



# FEED THE FUTURE

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

# LIBERIA WRITE SHOP SUMMARY REPORT

Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI)  
Suakoko, Bong County, Liberia  
January 11-14, 2016

Report prepared by Jan Henderson  
January 2016



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





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## INTRODUCTION

Over the years MEAS (**M**odernizing **E**xtension and **A**dvisory **S**ervices) has created many training materials, especially the smart skills material (<http://www.meas-extension.org/meas-offers/training>) and Tip Sheets <http://www.meas-extension.org/tip-sheets> (e.g., the [ASK ME Extension Framework and the TIGRS Keys for Success; Participatory Methods Tools and Fact Sheets](#)). Most of the material is designed for use by field-level agents, but exposing graduate and undergraduate students in extension degree programs to the information would also be beneficial.

### WHAT

A four-day MEAS-sponsored write shop designed to help faculty members at selected colleges and universities “make the MEAS material their own” and find ways to use the resources in ways that are valuable to them. Participants reviewed the “raw” material and converted the material into formats (e.g., manuals, lesson plans, Power Point presentations, course outlines) that are more readily useable “back home.”

The objectives of the write shop were for participants to:

- Create at least one product that could be used to train current or future undergraduate students, extension agents, or farmers using existing MEAS materials;
- Familiarize themselves with MEAS resources and determine opportunities for continuing to integrate MEAS materials into curricula and trainings;
- Establish a framework for ongoing collaboration on extension education and training throughout the country.

### WHERE

January 11-14, 2016

Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI)

Suakoko, Bong County, Liberia

### WHO

28 participants (see list in Appendix A)

- Lofa County Community College
- Nimba County Community College
- Stella Maris Polytechnic School
- Cuttington University
- Cuttington Junior College
- Booker Washington Institute
- University of Liberia
- David A. Starz College
- Bomi Community College
- Grand Bassa Community College
- Bong County Technical College
- Grand Gedeh Community College
- United Methodist University
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Central Agricultural Research Institute – CARI
- Agricultural Industrial Training Bureau – AITB

## EVALUATION AND PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Overall, the 28 participants provided very positive comments regarding the different aspects of the write shop. During the last session, we asked participants to share their **favorite part** of the write shop, the **most useful** or **beneficial** aspect of the write shop and **suggestions for improving** future write shops. Participant comments are summarized below.

1. What was your **most favorite** part of the write shop?

Overwhelmingly the participants cited the **interaction among participants** as their most favorite part: exchanging ideas, getting to meet professional people from all over Liberia, sharing knowledge with other participants on common topics, discussing progress and receiving feedback on their writing projects:

*Interchanging thoughts with other participants and using their ideas to shape and widen my own project was most helpful.*

*I had the opportunity to meet people from different academic institutions with diverse perceptions.*

*The write shop provided me the chance to interact with new colleagues, share experiences, and gain new ideas.*

- The **energizers and daily reviews** were identified by many participants as their favorite part of the write shop.

*The fun we all shared together in order to reduce some stress was my favorite part.*

*The energizers were a particular favorite.*

2. What did you find **most useful** or **beneficial** about the write shop?

- As in the two previous write shops in Ghana and Uganda, the participants in Liberia cited the **MEAS materials** on the flash drives as the most beneficial aspect of the write shop: the availability of resource materials to share with colleagues at their own institutions...the various topics participants could select from and work with.
- Other useful aspects of the write shop participants included: meeting new people, having the opportunity for each participant to develop individual topics, and sharing information in small groups.

3. What suggestions do you have for **improving** future write shops?

Overall the participants were very appreciative of the time, effort, and financial support devoted to organizing and facilitating the write shop; they provided positive comments regarding the meals, transportation, lodging, and daily agenda.



Specific suggestions for improvement included:

- Emailing the MEAS materials in advance so participants can be better prepared to begin writing.
- Increasing the time for participants to share their experiences, present their projects, and receive feedback from others on materials being developed.
- Improving some logistical aspects: Internet access in meeting room, availability of laptops for participants without computers, socializing activities in the evenings, and pay stipend immediately.
- The need for follow-up to track progress and the desire for participants to stay connected through a “refresher” write shop.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Having representatives from all agricultural universities and community/junior colleges in Liberia attend the write shop was such an affirmation of the excellent work done prior to our arrival in country. This was the first time for such a gathering and hopefully the participants can continue to work together and perhaps establish a more formal network for providing support and encouragement to teach other.
- Although we had extra copies of handouts, pens, flash drives, etc. we still ran out of supplies as the number of participants increased...having 28 participants was a very positive outcome, but in the future we need to be better prepared with additional items so no one is left out...we can always leave the few “extras” with the write shop organizers to use in their institutions.
- We must not take for granted the importance participants give to receiving an individualized certificate at the end of a workshop. During all three write shops we either had names misspelled due to errors on the original participant list or not enough certificates even though we brought along blank ones to complete on site. Awarding the certificates at the conclusion of the write shops was a meaningful part of the week-long experience for the participants. Fortunately we were able to get certificates (and a group photo) printed for all participants before departing the country.
- In-country coordination before, during, and after the write shop is essential. Knowing the most appropriate venues, which participants to invite, and organizing logistics are critical and can be more easily performed by professionals from the hosting country. We were very fortunate to have two coordinators in Liberia who provided outstanding support for the write shop; their attention to every detail was always evident.
- We managed the daily one-hour drive back and forth from the hotel to the meeting location. We appreciated the transportation provided by the Ministry of Agriculture providing...we could not have convened the write shop without their support. Having the lodging and meeting room in the same location or close proximity would be a first choice, but each country situation is different and needs to be accommodated.

