



Laying the Foundation for Peace

Executive Director Trip Report April 2-17, 2013



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Objectives:

1. Determine results of Phase I Women vegetable farming in terms of:
 - 2012 harvest productivity compared to 2011 results following the pesticide training program
 - determine the quantity of added acreage cleared for subsequent planting of additional seeds in Phase II
 - Determine budget for Phase II buy of seeds
2. Plan and budget for Cacao Phase II:
 - Price and obtain solar plastic to cover drying frames (this pertains to adding value to the old tree's beans by using best practices for drying, fermenting and processing cacao beans. This is essential to moving forward on achieving organic cacao certification.) Farmers know they are responsible for all construction that was taught during the train the trainer program in Phase I.
 - Price and obtain the seeds or seedlings of the new hybrid type to start nurseries and begin to replace the diminishing, old forest cacao trees. The added value process described in the aforementioned will be employed, and the new beans will also be the basis for sustainable growth as the source for new nursery seedlings.
 - Determine the budget and implementation schedule tied to the planting season.
3. Confer with Jula Consultancy on a Phase III project that focuses on certification steps following the 2013 harvest and evaluation of the quality and quantity. This will support a Phase III proposal.
4. Reconcile budgets for Phase I Cacao and Women Vegetable projects with TPF Freetown staff.
5. Review TPF Staff Monthly Budgeting Process.
6. Deliver the ISHI report to Nixon Memorial Hospital Director, Dr Missah.
 - Assess the adequacy of the guest houses for ISHI personnel
 - Ask Dr Missah to solicit support from their traditional supporters for the ISHI visit
7. Visit Alex Bonifas, the new Chairman of Kailahun District, and ask for support to Penguia Chiefdom.
8. Go to the Njaima mining concession and assess the situation.
9. Confer with BRAC Freetown on pathways to establish a micro-credit and other services to farmers in Penguia that could be expanded to other concession areas.

Chronology

March 31 departed IAD and arrived in Freetown on Tuesday, April 2d.

Apr 2 Traveled to Sandaru with intent to show TLR/TPF Presence at Lucy Jibilla's Inauguration as District Councilor. Arrived near the end, but presence was acknowledged by the Paramount Chief (PC) and Lucy. The PC called me to the stage to meet the Member of Parliament and the District Chairman. I did not get an opportunity to talk with the PC or the Speaker. I did have a brief conversation with the District Chairman and asked for a meeting the following week. He said he has heard about TPF and looks forward to the meeting.

Apr 3 Had first customary courtesy meeting with Speaker Sundu to inform him that I was in the chiefdom and had not yet spoken to the PC except by phone in an attempt to facilitate a call between Jeffrey Wright and the PC. Francis Bokarie accompanied me to translate. The meeting became much longer than I had expected. After informing the Speaker of what we intended to accomplish, he expressed his appreciation for our commitment to development and then shifted to a concern about understanding Mende culture. 'The Mende people always welcome strangers. We may know you well, but you are still strangers. It is our way that when you come, you must first report to the town chief and other chiefs who your project may affect.'

I told the Speaker we will try to honor this protocol, but if the project involves multiple Sections, I don't have time to see even each Section Chief and also get the work done with the people who do the work___ as you well know, I have a hard time catching the PC. He laughed.

I said maybe when I first meet with you, you can tell me who I must see also to avoid offending someone. He nodded OK.

I held two planning sessions for both Cacao Phase II (Samuel Mborka) and vegetables (Lucy Jibilla) Phases I and II.

Apr 4

As I began travel to Freetown, I saw the PC was at home in Segwemba and stopped to give him an overview of what TPF would try to accomplish during this visit. I told him I would need an hour next week to let him know the accomplishments and get his guidance on a separate matter not related to TPF/TLR, but potentially positive in the Chiefdom.

In Kenema TPF had two tasks:

- Determine the cost of hybrid cacao seedlings at Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI) or Jula Consultancy; however, the SLARI OIC was in Freetown and no one wanted to quote a price.
- Confer with Jula on our vision for transforming Penguia production in order to meet international standards for certification as a high quality organic cacao. I asked if they could lay out the steps to this end as a possible Phase III input to a proposal we would have to develop for funding.
- We agreed to discuss their ideas when I traveled back to Penguia on Apr 8.
- Upon arrival in Freetown East, visited Shanderkas, a vendor who we learned sold the solar plastic we would need for expanding construction of the shelters for the drying process that had been taught in Phase I. I examined the materials, obtained the cost per shelter, and advised that we would purchase the material for 12-14 shelters the following week.

Apr 5

- Called Dr Missa in Segbwema to confirm meeting with him on April 8 reference the ISHI report.
- Arranged a 10:30 AM meeting with Daniel Gbondo to give him an update on the R³ proposal and discuss the changes I had made based on concerns expressed by Rebecca Burton from Tiffany and Co, Foundation.
- Met with TPF staff to discuss the need to revise both their monthly budgeting process and how they view, manage and account for funds when there are TLR and TPF funds in the vault. Both issues are problematic. I asked them to think this through and we would meet again when I returned from Penguia.

