



The official presentation of some pieces of cassava processing equipment (cassava Grinder and hydraulic Press) in Zamia Town, Bomi County on October 9, 2015 with funding from the American Ambassador Self-Help Fund



## **The arrival of the pieces of equipment and community dwellers are off loading**

The presentation of some pieces of equipment was greeted with singing and dancing by the community dwellers. The community dwellers thanked God Almighty for changing their sorrow into joy on this day. For many years, we have suffered especially our women who undergo hard pain in producing food, income etc for their household daily, are now witnessing an answered prayer. “Long live! GRASS and the Government and People of America for this long lasting assistance, we will not forget this day, one of the youth asserted.”

The program to present the grinder and hydraulic press was planned to have taken place at 10AM but could not go ahead as planned due to some intervening circumstances couple with the harvest season. Therefore, the program actual commenced at about 4:30 PM on October 9, 2015. This time, around the country, village (rural) dwellers, who are into rice farming are now engage with the harvest. The program was attended by the County Assistant Superintendent for Development, Hon. Ernest Gray Davis, who made a remark on behalf of the local government of Bomi. Opinion leaders in the town and others members were in attendance.

The overview of the project was made by the National Program Coordinator of Grassroots Agency for Social Services. He mentioned that GRASS is a development grassroots organization working with marginalized and underprivileged rural communities within Liberia. GRASS has been working for the last five years with several rural communities on the issues of poverty reduction by using “local solution to solve local problem.” Some of the communities GRASS has worked with and continues to engage are as follows; Jackson Kwenah is during pineapple cultivation, Timbo in cassava cultivation and Bacconnie in goat farming in Grand Bassa County. In Rivercess County, GRASS is engaged with the women of Bodowhea in plantain cultivation, Jueh, Gbokon in goat Farming and Gbotoe Town plantain cultivation. All these communities are doing very well except for one.

The National Program Coordinator went on to say that on October 2, 2012, GRASS held a day community driven development consultation with the community dwellers. During the meeting, the issue of poverty, its negative impact on humanity and how to get out of poverty was discussed in-depth. At the close of the consultation, the participants showed the way how to get out of poverty and their willingness to do so. They said, “the surest way for the community to get out of poverty is through agriculture.” The community decided to cultivate 20hectre of land for a cassava project. The participants mentioned that the proceeds from the sale of their produce will be used toward their children education, health and their road. On this note, the date and time were set for the commencement of the project.

Therefore, a follow-up meeting was held to review some of the things that were discussed as to whether GRASS and the community were ready to commence the project, particularly the community, its surrounding villages and towns. Due to the commitment from the community its surrounding villages and towns, the project was officially launched in February 2013.

He also added that during the harvest period of the cassava, the women appealed to GRASS for help due to the suffering/hard labor associated with the production processes of the tuber to gari or fufu. Usually women are the processor of cassava tuber to gari or fufu and this is done manually. The energy is so immense, even at that, they sometimes get hurt in grinding process from tuber to gari. If they get hurt in the process, its hampers their daily works.

It was in this light that GRASS worked with the community to write a proposal and submitted seem on behalf of Ziama Town to the American Ambassador Self-Help Fund. The project was accepted and approved. Today we want to be very grateful to the People and Government of the United States of America for its support to marginalized and underprivileged community initiatives, he concluded.

Speaking on behalf of Ziama Town Youths, The Youth leader thanked God for what he has done in their lives. As you can see, our community is a hard to reach area, so we are considered by people of Bomi County as those living behind God's back. Today marks an important day in our lives especially with the presentation of the cassava grinder and the hydraulic press, thank God for GRASS, the Government and the people United States of America for this great work. We will forever remember GRASS for its commitment in working with local/rural dwellers in the area of poverty reduction, he concluded.



**The women and elders representative marking separate remark at the program**

For her part, the women leader expressed gratitude for what their eyes have seen especially for local organization to be very committed to reducing poverty in hard to reach community like theirs. We will give our men all the support to continue with the project. We will start to mobilize local materials, such as; sand crush rock, timbers etc for the construction of the shelter (the storage and processing facility) as of tomorrow. We would like to continue our appeal to GRASS so that it can find support for the roofing sheets, steel rods, nails and cement. Please help to talk with international Ngo for us in this regard.

The elders thanked the Government and People of America for their continue support to local initiatives. We appreciate you GRASS for your commitment in reaching us with this blessing and for keeping your promise. GRASS has put us on the map. May God Almighty bless you all for reducing the hardship on us especially our women, he said.



**Bomi County, Assistant Superintendent for Development is inspecting the equipment and making a remark at the program**

The program was attended by high profile local government official, the County Assistant Superintendent for Development. In his remark, he thanked the community dwellers for accepting the challenge to reduce poverty in their community. Today, I am a proud man to have these pieces of equipment in one of my communities. On behalf of the people and the local government of Bomi County, I want to use this time to thank, the American tax payers and their government by whose generosity, we were able to get these machines. To conclude, GRASS indeed is a great organization with little or nothing you were able to reach this length, the People of Zaimia Town and the whole of Bomi County will continue to remember your good works. We appreciate you, again, thanks!

Note: In GRASS community development work the children are prioritized particularly their educational activities. At the program, GRASS donated reading posters, chalk ten dozens of copybooks, pencils etc to the Assistant Superintendent for Development for onward transmission to the only teacher of the village school. This teacher is taking care of 130 kids with no support. He is presently ill and needs urgent attention. His stomach and legs are swollen/, some people are saying this could be kidney or liver failure. We pray and hope that

someone will come to his aid. He has demonstrated his commitment to education of these children of this community, their surrounding village and towns. Please see below his photos.



**The only teacher providing service at the village school with no facility (school building etc) these kids received some school materials from GRASS Team**



















