However many farm families felt left out because the benefits derived from the farm inputs is not immediate. Given the slow pace of recovery from the shock of COVID 19, considering should be made to extend the agricultural support in particular to other vulnerable communities as proven evidence exist to ensure that this is a high impact initiative.

* To effectively mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of COVID 19, support in the form grants should be given to business entrepreneur affected by COVID 19.
* To enhance sustainability exist strategy, there is a need to establish Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) in each of the two communities for beneficiaries to engage in a savings and loans scheme through pooling of their own resources.

In general the project needs to build a greater element of critical analysis into its M & E systems project management needs to encourage a stronger process of analysis, learning reflection and action to ensure that M&E data can be used to inform future project planning and implementation processes (and influence donors regarding these) as well as to build information that can be used to advocate for the wider adoption of innovative climate smart agricultural practices.

Continue to conduct annual crop yield assessment through the life of the project to provide technical data to verify the findings related to livelihood security.

Covert seed quantities prior to distribution into “Tri pens pan” quantities or another unit of measurement community understood by the targeted communities

There is a need for a follow up project to have an optimum duration of 3 or 5 years is suggested if funds permit to allow for adequate capacity of project structures and beneficiaries and hence project impact.

In order that farmers are able to reduce their post harvest loss and secure their yield the construction of drying floors and grain stores will go a long way to maximize farmers yield.

While there is limited time to complete the project cycle, a mechanism should be established to document key learning with project management team

As much as possible the team should ensure that updates and briefing resulting from visits, peer assist sessions joint monitoring and supportive supervision are documented in a shared drive. Besides, a community of practice could also be established and managed virtually that Makerere University could also participate into strengthen learning among project staff.

## 4.3 Sustainability Plan

### 4.3.1 Institutional sustainability

The institutional sustainability of the project will be ensured through the establishment of community seed and tool banks in the two project communities which will continue supplying farm inputs (seeds and tools) at the end of the project period MAFFS, FFS and the community structures (village development committees) and community authorities (ward counselors will continue carrying monitoring or follow – up activities. The capacity building of project participants through training and distribution of seeds and tools will be used to sustain and expand project activities at the end of the project period.

Policy level sustainability all relevant country policies those participating to environmental, rural development, COVID 19, health and agriculture (Right to food) will be known to people at grass root communities.

### 4.3.2 Environmental sustainability

The capacity building given to the community on environmentally friendly develop meet technologies through encouragement of using organic farming along with the permaculture, concept in gardening and discouraging the excessive use of chemical fertilizers insecticides and herbicides will see the environmental preservation beyond the project duration..