- Having 28 participants attend the write shop was a wonderful challenge...we could not always spend as much time as needed to work with individual participants or schedule time for all 28 participants to deliver presentations summarizing their projects, but overall the high level of participation was most appreciated as we strive to share the MEAS materials with as many professionals as possible.
- We assumed all participants would bring their own laptops to the write shop; unfortunately, two participants did not have access to any computers at their institutions (they also did not have e-mail addresses). Fortunately these two participants worked with their colleagues from the same institution to create a writing project.
- Several participants could not open the PDF files on their flash drives...we recommend including a PDF reader on the flash drive. We also recommend, in addition to the MEAS documents, that previous write shop projects (i.e, Ghana and Uganda) be included on the flash drives to serve as examples and additional resources.
- Working with the in-country coordinators to determine a “fair” dollar amount to reimburse participants for individual travel appeared to go more smoothly than having participants bring in multiple receipts for fuel. Having a set “price” eliminated the facilitators from determining if receipts accurately reflected travel expenses.
- In-country payment for lodging and meals always seems to be a challenge...either because we don’t have enough “cash” to pay for bills or because the amounts change once we arrive in country. Any procedures that can be handled prior to leaving the U.S. will help reduce financial problems in country.

## SELECTED WRITE SHOP PHOTOS



28 participants representing universities, colleges, research institutes, and the Ministry of Agriculture

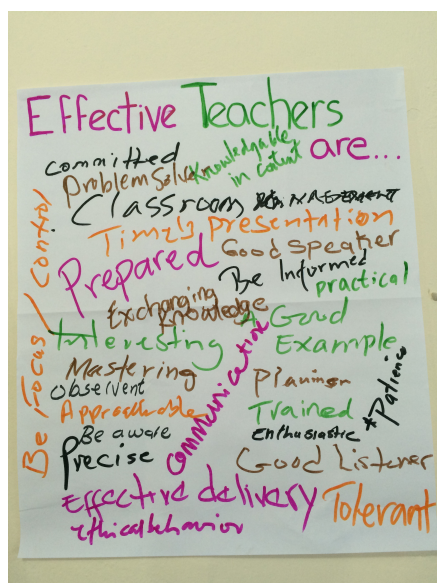
Participants working on their writing projects





Note: The next five photos depict participants sharing their work with each other





Introductions: One word to describe effective teachers

Facilitator explaining write shop procedures to participants





“Farm Chore” energizer



“Follow the Leader” energizer





## Workshop Wrap-Up: Expected Outcomes and Next Steps



## APPENDIX A. List of Workshop Participants

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## APPENDIX B. List of Teaching Materials Created by Participants during MEAS Write Shop - Liberia

### **J. William Barrolle**

Booker Washington Institute

A 10-page lesson plan for undergraduate students titled: *Food Security in Liberia* and a 20-page lesson plan for farmers, undergraduate students, and field Extension agents titled: *How to Improve Agricultural Products Using Field Settings and Laboratories in Liberia*.

### **Jerome Bohlen**

Agricultural Industrial Training Center

A 93-slide Power Point presentation Titled: *Monitoring and Evaluation*.

### **Leroy W. Cegbe**

University of Liberia

A 31-page training manual for undergraduate and diploma students titled: *Teaching and Information Dissemination Technologies*.

### **Jerome Clarke**

Cuttington Junior College

A six-page outline for a two-day workshop titled: *Understanding How to Choose and Work with Partners in Agricultural Extension in Rural Communities in Liberia*.

### **Victoria J. Cooper**

Ministry of Agriculture

An eight-page outline for a three-day workshop titled: *Farmer to Farmer Learning Approach for Lead Farmers*.

### **Senita Cuffy-Arku**

Stella Maris Polytechnic

A 16-slide Power Point presentation for Extension agents and undergraduate students titled: *ICT in Agriculture*.

### **N. Alfred Gono**

Bong County Technical College

A two-page outline for training field agents on the use of Smart Skills Guides.

### **Z. Edmord Greaves & Aaron S. Kenneh**

David A. Starz College

A 32-slide Power Point presentation titled: *The Effects of Climate Change on the Farming Seasons in Liberia*.

### **Darlington N. Kilay**

Nimba County Community College

A 37-slide Power Point presentation for undergraduate students, village elders, and district and central government representatives titled: *Managing Natural Resources*.

**David M. Kolleh**

Cuttington University

A 14-slide Power Point presentation for undergraduate students, farmers, and civil society actors titled: *Managing Natural Resources: Concepts and Strategies* and a six-page outline to accompany the presentation.

