

Outreach Multiplier & Gender Study

Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action

SOBA 2

Sierra Leone

2017



1.0 Introduction

[Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action \(SOBA\)](#) is a private sector development programme that uses a market systems approach to facilitate pro-poor economic growth in Sierra Leone. The programme collaborates with private sector businesses in three primary areas: (1) **sustainable energy**, (2) **agriculture**, (3) **professional services and entrepreneurship markets**, to trial and to scale innovative and inclusive business practices that reduce poverty and improve economic opportunities for poor women and men.

Implemented by [Adam Smith International](#), SOBA has provided ongoing technical support, capacity building, and market systems change in Sierra Leone since its inception in 2013. In 2016, the programme was awarded a second consecutive A+ Annual Review rating by DFID as a result of its work in designing and implementing interventions which have led to ongoing improvements to market systems that enable poor people to participate more effectively in the markets and position themselves to increase their incomes.

Within the agriculture sector, SOBA is working in three main sub-sectors which include: (1) Ag-Inputs & Services; (2) Outgrower & Aggregation and (3) Processing & Trade.

2.0 Background of Study

Agriculture in Sierra Leone is a significant part of the economy accounting for 58% of the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007. Close to two-thirds of the population of Sierra Leone are involved in subsistence agriculture. The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa resulted in major shocks to the economy of Sierra Leone, with a direct impact on the agriculture sector. Quality seeds, fertilisers, chemicals and equipment as well as the information required to best utilise these ag-inputs, has been largely absent in Sierra Leone. To address this, SOBA collaborates with a wide-range of seed and input suppliers, distributors and resellers as well as aid and government agencies on the following:

- **Distributor and wholesaler operational and financial performance upgrades to service small and commercial farmers as their core customer base.** This includes improved accounting systems, inventory management practices, credit control policies, brand refreshes and development, updated organisational structures and new team members.
- **New distribution strategies that target small and commercial farmers** with a wide-array of quality seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, and equipment – alongside the information and advisory services required to make the best use of them.
- **Wholesaler and retailer development projects** aimed at upskilling resellers' capacity to target and to respond to farmer customers and to professionalise accounting, inventory and credit management.

Growth in the agriculture sector has the potential to generate income not only for lead farmers or the head of the household but also other extended adult family members who contribute to shared farm income and farm labourers. These benefits can be in three forms:

1. Shared farming – extended family members or community members sharing farm profits
2. Unpaid labour – familial or communal or paid in kind labour (food, land)
3. Paid labour- benefitting from wages



The purpose of this study was to design and conduct research to build SOBA's in-depth understanding of the effect that growth in the agriculture sector will have on all benefiting women and men.

3.0 Research Objective

To design and implement a study to:

1. Understand how much household or family labour (unpaid labour/familial/communal) is used in rice, maize and vegetable farming and cost savings due to using unpaid labour.
2. Understand how paid family labour is used for farming in Sierra Leone, in relation to different farming activities, crops types, farm size and gender.

Develop a multiplier for each of the following in relation to increased farm profitability either through increased farm productivity or increased area under production:

1. Total number of adult family members contributing towards and benefiting from household farm income.
2. Total number of farm labours benefiting as a result of increased agricultural farm production.

Given the extent and contribution of females in agricultural production, the multipliers also included a gender ratio for male and female beneficiaries. Indicative (current) wage rate per activity per crop was also collected during the research.

4.0 Study Methodology

Data Analysis and Development of Multiplier

Household Multiplier

- Data was collected from farming households, with questions addressing lead farmer and other family members who are above 18 and contribute to the farming process. The questions covered the total number of members who are actively working on a farm, the number of man-days per household family members and cost saved due to the family members' man-days. Some of these results were further validated through the impact assessments conducted separately by SOBA.
- Based on the collected data, multipliers for each of the crop categories (rice, vegetable and maize) were developed. The multiplier showcases how many adult members are actively contributing to the farming activities and benefit from the total farm revenue in each farming household.

Farm Labourer Multiplier

- Data was collected from individual labourers and from labourers through separate Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The data covered which activities in the farming process the individual labourers and the FGD labourers are engaged in and how much time they spend working in each category. Collected data included labourer payment details for each category of the farming process and the difference in their working days before and after SOBA's intervention.
- Based on the data collected, a multiplier was developed. The multiplier states the total number of farm labourers benefiting as a result of increased agricultural farm production.

