



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/promoting-entrepreneurship-and-food-security-through-microfinance-liberia>

# Promoting Entrepreneurship and Food Security through Microfinance in Liberia



USADF

With financing, Blasin improved his cabbage farming and launched a new business endeavor in pig farming.

Mr. Lannon, a restaurant owner and father of eight, and Mr. Blasin, a cabbage farmer and father of ten, have a great deal in common. Both men live in Nimba County, Liberia and faced enormous difficulties during and after the country's civil war. Both love to talk about their families and are elated to be able to feed and educate their children. And both are hardworking businessmen who represent the power of finance to transform economically marginalized communities.

Lannon and Blasin are just two of the thousands of entrepreneurs who have received training, mentoring and access to capital through the Liberia Entrepreneurial and Asset Development (LEAD) microfinance organization. After receiving a grant from the [U.S. African Development Foundation](#) (USADF) in 2009 to support microbusinesses and subsistence farmers, LEAD was able to expand beyond the capital of Monrovia into areas of the country where people were not served by commercial banks. In addition to building loan capital, LEAD used the grant to acquire computers and vehicles, hire and train field staff and provide business training for clients like Lannon and Blasin.

Today, LEAD has scaled up its operations considerably: active in six of Liberia's 15 counties, the organization has over 2,000 members who have undergone training, pay regular dues, attend quarterly meetings and participate in its annual conference.

Lannon and Blasin demonstrate the exponential returns that are possible from a small investment. With an initial LEAD loan of only \$336, Blasin purchased inputs for growing cabbage and used the profits from his improved yields to send his children to school. Four loan cycles later (LEAD loans increase by \$67 per cycle), Blasin has put three children through university, with another son studying agriculture so he can return to help his father with his business. Blasin was so grateful to LEAD for the assistance that he volunteered 25 acres of his own land to be used as a demonstration plot where LEAD can continue training smallholder farmers to use more productive farming techniques.

Lannon used his first loan to upgrade his restaurant and begin farming on the side. Soon, instead of buying vegetables to cook with, Alfonso was able to start serving cassava, potatoes, plantains and leafy greens grown on his own farm. After three loan cycles, his restaurant is so busy that he employs several local youth, and the farm is doing so well that he hired day laborers and sells his excess produce in the local market. Alfonso and his family never go hungry now, but he says the best thing about his new financial stability is that he can provide food for people who don't have any.

Lannon and Blasin's successes are indicative of the great opportunity in bringing financial services to communities that are often overlooked by typical loan programs. In both men's cases, the ripple effects of a series of small investments increased income and food security not just for them or their families, but also for other farmers and community members.

*Under Feed the Future, USADF makes targeted investments through direct grants to Africans to expand economic activities in rural communities and build the capacity of smallholders employed in the agriculture sector, laying the groundwork for better nutrition and food security among increasing numbers of men, women and children across Africa.*