

Guinea-Bissau Livelihood Initiative

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The Global Fairness Initiative

The Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) is an international nongovernmental organization based in Washington, DC that promotes a more equitable, sustainable approach to economic development for the world's working poor by advancing fair wages, access to markets, and balanced public policy to generate opportunity and end the cycle of poverty. A special thank you to all of our partners who contributed to making GBLI a high impact program that was able to support thousands of Guinea-Bissau's farmers.

The Guinea-Bissau Livelihood Initiative (GBLI)

Improving Livelihoods for Bissau-Guineans

On July 31st, the Guinea-Bissau Livelihood Initiative came to an end. In this final newsletter, we would like to share with you the major accomplishments and successes of the last three years. The Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) hopes to continue working in Guinea-Bissau and is actively searching for opportunities to build and expand on what has already been accomplished during GBLI, specifically in local infrastructure, technical assistance for high-value crop production, facilitate to finance and farming inputs, and market access opportunities for small holder producers.

GFI implemented GBLI alongside two farming associations that represent GBLI's beneficiary communities. APALCOF – a women's farming collective of more than 3,500 smallholder producers – is being supported on multiple initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of APALCOF and its members to access markets, advocate for their rights and interests, and improve their livelihoods. GBLI has also engaged ANAG – Guinea-Bissau's national farming association, made up of more than 100,000 members – to strengthen its organizational capacity and support the economic and social development of its members.



GFI extends a warm thank you to all of our partners who helped make this program a success!

GBLI implemented a series of interventions tailored to the unique needs of its beneficiary communities. These interventions aimed to strengthen the foundation of beneficiaries' farming activities so that they can progress from subsistence farming to farming as a business.

The foundational interventions that GBLI worked to implement focused on three key areas:

(1) FOOD SECURITY

The primary objective of GBLI was to strengthen food security. GFI focused its rice production support in the region of Bafatá, partnering with AfricaRice and implementing activities with local partner APALCOF.

Modern Rice Production

During the first year of GBLI, GFI supported dry season rice production with a fund to support motor pumps, fertilizer and gas. GFI and AfricaRice also provided training to APALCOF members in the region of Bafatá on modern rice production. The training included theoretical and practical components and was designed to capture the entire production cycle, from preparing seedlings and transplanting them to the production site, to harvesting and post-harvest technologies. The final training component, held in March 2016, was a hands-on practicum where all 50 trainees created demonstration plots with a side-by-side comparison of traditional and modern rice farming techniques.

In July 2017, 14 of the 50 farmers received additional training in order to become community trainers and share best rice farming techniques with other communities. Thus far, community trainers have trained 126 farmers. Prior to GFI's intervention, each rice plot produced an average of 2-3 tons per hectare. Following the modern rice production training and refresher courses, each plot now produces an average of 5-6 tons per hectare. During the dry season and with support from the sustainable Rice Fund, farmers produced 202 tons of rice on 35 hectares (an average of 5.7 tons per hectare). By summer 2017, with harvesting ongoing, 213 tons have already been produced (average of 6.08 tons per hectare).

Horticulture Production & Crop Diversification

GBLI's 8 demonstration sites were developed in 8 communities and showcased new technologies and production methods, including an drip irrigation, crop spacing, organic fertilization methods, and crop diversification, all of which led to improved

diets for beneficiaries and increased market opportunities.

13 seed varieties were introduced on the demonstration sites and later in the beneficiary communities' personal farms, including eggplant, green pepper, cabbage, parsley, lettuce, tomatoes, okra, spinach, pumpkin, carrot, bean, green beans, and cucumber.

After the harvesting of the demonstration sites, GFI worked with APALCOF and ANAG to evaluate the results and found an increase in both quantity and quality of produce. Most importantly, communities were able to sell different produce at the market, yield more income, and provide their family with more diversified and nutritious foods. Over 3,500 households indirectly benefitted from the horticulture demonstration sites. Additionally, farmers interviewed in focus groups confirmed that applying natural composting and using modern production techniques led to higher and longer-lasting yields.

Nutrition Training

Following the 2016 horticulture campaign, during which GFI worked to maintain and conduct follow-up activities on the 8 demonstration sites, farmers in the communities of Sintchan Django, Sara Cutael, Sara Bece, Sintchan Djide, Sonaco, Tonhataba, and Sintcham Fanca learned how to apply their knowledge for crop diversification in their daily lives for better health.

250 farmers – 50 farmers from each of the 7 villages – were taught how to incorporate newly-planted crops into their homes for proper nutrition. These women were taught why they should have a balanced diet, how to cook the different new vegetables and best hygiene practices.

Focus group surveys show that the health in communities has improved substantially due to more balanced nutrition and best hygiene practices. Women explained that before they use to take their children to the hospital about 2-3 times per month, but now they visit the hospital on average once every 2-3 months.