Apr 6

- Called Foday Kamara, Director of FINIC Industries. In 2012 we had an agreement that FINIC would let the women in Penguia use a rice mill if they would agree to field test his new rice thresher using a specific protocol. Alhaji Sidibay went to FINIC on Nov 16 (the day I went to the airport) to pick up the two machines and the technician who would train the testers. I later learned that only the thresher was provided. We arranged to meet the following week to resolve the mix up.

April 7

- Called Seeds International to alert them to a buy of six type seeds for the women farmers and asked if they would be available in Kenema. They suggested we try the Freetown supplier first.
- Made detailed notes for the budgetary issues that needed to be known to shape the concept planning for the vegetable and cacao farmers. The latter had two tracks: 1) drying and fermentation of the old forest trees' beans to add value based on Phase I training; and 2) cost factors involved in starting nurseries using the new hybrid seedlings to begin to replace the old trees. Question to answer: how much can we accomplish from Phase I training completed in Dec 2012 with new funds provided by the Segal Family Foundation?
- Called John M. Kallon, OIC, of the Kenema SLARI office, to arrange a meeting on April 8 to discuss the cost of cacao seedlings. He said he would not be there, but he would alert Mohammed Luseni of my coming.
- Confirmed with Julia Consultancy our meeting on April 8 in Kenema.

April 8

- Departed Freetown at 7:00 AM.
- Because of anticipated problems obtaining petrol we tried to refuel in BO, but had no success. Had the same problem in Kenema and had to buy on the black market.
- Met with Julia Consultancy (Mohamed Fofana and Sonny Cole who had delivered the Phase I training). Instead of focusing on my request for Phase III concept, they wanted to be involved in Phase II_ a service I did not think was needed and could not afford. I emphasized that I did want their Phase III thinking and would come by on my return to Freetown. They did expand my understanding to focus on buying cacao pods and extract the seeds for the nurseries rather than buy the more expensive seedlings. We discussed the cost elements in that approach and the timeline for adequate germination and the possible desire to engage them in making a check for fungus and disease management of the nurseries.
- Julia gave me a copy of the SLARI costs per product, and I decided to pursue other options for the nursery project.
- After getting petrol on the black market, we traveled to Segbwema's Nixon Memorial Hospital for the meeting with Dr Missa. I gave him copies of the ISHI Report and suggested that he send an email to ISHI thanking them for their desire to bring capacity to the hospital. I told him of the critical need to fund the trip and also provide adequate accommodations. Regarding funds, I asked if he could contact some of the hospital's traditional funders to see if they could provide some funding support. Dr Missa said he would contact them. I inspected the hospital guest houses. There is sufficient space for nine ISHI staff. **However the facilities need a major cleaning to be considered adequate** (See photos below). There is a guest house in the town.



Above is one of two guest houses. Each can accommodate four persons. The small building on the right is the kitchen.



Each two bed room guest house has a common living area.



Each two person suite has a bathroom and a small stove.

- Called the District Chairman to confirm our meeting on the 9th.
- We proceeded to Sandaru.

April 9

- Departed Sandaru with Lucy Jibilla, newly elected Councilor for Penguia Chiefdom, and the Public Relations Officer for the meeting with the new District Chairman, Alex Bonifas.
- Met with the District Chairman (DC) and his Deputy. The meeting was cordial and positive. (Lucy Jibilla had sung praises about the TPF role in Penguia). I discussed our disappointment with the previous administration's lack of support for the agriculture initiatives in Penguia and gave several examples of legitimate needs that should have been supported, but were not. I gave him an overview of our current initiatives and those we hoped to fund. Pertaining to current initiatives, I emphasized the need to get technical assistance from the District rather than have to hire consultants. For the R³ project, I described the critical role that would be required of the District's officers responsible for mining policy, agriculture and the environment. The DC responded positively.
- During the return to Penguia, I reminded Lucy of what details I needed to finalize planning for the women vegetable farmers, namely: 1) productivity results for the 2012 harvest compared to 2011 following the use of pesticides; 2) amount of additional acreage cleared for added plantings; and 3) the amount of seeds needed by type to take advantage of the new acreage available.
- Upon return to Sandaru, I met with Samuel Mborka to finalize the Phase II cacao project now that we had budget data. The project has two components: 1) Build on the Phase I training for 50 farmers (10 farmers per five chiefdom Sections). Farmers were trained to train farmers in their Section in the "best practices" for the cacao drying and fermentation process. They learned how to construct the shelters and drying tables from local materials, and how to use the three drying boxes (10 carpenters, 2 per Section were trained on the precise construction of the boxes). This Phase I program is designed to improve the quantity, quality and value of the old forest trees. In Phase II TPF is supporting the construction of 13 shelters. The farmers build the framework, bamboo drying tables, and pay the trained carpenters for the drying boxes. TPF provides the solar plastic to cover the shelters; and 2) for the start of nurseries, TPF buys the

cacao pods and planting pots for germinating the hybrid seedlings. The farmers manage the 13 nurseries as follows: 4 for Bulima, 3 for Nimima and 2 nurseries each for the three smaller Sections. Each nursery will have 1000 seedlings. This process is the start for replacing the declining old forest trees which currently produce only 47% of the pre-civil war peak year harvest.



