STEELWORKERS HUMANITY FUND
FONDS HUMANITAIRE DES MÉTALLOS

Camp for Peace Cassava "factory" in Zorzor, Liberia (November 2018)

The group of about 15 young people working together in a cooperative trying to build a small business that will provide them with some income to support themselves and their families.

Clear the jungle

Plant

Harvest

Garmai Flomo is treasurer of group, and has responsibility for managing money for cooperative.

Garmai is happy that in the group "we all get along". "There's no noise", meaning the young men and women respect each other and work together easily.

Cassava plants in the background. Roots are harvested.

Cassava is a common food source in Liberia. Processing cassava adds value and increases the sales price in local markets.

Peel, wash and cut up the cassava

The cassava cooperative is a project of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. Most of the coop participants are graduates from vocational training program funded by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. Seed funding was provided by the SHF. And the SHF continues to provide on-going support.

Shred Cassava in grinding machine

Collect Shredded Cassava

Mechanical press to expel water

Dry Cassava in sun

The youth count on a daily portion of rice for lunch provided by the cassava cooperative. For some it is the first food they will have in the day. The rice is an essential incentive to coming to work.

Heat over fire to completely dry out and roast cassava, mixing constantly so it doesn't burn

The constant mixing is hard work, exposing the youth to on-going heat and smoke from the fire.

Health and safety hazards would be reduced with the purchase of a giant new mixing bowl with a mechanical mixing arm.

That is the request of the cassava cooperative.

Mix powdered milk, shredded coco nut, and sugar into the cooled cassava to produce the final product:

Super Gari

Measure and bag the final product

Seal the bags and stack, count, and record the day's production

The cassava cooperative is only the second group in all of Liberia to process super gari, so they see a huge market opportunity. But they need to find more land to plant more cassava, increase the size of their harvest, and provide continuous input into their 'factory'.

The final product: Super Gari

Ofantee Geninyan, elected president of the cooperative, together with Eric Fourner, president USW local 7940. Eric has just purchased a package for the going price: $1US per bag.

Ofantee, Garmai, and the other youth do not earn a daily wage. Instead they share in the profits of the cooperative. 50% of sales are retained by the cooperative to purchase inputs and to prepare for the day when the cooperative needs to stand on its own two feet, without the support of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. 50% of the profits are divided among the cooperative participants. All the co-op members see the cassava factory as a way to earn a regular income in the future and their hope for a better life.

David, Ofantee's son, with his friends and cousins.

Ofantee, with his grandmother, David and cousins. Now one of the oldest people in Zorzor, and getting blind, Ofantee's grandmother raised him after his parents died.

Farmer Field School in Salayea, Liberia (November 2018)

Students, together with SHF delegation, at the Farmer's Field School, Salayea, Liberia

22 students receive training in agricultural techniques, raising poultry, and fish farming.

The SHF delegation is welcomed with songs. The hope is to expand to 30 students.

Johnson KoiKoi (below) is the lead instructor for the Farmer's Field School.

The school starts at 1pm with one hour of class for theory and discussion. The rest of the afternoon is hands on learning in the school's fields, or at the chicken coups or fish pond.

Mr. Koikoi visits the homes of the students to help them apply what they are learning in their own subsistence farms. Mr. Koikoi's monthly salary is US $150.

Camp for Peace has requested funds to purchase Mr. Koikoi a motorcycle so he can visit students' homes more regularly to better support their learning. A bike would also allow him to travel to neighbouring Zorzor to support the cassava cooperative.

Denis Tanguay, vice-president USW 8664. A selfie with three of the enthusiastic young students of the Farmer's Field School.