Women's Economic Empowerment

The study also captured women’s involvement in the farming process. Some of the key areas covered to capture women’s economic empowerment include the following:

- Female farmers’ participation in the farming activities and their workload.
- The level of women's decision-making capacity in the farming process and in the household.
- Female farmer’s capacity to save and spend.

Sampling Strategy:

Respondent Group	Sample Size	Tools	Location
Treatment Farmers at a household level for Rice, who sell their rice to SOBA’s Partner Lion Mountain	HH 35	Questionnaire Survey	Bo Pujahun Moyamba Mile 91
Treatment Farmers at a household level for Maize, who sell maize to SOBA’s partners	HH 35	Questionnaire Survey	Mile 91 Moyamba Kabala
Treatment Farmers at a household level for vegetable farmers, who buy agricultural inputs by SOBA partners	HH 70	Questionnaire Survey	PortLoko Koinadugu Kambai
Treatment paid Labourers who work on the farms on a hired basis for Rice production	Individual labourers 15 FGD 4	Questionnaire Survey & Focus Group Discussion	Bo Pujahun Moyamba Mile 91
Treatment paid Labourers who work on the farms on a hired basis for Maize production	Individual labourers 15 FGD 4	Questionnaire Survey & Focus Group Discussion	Mile 91 Moyamba Kabala
Treatment paid Labourers who work on the farms on a hired basis for Vegetable production	Individual labourers 25 FGD 6	Questionnaire Survey & Focus Group Discussion	PortLoko Koinadugu Kambai

5.0 The Challenges of the Study:

For the most part, the study was carried out according to plan. However, due to the limited timeframe of the study, the sample size for some of the household farming sectors was cut short to focus on the quality of data rather than quantity. Although the research was cut short in a few instances, it did not impact the overall research due to the consistency of the results achieved from the data collection.

There were a few challenges during the research process. Some of the villages were very remote, and it was hard to reach some of the treatment farmers and labourers. A significant amount of time was spent travelling to the remote villages which affected the research timeline. Another major challenge was the difference in the languages spoken in the different villages. In a few instances, it was difficult for the research team to interview the farmers because they were not familiar with the language. For example, in Port Loko, the village community only spoke Temne, and it was challenging to communicate with the farmers without the help of a translator.

6.0 Findings

Background

In Sierra Leone, the farming practices are done manually without using any modern machinery. This makes the farming process labour intensive and lengthy. Farming in the country involves three major steps.

1. The first phase in the farming process is land preparation. The process includes brushing the bush, ploughing the land and planting the seeds and fertilisers. Since land preparation is incredibly labour intensive, women are mostly only involved in the planting phase.
2. The second step in farming is crop management which mainly includes weeding. Women farmers are heavily involved in this process.
3. The third step for farming is harvesting and post harvesting. This process includes plucking the crops, transferring the bags of crops from the farm to the home and finally selling the produce to either an agent or in town. Female farmers participate heavily in the harvest and post harvesting process. Women primarily contribute during harvesting and then take on the responsibility of transferring the produce to town for sale.

The family members who contribute to the farming process are not paid in cash. Rather, these members benefit from the family income pool. By making farming a family affair, the family can save money which otherwise would have been paid to hired labourers.

Table 1: Household Multiplier for the Rice, Vegetable and Maize Sector:

Households Producing Rice	Land Preparation	Crop Management	Harvest & Post Harvest	Multiplier
No. of Household Female Members	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.6
No. of Household Male Members	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.0
Total No. of Household Members	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.6
No. of Household Female Man-days	30.6	19.9	33.4	83.9
No. of Household Male Man-days	47.7	23.1	31.7	83.9
Total No. of Household Man-days	81.0	43.0	63.2	102.5
Total Cost Saved for using female Household members	SLL 127,844	SLL 171,867	SLL 258,893	SLL 558,605
Total Cost saved for using male household members	SLL 474,159	SLL 196,684	SLL 290,321	SLL 961,165
Total Cost saved for using household members	SLL 602,004	SLL 368,552	SLL 549,214	SLL 1,519,771
Households Producing Vegetable				
No. of Household Female Members	2	2	2	2
No. of Household Male Members	2	1	2	2
Total No. of Household Members	3	3	3	3