Stories From the Field: A Closer Look

Rosa Mané Gomes

Rosa, 45, is a farmer and trader in Sintcham Django. After attending Horticulture Modern Production and Diversification training, Rosa diversified her crops and used natural composting to improve her yields. "At first I produced...very small [species], but now [they]...are bigger, to my satisfaction". She almost doubled the yield produced on the same surface area.

Rosa has family in other communities that did not receive the training, and travels frequently to teach her family and other farmers the modern production techniques.





APALCOF's Micro-Credit Committee

6 women trained in financial literacy and microloan management manage and oversee APALCOF's community micro-finance fund.

Together, they review loan applications, make decisions about beneficiaries, and manage the fund. Their work has resulted in over 200 individuals receiving loans to support their farming activities.

(2) FACILITATING ACCESS TO FINANCE

A key objective of GBLI was to ensure that rural farmers have access both to finance and financial literacy training to support the transition from subsistence farming to farming as business.

Micro-Credit Program

GBLI worked closely with APALCOF to grow and professionalize their micro-credit program so that they can offer financial services to more of its members in rural Eastern Guinea Bissau who do not have any other means to gain access to finance.

In August 2016, the first round of loans were given out. 5,685,000 FCFA was distributed as loans to 128 people (91% of whom were women). More than half of benefactors received 25,000 FCFA. After recovery of the first loan, the second loan distribution process began in June 2017. In July, 72 loans were given out to total 4,630,000 FCFA. This money was distributed to the beneficiaries after they had received training in financial literacy (see page 3).

The loans were used for a variety of activities that ranged from purchasing more peanut seed to expand plot and production size; purchasing livestock to breed; purchasing raw produce from the market to cook and sell for a profit in the village; and paying people to work their land to increase production.

Financial Literacy

The majority of APALCOF's members are women, all of whom carry out farming activities to support their families. These women, the majority of whom are illiterate, had yet to unleash their potential as entrepreneurs and businesswomen.

In 2016, 50 farmers were selected from 5 communities to gain financial literacy skills, including how to do market research, open a business, and budget. In July 2017, GBLI developed a financial literacy and farming as business refresher training. Over 3 days, 11

farmers from 6 villages (Sare Besse, Sinctham Django, Sare Cutel, Sinctham loba and Contuboe) were trained on how to train other members of the community on financial literacy and farming as business.

Thus far, the farmers have begun working with community members and have reached 95 loan beneficiaries in 2-day training sessions on these topics so they can access the microcredit loans and make the best decisions for their business and investment. Many of the newly trained farmers indicated that they gained new knowledge that helped them make smarter decisions around money and budgeting, household spending, and doing business. The impact of the financial literacy and farming as business training has reached over 120 families in the community, totaling nearly 1,000 individuals.

Community Store & Management Training

GBLI supported the financing of APALCOF's Community Store, which provides access to seeds and farming inputs to members in Bafatá and Gabu. The store serves more than 2,500 farmers in the region.

In 2015, GBLI led a market study and supported workshops to develop a sustainability plan for the store. Following the workshops, a business plan was finalized and 13 seed varieties were purchased from Senegal. These varieties were supplied to the community store in Contuboe to relieve farmers from traveling to purchase seeds out of their communities, which is costly. 2 store workers were trained on customer service and bookkeeping.

Prior to the 2017 horticulture campaign, The community store sold over 500,000 XOF of seeds, including onion, green pepper, and cabbage, and is re-stocking for the upcoming horticulture campaign. The community store is slated to reopen in October 2017.

Gender Empowerment & Community Advocacy

In early 2015, APRODEL, a local organization that advocates for gender equality and empowerment, trained 270 farmers from 9 villages in the regions of Bafatá and Gabú on gender equality and equity, domestic violence, nutritional health, female leadership, decision-making in communities, and women's access to and ownership of land. APRODEL also worked with APALCOF's management committee and staff on gender mainstreaming in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of gender training.

270 farmers in 9 communities were trained to be community trainers and lead gender advocacy and awareness in their villages. In each of village, a multiplier group of 7 people (5 women and 2 men) was created to lead community-based trainings. This multiplier group included the village chief, the imam, women leaders, and a youth representative. After the first training, 300 people were trained in gender awareness and empowerment (each trainer reached 10 individuals in their respective communities). Thus far, nearly 2,700 individuals have been trained across 9 villages.

Gender training was so important and impactful that women in the villages have testified that rates of domestic violence have dropped. The women also noted that more young girls are attending school. Additionally, many women have assumed leadership positions in their communities.

Stories From the Field: A Closer Look



Sera Cissé

Sera Cissé, 31, is a petty trader and farmer with 3 children who lives in the community of Contu-boel. Sera attended the Farming as Business and Financial Literacy Training and received a loan of 25,000 FCFA from the micro-credit program.

