

Your Gifts to the Presbyterian Hunger Program at work in Nigeria



A project participant on his farm in Nigeria. Photos courtesy of CISCOPE

Crop production is the primary source of income for many people in Adamawa State, northeast Nigeria. But the region has been deeply affected by crises. In the last decade, insurgents killed thousands of people, and millions of people in the region were displaced by the violence. The resources of host communities were stretched thin.

The PHP Advisory Committee chose to support work in northeast Nigeria, a part of the world where the U.N. had declared a famine.

Presbyterian Hunger Program's partner, *Civil Society for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE)*, met with leaders and community members in the Michika area of Adamawa State. They learned about the challenges and obstacles to food security in local communities, including limited access to fertilizer, water pumps, quality seeds, and agricultural credit loans.

In 2019, 200 small holder farmers participated in training on best farming practices, including land and seed preparation, fertilizer micro dozing, disease and pest control, and post-harvest techniques for 12 different crops. Seeds were provided for households that were not able to afford them during the dry season, and water pumps were provided for groups of five farmers to share.

Peter Dadda plans to share some of the information he learned with his neighbors. For the majority of farmers in his village, after the terror inflicted by Boko Haram, procuring seeds for farming was difficult. This often meant that those who could manage to get quality seeds – which were scarce – could cultivate just a small portion of land. The year he participated in the training project with CISCOPE, he was able to cultivate a much larger space and looked forward to a bountiful harvest.





Sabina Samaila's husband and father were killed by insurgents, but she still had four children and a diabetic mother to care for. Sabina attended all the training sessions on farming best practices and received seeds and access to a water pump. With this support, she plans to cultivate a larger portion of land and use the profits from the harvest to care for her family, including sending her oldest daughter through further schooling.

CISCOPE and the communities were appreciative of PHP's support, but still the need in the region was severe. In Demsa, near the River Benue, flooding added to the heavy toll, displacing dozens of villages.

In 2020, 200 people in Demsa registered to be part of farmer groups. The community's participation in planning the project helped CISCOPE understand what agricultural inputs would be most helpful. While a typical distribution might have included rice seeds, the Demsa communities made it clear that quail in the area destroy rice farms, so vegetable seeds would be more productive. Listening to the needs of the local community is a pillar of an effective response.

In 2017, the United Nations designated four countries as suffering from famine: Somalia, Yemen, South Sudan, and Nigeria. In 2019, the Presbyterian Mission Agency sent out an appeal, and numerous people responded, wanting to offer assistance in areas affected by extreme hunger and famine. Using those gifts, PHP was able to send additional support to CISCOPE for their work with at-risk communities in Madagali, where attacks were more frequent, and farmers had not had sufficient access to needed farming inputs.

500 returnees and host community farmers chose to participate in the famine project with CISCOPE, and they were happy with the community-based approach, which allowed them to offer their concerns and preferences for what support would be most beneficial. In addition to cowpea and groundnut seeds, threshing and milling machines have been provided for groups of farmers to share. Training on farming best practices and use of the machines was included. Now the farmers don't need to rely on expensive rental of equipment for processing their harvests. In addition to benefitting the participants directly, when the farmers take their produce to market, commercial activities are revived, helping to boost local economies.

2020 brought the additional challenge of the rising price of inputs, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some trainings had to be postponed due to lockdowns.

With support from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, CISCOPE continues interventions in northeast Nigeria. In 2021, plans include the support of Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLAs). These community-based groups of 25-30 members save money together, and members can take small loans from the savings to begin income-generating activities. Agricultural processing equipment and 1,500 tree seedlings for the GSLA members to plant are also in the plans.

We are glad to hear good reports from our partners, and we are thankful to those who make support for their work possible. Supported by One Great Hour of Sharing and gifts from individuals, churches, and presbyteries, the Presbyterian Hunger Program works to alleviate hunger and eliminate its underlying causes in places like Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States. Please pray that the Lord of the Harvest will lead our work and help us to faithfully use the gifts that are given for hunger ministry.



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