No. of Household Female Man-days	19	9	9	35
No. of Household Male Man-days	18	7	7	32
Total No. of Household Man-days	37	16	15	68
Total Cost Saved for using female Household members	SLL 133,577	SLL 54,211	SLL 68,544	SLL 244,349
Total Cost Saved for using male Household members	SLL 189,928	SLL 50,888	SLL 51,199	SLL 210,937
Total Cost Saved for using family Household members	SLL 299,765	SLL 61,421	SLL 105,391	SLL 455,287
Household Producing Maize				
No. of Household Female Members	1.8	2.7	2.6	2.4
No. of Household Male Members	1.1	2.3	0.9	1.4
Total No. of Household Members	2.9	5.0	3.5	3.8
No. of Household Female Man-days	27.2	32.7	31.7	91.6
No. of Household Male Man-days	20.4	26.4	5.8	52.7
Total No. of Household Man-days	47.6	59.2	37.6	144.3
Total Cost Saved for using female Household members	217,914	250,604	110,851	579,370
Total Cost Saved for using male Household members	171,888	208,111	27,555	407,556
Total Cost Saved for using family Household members	389,803	458,715	138,406	986,926

Explanation of Table 1

Table 1 demonstrates that in a rice farming household there are at least two female family members actively contributing on the farm. They work for a total of 84 days in a year. The female household members contribute to a savings of around SLL 558,605 per year, which would have otherwise resulted in the payment of a hired labourer.

The households harvesting vegetables involve two female and two male members in the farming process. In general, female heads of households are in charge of the vegetable production. Female family members work approximately 35 man-days in a given year. By working on the farm and substituting hired labourers, the female family members help the family save on an average of SLL 244,349.

In the maize sector, on average, three female and two male members are involved in the farming process. The female family members work a total of 92 days in a year. This allows the household to save SLL 579,370 a year on hired labourers.

Background- Paid Labour

Since farming in Sierra Leone is mostly manual, a significant amount of paid labour is hired to help with the harvest. Labourers can either be hired individually or in a group. When it comes to labourer groups, there are separate groups

of male and female labourers present in each community. These groups vary in size from five members to up to thirty members.

There are different dynamics in labourers groups. In some cases, individuals who work as labourers are also farm owners.

The study revealed that farmers have different payment arrangements with hired labourers. Some of these arrangements include:

1. Hired labourers usually have a fixed rate. Depending on the supply and demand of labourers in a particular season, their rate can vary in a given community.
2. There are instances where labourers that own farming land, rotate working on each other's farms. In this case, they usually receive no payment in cash because they are helping each other out of mutual interest.
3. Tightly knit communities sometimes hire their friends as paid labourers who work for them at subsidised rates.
4. Some paid labourer groups negotiate to a discounted rate and make alternative arrangements. For example- lunch to be provided to them while they work on the farm or part of the harvest is given to them.

Table 2: Hired Labourer Multiplier for the Rice, Vegetable and Maize Sector

Hired Labourer details for Rice	Land Preparation	Crop Management	Harvesting & Post Harvesting	Multiplier per farm
Total hired labour involved in farming	18	15	20	18
Total hired man-days	403	143	346	866
Total hired cost	SLL 4,097,536	SLL 1,243,379	SLL 2,679,000	SLL 7,968,643
Hired Labourer details for Vegetable	Land Preparation	Crop Management	Harvesting & Post Harvesting	Multiplier per farm
Total hired labour	23	14	11	17
Total hired labourer man-days	292	63	58	411
Total hired labourer cost	SLL 2,612,315	SLL 459,744	SLL 616,335	SLL 3,556,502
Hired Labourer details for Maize	Land Preparation	Crop Management	Harvesting & Post Harvesting	Multiplier per farm
Total hired labourer	22	17	14	23
Total hired man-days	317	162	106	585
Total hired cost	SLL 2,981,167	SLL 1,361,333	SLL 976,750	SLL 5,210,722

Explanation of Table 2

It's evident that an average rice-cultivating farm uses 18 hired labourers for land preparation. These labourers work for a total of 403 man-days and cost on average of SLL4,097,536.

