

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services (INGENAES) and WorldFish Sierra Leone Agricultural Project

Sierra Leone
September Update
2016

Horticulture Demonstration for
Farmer-to-Farmer Learning Exchange

Led by Colby Silvert (INGENAES & WorldFish) with Yeanoh Dumbuya, Abubakar Senesie, and Sheka Sesay (WorldFish interns)

During the week of August 1st a team from WorldFish together with INGENAES worked with a group of fifteen farmers from the Mathelebana pilot community to construct a diversified horticulture demonstration plot. Constraints affecting vegetable production in the inland valley swap were identified through group discussions with the local farmers. Poor drainage and soil saturation during the rainy season were primary concerns, along with weather limiting the seasonality of the cultivation of many crops. From in-field brainstorming with the farmer group, several ideas were generated to address these constraints including increasing the height of the heap and row formations, and digging trench ways for water to drain freely, without washing away soil and seeds.

The integration of nutrition was an additional priority in the implementation of the plot. Groundnut, okra, sweet potato, hot pepper, bean, and jute seeds and seedlings were procured locally from the community to include four of the FAO recommended food groups for West Africa. Fish from the nearby pond could then add the fifth group to provide a complete diversified diet.



Group planting led by Mahawa Fornah (pictured behind), farmer from Mathelebana, during the farmer-to-farmer field day learning exchange on August 4th.

On August 4th, in participation with the Tonkolili Ministry of Agriculture, a farmer-to-farmer exchange was held to engage farmers from the neighboring Masankoro Two community. To facilitate mutual exchange, the visiting farmers presented on the Seasonal Food Availability Calendars that were created by WorldFish with farmer feedback based on the twelve-month availability of foods in the community, with a calendar for each FAO food group. The group from Mathelebana then shared their experiences in decision-making and thereafter construction of the demonstration plot.

This participatory farmer-to-farmer extension approach also promoted gender empowerment by involving an equally mixed group of men and women farmers, and prioritizing ideas suggested by women farmers. The women took the lead in deciding to use local chicken dung to improve soil fertility, and they procured and prepared the seeds locally. The men were largely responsible for the land preparation and the formation of the heaps. During the exchange field day, the men and women from both communities participated together in the planting.



(Above) Fatmata Koroma, farmer from Mathelebana, teaching peers about the Seasonal Food Availability Calendars with Rebecca Fayama and Jennet Fofanah both visiting from the neighboring community, Masankoro 2, during the farmer-to-farmer learning exchange © Silvert 2016



(Above) Masiray Kargbo (front) preparing groundnut seeds, while John Tholley, community volunteer, discusses the newly prepared demonstration plot with Lester Greywood from the Tonkolili District Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security.

Also pictured: Abubakar Senesie and Sheka Sesay (WorldFish Interns); and Rebecca Fayama and Jannet Fofanah (farmers from Masankoro 2) © Silvert 2016



(Left) John Tholley, community volunteer from Mathelebana, with peers planting chili pepper seedlings for a trial to evaluate how differences in spacing and land preparation affect productivity outcomes. © Silvert 2016



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