



God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

—Genesis 1:29 (NRSV)

Seeds are a gift from our loving God. Around the world, people sow, tend, fertilize, and wait for growth. With heaven-sent rain and sun, a harvest is gathered. But in many places, communities struggle around the issue of seeds: must they continue to pay for seeds each year and not be allowed to save their own; can they find local, natural seeds; will the seeds hold up to climate changes; how can the seeds best be harvested and saved to share with neighbors and future generations?

One of the ways **Presbyterian Hunger Program** (PHP) reaches toward its mission of alleviating hunger and eliminating its causes is through supporting partners around the world who are working to impact the root causes of hunger and poverty. Supported by gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing and gifts to PHP, several of the partners who are receiving grants for their work in 2018 have a connection with seeds. Here’s a sampling:

India

Amrita Bhoomi will set up a seed production and distribution program, including key seed savers in the state of Karnataka, India. This will help ensure a supply of quality, affordable local seed varieties to farmers to help guarantee against hunger. Seeds will be distributed at all farmers’ events in the state. Training will be offered, including technical training in seed saving techniques and education on the importance of seed autonomy. The Joining Hands network **CHETHANA** will also be working with more than 1,200 households participating in Small Farmer Groups in southern India.

Rural women farmers in Batibo produce the bulk of yams eaten in nearby communities and towns, yet they lack enough food and money to feed their families and meet basic needs. About 650 women from 15 farming groups will receive training through a project offered by **Community Initiative for Sustainable Environment and Gender Development** (CISEGD). Topics will include yam production and propagation; agroforestry; beekeeping and honey harvesting/processing; poultry production and organic fertilizer/compost production; group leadership; and cooperative management and marketing. The groups will also receive inputs including chicks (a natural source of fertilizer) and agroforestry trees. The trees offer shade, protection from wind and soil erosion, and a reduction in deforestation, because the agroforestry tree wood can be used for stakes for the yams to climb, helping them produce well. A bee farming component will also benefit trees and crops and provide honey for additional income and improved nutrition for the women and others in the community.

Cameroon

United States

Soul Fire Farm in Petersburg, New York, is committed to empowering poor communities toward food self-sufficiency and eliminating gaping disparities in the food system. Their food justice and farmer training programs are offered by and for communities historically marginalized – Black and Latino, low-income, women, and those in the criminal justice system. With seeds and soil as important parts of the story, hundreds of youth and adults are trained each year in sustainable farming and whole foods cooking, so they can participate in their own sustenance and help end hunger in their communities. The farm also provides subsidized weekly deliveries of farm-fresh food to dozens of families living in food desert neighborhoods.

A project through the **Improvement and Development for Communities Center (IDCO)** in Palestine will respond to reduced food production, major economic losses, a rise in unemployment, and a threat to food security. It will help boost agricultural productivity, promote water saving techniques, and strengthen the capacity of vulnerable household farmers in the Gaza strip. 80 rural and vulnerable farmers who own a dunam of land will receive open field seedlings (potato, strawberry, tomato, etc.); horticulture production and pest control services will be revitalized; and training will be provided on environmentally sound agriculture and water saving techniques.

Palestine

Uganda

Development in Gardening (DIG) will provide a five-month hands on training in sustainable agriculture in several locations, allowing 400 Batwa women to learn to design and support their own household gardens, a step toward breaking the cycle of poverty and food insecurity for their households. The gardens will be designed to accommodate local food preferences, changing climate patterns, and innovative gardening techniques such as soil restoration, companion planting, and integrated pest management. Workshops in cooperative business planning and record keeping will be incorporated, as will cooking demonstrations and nutrition training.

Seeds play a crucial role, but they are part of an even larger story. Capacity building, cooperatives, community education, evaluations, advocacy, and other components are also part of how our partners are working to eliminate the causes of hunger in these and other communities.

Will you join us in sowing support for projects like these?

Together we can continue to make a difference for those who are hungry in the United States and around the world. As you share, please pray that the Lord of the Harvest will lead this work and help us faithfully use the gifts entrusted to us.



Photos by Valery Nodem, PHP