Bamboo shelter and drying tables for old forest cacao crop



A, B, and C fermentation boxes



Properly dried and fermented cacao from Phase I training. Julia Consultancy verified the sample as perfect, certifiable, organic chocolate.

- Held the first meeting with Edward Panda of Koumintandu for the start of coffee nurseries in Phase II. Because of the nonavailability of berries for planting, actions will not occur until December 2012. Thomas Brima of SNAP was asked to provide a proposal and budget for the training.

April 10

- Traveled to the Njaima mining site. Alhaji Lahai, Senior Section Chief, Lucy Jibilla, Chair of the District Committee for Mineral Resources, and Francis Bokarie accompanied me. I wanted to see the site and talk with the Youth Association Leadership that was securing the site. The visit was very informative. A summary of the visit and photos was sent to the New York management team.
- In late afternoon I reviewed the vegetable farmer inputs I had requested. I discussed the data with Samuel Mborka and concluded we cannot buy seeds based on the data provided. Instead we would fund a seed multiplication project based on affordability and our best translation of the local measurements used in the report.

April 11

- Departed Sandaru for Freetown. I stopped at PC Jibilla's home to discuss a pen pal project with young African American and Penguia girls. This initiative is unrelated to the work of TPF. The project is sponsored by Dr Karyn Trader-Leigh who heads a leadership development mentoring program for young girls in her church. I gave him a packet of info and 9 throwaway cameras and said Karyn would need to have a woman POC in Penguia. The PC said he would think on this and give me an answer when I returned.
- I stopped at Jula Consultancy for further discussion about a Phase III program for cacao and coffee. They still wanted to become involved in Phase II. I told them I could not afford what they propose and did not think their services were needed because of the competency of Samuel Mborka, but I am open to an independent assessment once the seeds are in the ground to ensure proper management control of disease and fungus. The latter is an open issue. Samuel Mborka had already started a nursery for 1000 seedlings and that was the basis for my confidence in him.



Samuel Mborka's hybrid cacao seed nursery

- Upon arrival in Freetown East, I purchased 7 rolls of solar panels from Shanderkas for cacao Phase II construction of 13 shelters.

- FINIC was close by Shanderkas and I had a 4:00 PM meeting with the Director, Foday Kamara. The meeting was to clarify the mix-up in Nov 2012 when only a rice thresher and not a rice mill were provided to the women farmers. I showed him his email making the commitment for both. He agreed to rectify this, but I needed to give him the exact period of need, the time of return, and who will be responsible for the transport. (Before leaving Sierra Leone I gave Mr Kamara the info he requested _ late October pick-up and return by TPF in early January).

April 12

- Purchased the six varieties of seeds (ground nut, okra, peppers, egg plant, tomato and maize) from “Seeds International” in Freetown. Paid for all but the quantity of maize was not available and we were told we could pick up those seeds in Kenema on Monday, April 15.
- Tried to change my return flight to be available for a TLR/Penguia Chiefdom community-wide meeting on the 18th, but no seats were available.

April 13

- Worked on notes reflecting the budget and implementing plans for the women, cacao, and coffee farmers.
- Met with the Freetown BRAC Director, Mr Tapan Kumar Karmaker, to further the discussions on micro-credit and other services to support TPF projects.

April 14

- Conferred with the TLR/TPF management team about the upcoming events in Penguia Chiefdom, especially in regard to the mining concession. Prepared for return to Penguia.
- Joined the dinner meeting with the investor team.

April 15

- Traveled to Penguia. On the way, I met with Julia Consultants to iterate our desire for a Phase III concept think piece that would include a pathway to certification of Penguia cacao as organic chocolate which can be sold and exported as such.
- The Seeds International delivery of the maize seeds from Makeni was supposed to arrive by 12:30, but did not arrive until 3 PM. We proceeded to Sandaru. Upon arrival, I showed the seeds and solar plastic rolls to Lucy Jibilla and Samuel Mborka. We agreed to store these items in the camp until needed.



The bags contain ground nuts and maize. The black plastic bags visible in the right photo contain tomato, okra, pepper, and egg plant seeds. The rolls of plastic are for the 13 shelters' solar panels.

April 16

- Accompanied the TPF Chairman, Jeffrey Wright, to the Njaima mining site and introduced him to Mohammed Sam King, the Youth Association President.
- Accompanied the Chairman to the meeting with the Paramount Chief (PC) Samuel Jibilla to discuss mining issues and future plans.
- I told the PC I would like to stop on the way to Freetown to discuss the pen pal project I had asked him about the previous week. He agreed.

April 17

- Departed early for Freetown. Stopped to speak with the PC. He had discussed the proposed pen pal project with his wife, Fatimata W. Jibilla. She agreed to be the chiefdom liaison and work with Dr Karyn Trader-Leigh to implement the program. She said the number of participants should not exceed fourteen.
- Met with the Freetown staff to finalize discussions on budget submissions and reconciliation of expenditures during the visit.
- Packed for the early departure to Lungi Airport on the 18th.