**Abibatu T. Kromah**

Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI)

A four-page handout titled: *Basic Principles of Extension* and a two-page handout titled: *Extension Approaches*.

**Mercy Kou Lah-Jally**

Central Agricultural Research Institute

A seven-page outline for Extension field agents for a one-day workshop titled: *Three Methods for Planting Cassava Cuttings*.

**Molly Massaquoi**

Cuttington University

A four-page outline for an undergraduate course titled: *Climate Change for Extension and Agricultural Service Providers*.

**Morleeta Mends-Cole**

University of Liberia

An 18-page lesson plan for undergraduate students titled: *Food Security: The Role of Extension*.

**Paul L. S. Nabieu**

Lofa County Community College

A 46-slide Power Point presentation titled: *Cocoa Nursery Establishment Using Farmer Field Approach* and a 14-page training manual to accompany the presentation.

**Philip Ndaloma**

Bong Technical College

A nine-page lesson plan for a farmer workshop titled: *Preparing Smallholder Farm Families to Adapt to Climate Change: Managing Water Resources*.

**Philip N. Neoh**

Grand Gedeh County Community College

A ten-page outline for an undergraduate course titled: *Agricultural Education Extension Services*.

**Caroline Nyaplue & J. Lepolu Torlon**

Cuttington University

A four-page lesson plan outline for undergraduate students titled: *Comparative Assessment of Pluralistic Extension Services: Liberia and Bangladesh*.

**John Y. Reed**

Cuttington Junior College

A three-page outline for an undergraduate course titled: *Introduction to Agricultural Marketing*.



**Jerimiah M. Swinteh**

Grand Bassa Community College

An eight-page lesson plan for a two-day workshop for Extension workers titled: *Role of Extension Workers and their Advisory Services in Linking Smallholder Farmers to Markets in Liberia.*

**William C. Todd Jr.**

Booker Washington Institute

A 34-page lesson plan for undergraduate students, farmers, and Extension agents titled: *Climate Change Adaptation for Smallholder Farmers in Liberia.*

**Kieh Wisseh & Alfred S. Mongar**

Bomi County Community College

A four-page outline and a two-page work plan for a two-day workshop titled: *Delivering Extension Services through Effective and Inclusive Women Groups* and a 26-slide Power Point presentation for women farmers titled: *Organizing and Managing Farmer Groups.*

**Moses M. Yama and Prince P. Yini**

United Methodist University

A five-page curriculum guide for undergraduate students and small-scale farmers titled: *Linking Smallholder Farmers to Markets and the Implications for Extension and Advisory Services.*

## APPENDIX C. List of MEAS Materials Used by Write Shop Participants – Liberia

<b>Folder: CRS –MEAS Field Guides</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Preparing Smallholder Farm Families to Adapt to Climate Change; Pocket Guide 3: Managing Water Resources	Aaron, Edmord
<b>Folder: CRS –MEAS Smart Skills Guides</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Organizing and Managing Farmer Groups	Kieh, A. Mongar
Managing Natural Resources	Darlington
Marketing Basics	John
<b>Folder: Briefs</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Linking smallholder farmers to markets and the implications for extension and advisory services	Jerimiah, Moses, Prince
<b>Folder: Case Studies</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Documenting extension approaches of selected development organizations	Abibatu
The mud on their legs –Farmer to farmer videos in Uganda	Victoria, Paul, Leroy
Delivering extension services through effective and inclusive women's groups: The case of SEWA in India	Kieh
<b>Folder: Country Assessments</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Assessment of Bangladesh's pluralistic extension system	Caroline, Lepolu
<b>Folder: Methods &amp; Tools → Ask Me</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Keys to success –Extension principles	Abibatu
Choosing and working with partners	J. Clarke
<b>Folder: Symposium 2012</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Linking smallholder farmers to markets and the implications for extension and advisory services	Jeremiah, Moses, Prince
Nutrition extension	Barrolle
<b>Folder: Symposium 2013</b>	<b>Used By</b>
GrowCocoa –Farmer Business Schools	Paul
The link between agricultural extension and food security: wave 1 survey results from a MEAS randomized controlled trial of Grameen's community knowledge worker program with dairy farmers in Uganda	Barrolle
Exploring the promise of ICTs for women farmers	Senita
The role of extension and advisory services in improving livelihoods and food security –Evidence from the field	Barrolle
The role of extension and advisory services in improving livelihoods and food security –evidence from the field	Barrolle
Adoption of farmbook by extension agents in Africa: Challenges and opportunities for the future	Barrolle
The role of extension and advisory services (EAS) in improving livelihoods and food security –evidence from the field	Barrolle
<b>Folder: Technical Notes</b>	<b>Used By</b>

Teaching in field settings and laboratories	Barrolle
<b>Folder: Training Material → Evaluation</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Evaluation of agricultural extension and advisory services	J. Bohlen
<b>Folder: Training Material → Program Development</b>	<b>Used By</b>
Methods for monitoring and evaluation	J. Bohlen