



Sustainable Development Application Form

*Please email this form in MS Word format along with detailed financials of proposed projects to
Rev. Vy Nguyen, Executive Director (vy@weekofcompassion.org).*

Submitting Partner: <i>AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS, INC. (AMI)</i>		April 10, 2023	
Address: <i>475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1500</i>	City: <i>New York</i>	State: <i>NY</i>	Zip Code: <i>10115</i>
Name of Contact: <i>Winston Carroo</i>		Title: <i>Coordinator for International Programs</i>	
Phone Number(s) <i>(202) 415-8014</i>		E-mail Address: wcarroo@aq-missions.org	
Project Name, Local Country Partner, and Location: <i>Program: West Africa Initiative (WAI) Project: PROMOTING GENDER RIGHTS- Preventing Violence Against Women and Supporting Girls' Education- THROUGH THE YOUTH AGRICULTURE PROJECT IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE.</i>			
Local Country Partners: <i>Village to Village Federation (Sierra Leone) and West Africa Initiative of Liberia (Liberia) Locations: 5 Districts in Sierra Leone (Tonkolili, Bombali, Port Loko, Kambia and Kenema) and 5 Counties in Liberia (Grand Bassa, Bomi, Nimba, Bong and Grand Gedeh)</i>			
Partner's History/Relationship with the Project: <i>Since 2008 AMI has been engaged with local partners in the WAI program that has its origins in the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts following the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. At the request of its US based ecumenical partners, AMI developed and implemented a rural development that was initially focused on developing food security through local food production. This resulted in significant increases in local food security, increased family incomes, improved nutrition and access to safe water. In addition, the program now also focuses on developing the human resources and institutional capacity of the local partners to assume full responsibility for the program. Subsequently, the West Africa Initiative of Liberia (WAIOL) and the Village to Village Federation (V2V) in Sierra Leone, evolved as the local organizational structures through which the WAI is being implemented. The urgent problems of high youth unemployment and gender-based discrimination and inequalities, particularly in rural areas, led to the locally based decision to address these challenges at the community level, within the framework of the overall WAI program. In 2019 the Youth Agriculture Project was initiated in three villages in each country that aimed to establish sedentary farms that would provide youth with livelihood opportunities and promote ecologically sound farming practices while educating the communities on the issues of climate change and building climate resilient communities. This aspect of the program now exists in 18 communities in both countries. The impact of the COVID -19 pandemic led to the decision by partners to include in the Youth Agriculture Project, a focus on the impacts of this virus on rural communities in terms of awareness and prevention measures, and to tackle the persistent problem of gender-based discrimination. Even in normal times, women and girls suffer overt discrimination with respect to access to opportunities in education and employment and physical and mental/psychological abuse. In times of crises these abuses increase and the deterioration in the current economic conditions further exacerbates this problem. Addressing gender-based violence against women and girls' education will include both the existing youth groups initiated in 2021 and 2022 as well as new ones planned for 2023. Integration of the gender related aspects of the program with the Youth Agriculture Program is rational, as there is significant overlap in terms of currently participating communities and personnel, thus maximizing the use of available resources. Through the West Africa Initiative (WAI) program, Agricultural Missions, Inc. (AMI) and its local partners have been working with farmers' groups and rural communities for the past ten years. This work included training and material support in agricultural production and marketing, water wells and hand pump installation and repair, grain storage facilities and microcredit for women.</i>			

Description of Project

Name of Project and Purpose (agricultural, health, water, micro-credit, education, community development, etc.- and how it might address at least one of the **17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030**):

Name of Project: *West Africa Initiative Youth Agriculture Program- YOUTH LED RESPONSE TO FOOD SECURITY AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION.*

PURPOSE: Engage community participants in the Youth Agriculture Project in resilient locally controlled Food Security systems and reduce Gender based discrimination through the building of community awareness and school support for girls in Junior Secondary schools.

This project addresses United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 1 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well Being), 4 (Inclusive and quality education) and 5 (Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls).

The current situation: The feared increase in cases of the COVID-19 that was present at the onset of the pandemic has not materialized in either country. As of December 31, 2022, the total number of infections in Liberia was estimated to be about 8,000 (158 per 100,000) with 320 deaths (1.8 per 100,000), while in Sierra Leone there was a total of 7000 cases (98.3 per 100,000) and 135 deaths (6.0 per 100,000). The number of infections in both countries has steadily declined to the point where the governments have ceased to publish this information on a regular basis. This can be partially attributed to the government instituted lockdown measures that closed schools and markets and curtailed commerce and trading as well as farming activities in both countries. These measures resulted in the expected shortage in food production and increased food insecurity. The Youth Agriculture Program engaged the youth in farming activities that address this problem of food insecurity. The youth also decided to address the persistent problem of gender-based inequities within their communities.

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, pervasive gender-based inequities are rooted in historical, social, and cultural practices which severely limit the ability of women to gain access to educational and occupational advancement and full participation in the development of their communities. An assessment of the WAI communities on women's rights and empowerment indicates that acts of violence against women do not only take place in the homes, but a significant number of incidents occur in workplaces, schools and even places of worship. School attendance rates are lower for girls when compared to boys resulting in women with lower literacy and educational levels when compared to men. Most families cannot afford educate all their children and preference is often given to boys in terms of school attendance and other educational opportunities. The World Bank reported that, between 2013 and 2017, 60% of the adolescents who dropped out of school were females, citing economic and cultural factors as major causes for this situation. Although there have been improvements with respect to legal reforms and increased gender awareness and activism, entrenched cultural beliefs and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and stereotypical perceptions, remain stumbling blocks in achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Women and girls in rural communities are more vulnerable to gender-based violence and other inequalities than their urban counterparts due to the lack of awareness in the population and lack of supportive social and legal services. In cities and large towns such services are provided by the governments and non-governmental organizations.

