

UDDAO CASSAVA PROCESSING PLANT: SIERRA LEONE  
ROTARY DISTRICT 5960  
FARIBAULT ROTARY CLUB  
December, 2012

### **BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT**

Sierra Leone, situated on the west coast Horn of Africa, has a population of 5.6 million and a land area of 28,000 square miles. Its population is comparable to Minnesota (5.35 million); its land area is one-third that of Minnesota. The majority of people lives in rural areas, much of it remote, and sixty percent are subsistence farmers. Maternity mortality is 890 per 100,000 births; the infant mortality rate is 770 per 100,000. Life expectancy is 56 ½ years. 42% of the population is under 15, 54.5 % are 15-64, while only 3.5% are 65 or older. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in Africa and Africa is the poorest continent.

The country endured war and internal strife from 1990 through 2002, devastating communities and agricultural production. As part of a recovery program to assist farmers who had seen the destruction of their lives, property, and possessions, the government sponsors "Integrated Agricultural Development Projects" (IADP) to revitalize the agricultural sector. Women and youth have suffered the most, but they also represent an underused resource in producing, processing, and marketing agricultural products. IADP helps farmers establish associations and return to normal life. United District Development and Agricultural Organization (UDDAO) shares these goals.

Makeni is the largest city in the north central part of the country. Just west of Makeni is the Makarie Gbantie Chiefdom—with 450,000 people. The Manjay section (5000 residents) includes the village of Matoko and ten other communities. *This area is the focus of our project.* The Manjay section is a poverty stricken, neglected area. Its land is fertile and suitable for cassava production, but has not been developed. The people are challenged with high illiteracy, teenage pregnancies, and youth without hope. But it also has abundant land and human energy. It needs an economic plan that will alleviate poverty, support community employment and education, and move toward economic self-reliance. Sixty to eighty percent of the people rely on farming for survival. The main crops are cassava, rice, potato, palm oil and groundnut. Rice and groundnut are used locally and easily sold. But UDDAO sees a brighter economic future in the development of cassava.

### **UNITED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UDDAO)**

UDDAO was established locally to develop the agricultural economy and reduce poverty. UDDAO was originally the vision of 19 college students. After graduation, 13 of these students formed the organization. It is a community based organization registered with, but separate from, the national government. Unlike IADP, UDDAO is not sponsored or financially supported by the government. It is a non-profit action agency with programs in food security, water and sanitation, road development, welfare, and small business development. It has a membership of over 2000 people, made up largely of women and young adults. UDDAO has organized eight groups of small landholder's farmers associations, each group currently cultivating ten to thirty acres. These farms are near the villages of Matoko, Matikeray, and Magbonbeh in the Makarie Gbantie Chiefdom of the Bombali district. Since UDDAO is a local, farmer-based cooperative, monthly meetings will be held during the term of the Rotary Cassava Project for evaluation and planning. The director of UDDAO is Alie Kamara, who has been recognized by the national government for outstanding achievement in this work.

In addition to cassava UDDAO members this year have planted 40 acres of rice, 35 acres of groundnuts, and 25 acres of palms for palm oil. They did not plant potatoes this year, though they have in previous years. Additional land has been given by the headman (chief), who is responsible for the community and controls land rights. UDDAO members pay membership dues in support of the program. They do this in cash or by putting in labor hours.

Cassava is a tuber with multiple uses: food for people and livestock, pharmaceuticals, sweetener, glue, plywood, textiles, and biodegradable products (polymers). The demand for cassava is increasing globally and locally. Much of it is wasted because the area lacks the infrastructure to get the product to market in a timely manner. Companies such as Addax Bio-Energy, Sierra Leone Brewery, and San Miguel Foods (The Philippines) require thousands of metric tons of cassava for feed, ethanol, glue, food, starch, powder, and other products. This is an economic opportunity for area farmers.

### **THE PROJECT: Cassava Production, Processing, and Marketing**

The project area where UDDAO operates has much uncultivated acreage. UDDAO provides technical know-how to properly plant and process cassava and the marketing skills to increase income for area farmers. Funding is needed to purchase seedlings, fertilizer, tools, processing equipment, and other materials involved in planting, harvesting, processing, and marketing the finished product. Members are highly committed, but lack resources to realize their dream of self-development and self-reliance.