Using this information, she was able to make better decisions on how to generate more income. She explained, "I used the loan to purchase peanuts, onions, and rice seeds. I then applied financial literacy knowledge and discovered that for every 2,500 FCFA invested, my income was 24,000 FCFA, as compared to 9,500 FCFA income in the past."

Stories From the Field: A Closer Look



Jalang Fati

After her father passed away, Jalang Fati's brother inherited all of the family's land. After taking part in Gender Empowerment and Leadership training, where she learned about equal rights and how to advocate for herself, she went to her brother to convince him of her right to inherit the land. Now, she has legal ownership over her own land. Jalang acknowledges that without the training, she would not have been compelled to challenge social norms and stand up for herself

SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER PRODUCERS

4,500 farmers in
2 regions &
12 communities

10+
VILLAGES

sensitized to
gender equality and
women's empowerment

5
VILLAGES

and more than 350 farmers
producing 13 new vegetables
for food nutrition and security

(3) POLICY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Guinea-Bissau Professional Association for Microfinance Institutions

Founded over 10 years ago, the Guinea-Bissau Professional Association for Microfinance Institutions has been a leading association for the country's microfinance sector. GFI, in collaboration with SwissAid, supported the Guinea-Bissau Professional Association for Microfinance Institutions in organizing a workshop to discuss issues present in the sector and possible solutions.

Using a multi-stakeholder approach, the workshop included key players in the sector, including microfinance entities, government, and the central bank. In total, more than 70 stakeholders from various organizations and institutions across the country participated in the workshop. The Report included several recommendations and was shared with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, and the Credit Activity Promotion Agency.

In July 2016, the Ministry of Finance organized a meeting with the presence of all the commercial banks and the National Agency of Micro-Credit to discuss the recommendations from the conference and create a system to ensure that the National Agency of Micro-Credit is delivering and meeting its targets.

A national follow up committee was organized to help ensure continuous momentum on reforming the microfinance sector, and the Minister of Finance agreed to spearhead this committee.

Strengthening ANAG's Organizational Capacity

As Guinea-Bissau's largest farmers' association, ANAG plays a critical role in the country's agricultural sector. Over the last three years, GFI has worked with ANAG to strengthen its organizational capacity through trainings on financial management and human resources, as well as the development of a strategic plan. The overarching mission was to enhance the capacity of ANAG so it could best meet its goals of combatting hunger and food insecurity in Guinea-Bissau's rural communities.

GFI, in collaboration with an independent consultant, conducted a thorough diagnosis of the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the organization. The analysis was conducted over 10 days and involved interviews with individual members and staff, focus groups, and analysis of legal status and other records. This led to training key staff on best practices in Financial and Human Resource Management during the initial phase of the intervention.

Additionally, GFI provided financial support to produce essential office equipment for running the organization. By providing ANAG with proper tools to support its members, the organization was able to run more efficiently and professionally. Finally, GFI supported ANAG's efforts to create a Five-Year Strategic Plan, outlining the organization's vision, mission, key areas of focus and opportunities for the five-year period between 2017 and 2021.

Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Export Opportunities

GFI, in collaboration with the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Center and the Ministry of Commerce and Business Promotion, organized a workshop to facilitate market access for farmers and small producers in Guinea-Bissau.

The workshop was hosted in Bissau on February 15-16, 2017 and was designed to encourage entrepreneurs and producers in Guinea-Bissau to take advantage of the opportunities to export to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference program.

Minister of Commerce Victor Mandinga opened the workshop by welcoming participants and sharing the government's support for expanding exports and strengthening AGOA. TradeHub's AGOA Specialist, Kara Diallo, presented on AGOA benefits, export processes, and documentation. He also presented on the ECOWAS Free Trade Liberalization Scheme, which promotes free trade in local agricultural goods, thus improving food security and expanding regional markets.

Overall, 40 operators in cashew, handicrafts, mango, and timber, as well as government export promotion agencies, attended the workshop.



Bikes for the World Distribution

In collaboration with Bikes for the World and GFI, APALCOF distributed 419 bikes. The bikes and spare parts were sold to farmers in Bafata and Gabu at discounted prices, with the money earned reinvested into a bank account to support the micro-credit program, thus increasing access to loans to beneficiaries.

The bikes served as a means of transportation for farmers during their farming activities, often eliminating extra time and energy exerted to travel from the wells to the field or from their homes to markets. Children also used the bikes to go to school, some of which were upwards of 5 kilometers from their home village. Additionally, the bikes were particularly helpful to women and families, who used the bikes to go to health centers.



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Guinea-Bissau Livelihood Initiative

Learn more about GBLI and the communities we work with:
<http://www.globalfairness.org/our-work/our-programs/gbli>

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