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Introduction

My foundation began working with 2 villages in 2017 developing Hope Sakuma, a climate-smart sustainable farm and we enter 2019 working with an amazing 23 villages in Sanda Magbolontor, one of the most deprived Chiefdoms in Sierra Leone, one of the least developed nations.

Inspired by Dr Richard Munrang and EBAFOSA we’re harnessing the power of innovative volunteerism leveraging human and natural capital with diaspora skills to develop key value chains; empowering rural women to improve nutrition harvesting groundnut, vegetables and honey, food security with IVS rice and climate change adaption with cassava and cashew; diversifying livelihoods, protecting our rich bio-diversity and feeding children in our interim care and kinship fostering programmes.

As Hope Sakuma turns two, my foundation has taken the decision, with the support of Karene District MAF, to transition Hope Sakuma to a stand-alone NGO with ABC status enabling development as a producer marketing cooperative able to lever in private sector investment to achieve our mission, fully aligning our activities to the Government’s bold new Strategic Masterplan for Agriculture and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Supporting villages with skills training to register as independent FBOs my foundation will retain a stake in Hope Sakuma continuing back office support and building capacity locally in project management, fundraising and social media.
Intensifying Rice Production to Improve Food Security

This 2018-21 project aims to improve food security for Sanda Magbolontor farmers by intensifying rice production. In 2018 6 villages benefited from a boli planted with 30 bushels, weeded and 150 bushels harvested by hand - feeding vulnerable children. 2018 also saw 15 villages begin development of inland valley swamps for Nerica rice, harvest-ready in just 3-4 months.

Farm Plan 2018
Mar 18  Identify suitable boli (10 in total identified)
May-Oct 18  Provide tractor repair, tools, seed, feeding
Sep 18 Purchase parboilers to add value to rice
Oct 18  Identify suitable IVS sites and teams (20 identified)
Nov 18  Provide tools, seed, fertilizer, feeding
Dec 18  Establish seed bank

Farm Plan 2019
Jan-Apr 19  Develop IVS sites for Nerica rice production
Jan-May 19  Bespoke Farmer Field School training with JICA, MAF
Apr-May 19  Develop boli lands as funding allows
Jul 19  Purchase thresher & polisher to improve productivity & quality
Sep 19+  Develop additional IVS sites as seed bank/funding allows
Nov 19  Seek private sector investment

Farm Plan 2020
Jan 20+  Develop additional IVS sites
Mar 20  Develop boli lands as funding allows
Feb 20  Purchase oil press to process rice husk waste by-product
Jul 20  Purchase flour mill to process rice into flour

1000 + acres of undeveloped boli and inland valley swamp available to intensify rice production, enough to feed Sanda Magbolontor, children in our interim care and kinship fostering programmes and supply nutritious Kontri rice to selected Freetown outlets.
Gender Equality to Deliver Good Governance

Despite low literacy and numeracy rates, rural women are savvy marketers working on trust who also carry out the majority of work on the farm and in the home. By design, Hope Sakuma affiliated FBOs reflect this reality with a two-thirds majority of women members with guaranteed roles at all levels and equal speaking time at meetings.

Farm Plan 2018
- Feb 18 Select Executive Board
- Mar - Dec 18 Hold regular meetings (8 documented)
- Jan-Feb 18 Skills training equal voice
- Oct-Nov 18 Skills training self-supervising groups
- Dec 18 Elect group office holders equal representation

Farm Plan 2019
- Jan-Feb 19 Hold registration drives & register FBOs (20 FBO’s registered from 23 villages, maintain waiting list)
- Apr 19 Skills training in videoing decisions
- Jul 19 Develop model constitution with villages
- Jul-Sep 19 Skills training in fair non-discriminatory decision and rule making
- Aug 19 Transition to ABC status
- Dec 18 Elect group office holders

Farm Plan 2020
- Mar 20 Transition to Producer Marketing co-op
- Mar-Jun 20 Financial inclusion training
- Jul 20 Open bank accounts / app
- Aug 20 Business skills training for women and youth
- Nov 20 Share co-op proceeds according to agreed rules

Guaranteeing women speaking rights, translating information into Temne and videoing decisions and discussions improves inclusivity and overcomes low literacy rates.
Our project to boost nutrition and climate adaptation seeded 6 groundnut farms in 2018 from our 2017 harvest. Diversifying into highly nutritious and drought-resistant cassava and cashew will provide staple replacements even in times of climate stress helping these communities become more resilient as they take practical steps to adapt to climate change.

Adding value locally by processing groundnut into peanut butter and cassava into gari will improve livelihoods. Villages actively want to diversify into vegetables.

Farm Plan 2018
Mar 18  Extend groundnut from 2 to 7 villages (60 bushels produced)
May-Sept 18  Create cassava farm on previously farmed land, interplant with millet, potato leaf for feeding and supress weeds, removing the need for pesticides, maintaining soil health
Aug 18  Interplant 600 cashew saplings to ensure tending

Farm Plan 2019
Mar 19  Extend Groundnut farms to 12 villages
Jul 19 Install off-grid system to power cold storage, irrigation
Sep 19  Extend cassava farms to key cashew plantations in partnership with COOPI planting 10,000 cashew saplings

Farm Plan 2020/21
Jan 20  Build food-safe Processing and Packaging space
Feb 20  Purchase oil press to process cashew, groundnut
May 20  Extend cassava and cashew farm to 10 villages
Jul 20  Purchase flour mill to process cashew, cassava

The largest cassava farm in Sanda Magbolontor created in 6 months will seed cassava farms throughout the Chiefdom building climate resilience. Lined with 600 cashew saplings donated by COOPI these two nutritious, drought-resistant crops help communities adapt to climate change.
Improving Forest Livelihoods, Protecting Bio-Diversity

This new project for 2019 builds on our nutrition and climate adaptation project to improve rainforest communities’ livelihoods by developing market linkages for existing products such as honey and palm oil and diversifying activities. Sensitization work undertaken in 2018 with Sakuma villages and the Fola demonstrated a willingness to protect bio-diversity and diversify into low-impact, high-profit sheep and pigs, fruit and cashew trees, vegetables.

Farm Plan 2019
Apr 19  Provide food-safe containers
May 19  Appoint seed multiplication officer
Jun 19  Transfer Nursery kit to Manays
Jul 19  Train 4 women per village in nursery skills
Jul 19  Develop 10 pepper and tomato farms
Aug 19  Assist Fola & 2 villages to diversify into goats and pigs
Sep 19  Bee development peer training for cashew villages
Nov 19  Weave additional hives
Dec 19  Map palm and medicine trees

Farm Plan 2020
Jan 20  Hang hives at cashew locations
Feb 20  Purchase oil press and nutcracker to assure quality
Apr 20  Utilize waste bi products for nut oil and black soap
Jul-Sep  Develop 20 pepper and tomato farms

Artisan bee-keepers, trained to farm sustainably, weave and place their hives by hand in medicine trees of the Sand Magbolontor rainforest and harvest the hives by hand without harming bees.