For crop management, a rice farm uses on average of 15 paid labourers who work for a total of 143 man-days. Their hired cost is approximately SLL1,243,379. For harvesting and post harvesting, an average rice cultivating farm uses 20 labourers, who work for 346 man-days in total at a hiring cost of SLL2,679,000.

Therefore, the table shows that an average rice farm hires 18 labourers, who work for a total of 866 man-days and cost an average of SLL7,968,643.

When it comes to farming vegetables, it can be observed that an average farm will only hire 17 labourers for the whole farming process. The quality of labour is lower than farming other crops because farmers usually do vegetable farming on smaller lands. Per farm, an average of SLL3,556,502 is spent overall on paid labourers for cultivating vegetable.

An average maize farm hires 23 paid labourers who work a total of 585 man-days and cost a total of SLL5,210,722 per farm. The maize sector uses more paid labourers as most of the farmers who are cultivating maize are doing commercial farming and are using a large area of land.

The hiring structure of paid labourers on a farm depends mostly on the supply and demand condition in a given community. For example, if a farm land takes seven man-days for land preparation and one particular group of labourers is not available to work for all seven days consequently, then the farmer usually hires different groups of labours to finish the process.

For certain process in farming, the labourers are in higher demand than the others steps. For example, for post harvesting, the labourers are in high demand as the crops are perishable and need to be harvested within a particular time frame.

7.0 Findings on Women's Economic Empowerment

Savings:

The survey exposed that across the rice and vegetable sector, in almost all the villages, women don't have opportunities to save their earnings and don't have a bank account. Access to transportation is difficult for the villagers. Most banks are in town which exacerbates the problem.

Farmers also claimed that their income is not enough for them to keep money aside for savings. They have to spend for the household and on their children's expenses on a regular basis and therefore prefer to keep the extra money at home.

The study captured that in 80% of households the husband and wife are involved in joint savings decisions.

The saving is spent on household expenses and in farming practices. Only a minority of the female farmers spend part of their savings on themselves.

The results were different for female farmers working in the maize sector mostly in the Kabala region. Female farmers are taking the lead in this sector due to their polygamy family structure. Most of the wives live separately and oversee their own farming. The female farmers are engaged in commercial farming on a large scale in Kabala. Due to the engagement with commercial farming and the proximity of the village to the main town, the female farmers all have bank accounts. The female farmers in Kabala manage most of their income and save a portion of it for personal use.

Workload:

It's safe to conclude that in almost all the sectors, women are contributing to the family income by participating in farming. In a village setting, it is considered taboo for the women not to work in the farms and contribute to the family income. Many women revealed that their husbands would not accept them if they did not contribute to the family income. They would be considered lazy and incapable. Thus, they even work on the farms during harsh weather

conditions. Female farmers even claim that they need to work and contribute to the income to have a voice in the decision-making process in the family.

The study showed that the majority of female farmers manage full time farming in addition to their regular household work. They leave their young children with other household members or with their neighbours to look after them. If a baby sitter is not available, they take the children to the farm with them.

The female farmers revealed that depending on the payment arrangements with the hired labourer, they also cook lunch for the entire group of labourers to subsidise the payment.

Decision Making:

When it comes to decision making, different villages have different arrangements.

70 % of the time farming decisions such as the type of crops to plant, the use of agricultural inputs and the selling price of the produce is a joint decision between the husband and wife. However, female farmers take complete responsibility for selling the produce.

Female farmers are often quite active and go to town by themselves to sell the produce. They face no objections from their husbands to access the market.

80% of the time, family decisions like the household expenditures and decisions involving the children, are jointly made by the husband and wife. Most female farmers revealed that their husband includes them in the decision-making process because they are involved in income generating activities.

In the Kabala region women farmers take the lead in decision making in almost all matters. But for major decisions, they still consult with their husbands and reach a joint decision.

Conclusion

This study will help inform final programme engagement while sharing valuable knowledge with how future private sector programmes in Sierra Leone can work towards a more inclusive economy to benefit poor women and men.