The Rotary Cassava Project will begin with 140 acres under cultivation: 60 acres of this are currently planted in the Upland area and growing well. Eighty acres will be added in the first year by the eight local farm groups. Within three years 900 acres could be cultivated. Profits made in the first year will sustain the project expansion into the second and third years.

After a training period, farm groups will be given farm tools/equipment and cassava stalks for planting. The plantings will be spaced so that year-round harvesting can be done. Planting will be done in a variety of ways depending on the soil and contour of the land. In some places small tractors may be used; in other areas shallow planting will be done by hand. As each field is ready for harvest (after 12 months), small tractors will be provided. During harvest, members will dig up the tubers, remove roots from the stalks, pack stalks for future planting, and send the tubers on to the processing plant—to be built in Matoko.

This plant (estimated cost \$5500) will be built to process the cassava and store it until it is sent to market. Processing involves pilling, washing, chipping or cutting, and packaging. A well will be constructed near the processing building. The well will be available for community use in the village of Matoko. A small office with computers, printer, and scanner also will be housed in the plant. This unit will be responsible for record keeping. One of the computers will have internet connection, allowing the farmers to quickly access information on the progress of the project and where and how marketing may be undertaken. The office will enable the small staff to prepare documents, reports, and other important information.

UDDAO will provide a motorbike for the director to monitor, supervise, and evaluate the project in five communities where the eight farm groups reside. Rented trucks will be used for transporting workers, stalks and the harvested cassava, tools and equipment, and the finished product. The staff will be given an allowance as they oversee the project. They will train and supervise farmers, oversee the processing, and tend to marketing. Outside consultants will be hired as needed.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** improve the livelihood of the eight farming groups in UDDAO. With education in farming methods, providing resources and employment, prolonging the shelf life of cassava, and increasing revenue with expanded sales, the income of the farmers will be increased by at least 50% in the Makarie Gbantie Chiefdom.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

1. Improve the living standards in Makari Gbanti Chiefdom.
2. Provide an agricultural processing plant for the area farmers.
3. Increase household income.
4. Promote farming as employment for women and youth.
5. Skill development through training programs and the use of the Internet.
6. Increase farmer and farm group income by 100%.
7. Provide funding for school costs and raise the literacy rate.
8. Provide clean water for 5000 people.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:** The project will have little adverse impact on the environment. The land preparation, growing, and harvesting will not have negative affects. Use of machinery in this setting is not harmful to any significant degree. Unused wastes will feed animals and enrich the soil. Having a variety of crops in the area, crop rotation will be used to nourish and maintain soil quality.

**DISTRIBUTION OF EARNINGS:** After sales members (men, women, youth) will evaluate the project and oversee distribution of the profits. It has been decided that 40% will go for sustaining and expanding the project. 40% will be shared among the farm families in the project: for life's necessities, the education of children and youth, and to provided health care. It will begin to lift them out of extreme poverty. 20% will go to UDDAO for management/administrative costs AND for emergencies and contingencies.

**LOCAL PARTNER: MAKENI ROTARY CLUB**

From and email on February 2, 2012: "Rotary Makeni will ensure that we render whatever help we can offer to make this project a reality. Aminata Koroma, president"

For the MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: Aminata Koroma, Makeni Rotary Club  
To: Rick Ormsby, Faribault (Minnesota) Rotary Club

email September 5, 2012:

Thanks for your effort in trying to raise living standards in our country; we really appreciate that. I'm going to handoff the presidency on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, to Aminata Sherriff. However, as current past president the club has agreed and mandated me to chair the project committee as we had lots of project proposals this year.

Members of the committee are Aminata Sherriff, Bashru Bangura, Isatu Fofanah, Joseph Turay, and myself. We are ready to do the oversight and monitoring of your project. I have known Alie Kamara

for a long time; we (in Makeni) are 8 kilometers (5 miles) from Matoko....Presently Alie is updating me with all the discussions you (in Minnesota) are having with him. We are ready to provide management for the project and monitoring their activities and will work with a committee in the project area. We are suggesting that the funds be sent to our account, so we Rotarians will control the finance and provide transparency. We will remit money to their account as the project budget directs. After the completion of one activity, we will release money for another—providing accountability and transparency and to avoid the misuse of funds. We are already working in the manner with an Australian Rotary Club that is assisting a local school. Will will be accountable for any mismanagement. We are all stakeholders with integrity; it is our responsibility to see that your money is used for its intended purpose. We wish you all the best.

Aminata Koroma