Target Population (children, women, farmers, urban poor, etc.- priority will be given to projects that enable the empowerment of women and children):

Primarily youth, with emphasis on the participation of women and girls, in rural villages who are not likely to be serviced by government and non-governmental organizations. Youth from these communities will be trained and empowered to address recurring problem of food insecurity, with deliberate emphasis on the reduction of gender based violence, inclusion of women in decision making and school support of girls.

How many persons are/will be served? (Please give as specific a figure as possible)?
For 2023, six new groups will be added to the program, resulting in an additional 150 persons attending community awareness session on gender violence, 90 more girls receiving school support and 300 persons benefitting from increased food security. In 2021 and 2022, 12 communities were engaged with: 350 men and women leaders and community members attending awareness sessions on gender-based violence, 180 girls supported with school supplies and peer counseling and 800 persons benefitting from the food security activities.

Key Objectives:

Objective 1: Gender based violence reduced in 6 (new) communities.

Objective 2: Continue support for 180 girls enrolled in schools supported with uniforms and school supplies and peer counseling and an additional 90 in the six new communities adopting the program in the current year. (Total of 270 for 2023)

Objective 3: One year Emergency food reserve established in each of the six new communities. This will also be continued in 12 groups previously engaged, for a total of 18 groups for 2023.

Objective 4: 6 new youth groups added to Youth Agriculture Program and 180 youth trained. (Concurrent with Objective 3)

Key Activities:

Related to objective 1: (a) Conduct community- based awareness sessions for men and women, to be led by those who attended the 2021 Training of Trainers Workshops on the subject; (b) Establish “community watch” groups to monitor incidents and promote mediation and provide counselling and advice to victims; (c) Establish links between communities and support services and organizations.

Related to Objective 2: (a) Work with local community stakeholders (parents, schools, community leaders to identify girls who are in need and at risk for dropping out of school; (b) Based on the experience of the previous year, establish transparent selection process and work with stakeholders to select girls for support; (c) Provide support for uniforms, books, and school supplies to selected girls; (d) Establish peer counseling units for teenagers in high schools.

Related to Objective 3: (a) Consult with youth and village leaders to secure access to land for 3 new youth groups; (b) Youth organize themselves in work teams; (c) Youth assist in construction of storage facility, cultivate and harvest and store crops; (d) Distribution of food at appropriate times, based on guidelines developed; (e) Emergency food reserve replenished annually.

Related to Objective 4: (a) Land secured from community leaders, groups selected and submit operational plans; (b) Youth attend training in farm planning for ecological farming led by youth previously trained; (c) Initiate establishment of farms using the farmer field school methodology led by youth trained in previous year.

Duration of Project: May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

Project Budget

Total Budget: \$73335

Amount Requested from Week of Compassion:
\$22500– Designated for THE WEST AFRICA INITIATIVE

Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?

One time request for 12-month period indicated. Ongoing request for Gender Rights aspects, particularly support for school girls.

Please provide a cost breakdown for the requested funds (A detailed, itemized budget is required. May be provided on a separate sheet, if easier): See Attached Excel file for comprehensive budget and other support sources.

<p>If this project has been funded previously or is in the same geographical area, please specifically state when and how much was granted: 2019- \$29,590 – for Youth Agriculture Project; \$2020-\$40297 for COVID 19 Pandemic Education and Food Security; 2021 - \$20645 for Gender and Food Security; 2022- \$22930 for Gender and Food Security . Same geographic area but not same groups/communities.</p>	
<p>Dates and project names of previous approved proposal submissions within the last 5 years: <i>See above</i></p>	
<p>Other Funding Sources: Growing Hope Globally (GHG) - \$47,840; Local and Individual Contributions - \$2995. All confirmed</p>	
<p>How do you plan to monitor, evaluate, and report back to Week of Compassion? <i>(Please note that future funding is contingent upon reporting, and that reports should be made between 6 months- 12 months after funding. In addition to reporting, please provide at least one story of transformation and photos.)</i></p>	
<p><i>Ongoing monitoring is an integral part of the program implementation plan, conducted by groups (self –evaluation) and local partner organizations. The local Board of Directors of each organization has established an evaluation and monitoring committee which will be active in this process. There is also a mid-year and end of year evaluations conducted by AMI. Mid-year and end of year reports will be submitted in December 2023 and June 2024</i></p>	
<p>Have all reports and stories from previous projects been submitted to WoC? <i>Yes.</i></p>	
<p>If granted, is there a deadline by which to receive funding? <i>May 15, 2022.</i></p>	
<p>If granted, please provide full information for how (wire transfer, check, etc.), where, and to whom funds should be sent. <i>Wire transfer details same as previously used: Details Provided upon Request</i></p>	
<p>Application prepared by: <i>Winston Carroo</i></p>	<p>Contact info: Email: wcarroo@ag-missions.org. Phone <i>202-415-8014</i></p>

Week of Compassion Contact Information:

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