

Cassava and Plantain Farm Project

Background:

Cassava and plantain being popular tropical crops are widely consumed and are considered as amongst the second and third major staple foods in Liberia. They are next to the country's staple food, rice. There are vast millions of hectares of green tropical land covered by green vegetation which could be cultivated for growing cassava and plantain in order to help fill the huge gap in meeting the country's food insufficiency.

However, consulting with community farmers on the challenges they are faced to move beyond subsistence farming (which yields cannot feed their families right round the year) to increase cultivation, production and generate income from farming, 80% says they lack farming subsidies and inputs following the Ebola outbreak. The above mentioned factors served as major causes to the inability of Liberians to sufficiently grow its staple foods, rice, cassava, potatoes and plantain over the year. This appalling situation continues to put pressure on the national government to support importation of the essential food commodities like white grain rice into the country of which a 50kg bag of imported rice is sold at an astronomical cost of \$ 30.00 USD. This is fast becoming unbearable for majority of Liberians who live below \$1.5 a day.

Owing the high cost of rice, the consumption of cassava and plantain which are locally grown is on the increase and could be a proven remedy to the food insecurity of Liberians and also serve as income generation activity for the typical Liberia farmer. Hence, the growing of cassava and plantain is becoming a major focus for subsistence rural farmers in western Liberia.

Project location: As a pilot, the project intends to target a farming community in one of the three Districts in Grand Cape Mount County, Southern Liberia. Porkpa District has huge fertile hectares of land that is suitable land for both crops. Porkpa District is two and half hours drive from Monrovia and one hour and half drive from Robert Sport, Grand Cape Mount County. The inhabitants are predominately engage in subsistence farming and small scale mining.

Resources/description

Energetic youths who are mostly challenged in accessing capital and other farming inputs in the target community will be mobilized to form at most four groups to cultivate cassava and plantain farms separately by the respective groups. Each group will cultivate 3 acres of land. Key of the cassava and plantain cultivation would include brushing/bush clearing, preparing of farm land for planting, securing cassava stems and plantain suckers, planting, brushing and harvesting of the farms. The member of the four farming groups will lead on clearing of the bush and planting of the crops. Amongst them, a farmer manager be appointed and an agricultural field agent will be drawn from among the Agricultural technical team to provide them with extension support.

The project will be owned and sustain by the community. The crops will be sold on the local market and proceeds redeploy for further cultivation thereby ensuring sustainability of the initiative.

Solution/Result

The project will increase availability of cassava and plantain in the target community and thereby serving an income generating farming activity. It will also popularize the consumption of both crops as part of the staple foods. The project also aims to transform the minds of community people from being over dependent on only rice as the staple food rice and it is expected to enrich their daily diet.

A total of fifty households, comprising of the two hundred and fifty inhabitants of Porkpa District will benefit from this project which will provide and add on the food source to the whole of western Liberia comprising cape mount, Bomi and Gbopolu counties. The county will provide man power, and five hundred (500) acres of land.

Budget of the project

Activities	Unit	Unit Cost/Amount
Food for work (brushing, clearing and preparing of land and planting)	4 groups	\$ 400
Farming tools (cutlasses, rain boots, safety overalls, wheelbarrows and shovels)	4 groups	\$ 400
Procuring of improved cassava cuttings	Bulk purchase for the 4 farm groups	\$ 500
Procuring of improved 4,000 plantain suckers	Bulk purchase for the 4 farm groups	\$ 500
Transportation and administration cost	Bulk	\$ 500
Support cost to Agriculture extension farmers and pesticides	2 Extension workers	\$ 400
Grand Total of the Project		\$ 2,700

The total cost of the cassava and plantain project is estimated to the tune of two thousand, seven hundred United States dollars (\$2, 700.00 USD)



Met with traditional women on ground which is part of the tradition and culture as they serves as the spirits of the land.



Mr. Christopher A.Z Kinnii, youth chairman represented and explaining about the productivity of the soil.



Mr. Christopher A.Z. Kinnii, explaining about the poor condition of farmer and community dwellers in Porkpa District, Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia



The production of the soil.