



## Presbyterian Hunger Program – Partners Plant Trees and Care for God's Creation

Trees are essential for our planet, taking in carbon dioxide and releasing life-sustaining oxygen. Now needed more than ever, trees can sequester carbon to help mitigate pollution and climate change. In 2022, the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly called for the development of a carbon offset program that will support reforestation and greenhouse gas sequestration. More information about this program can be found at [www.pcusa.org/trees](http://www.pcusa.org/trees).

Congregations and individuals can choose to lower their carbon footprints, by giving to the Presbyterian Hunger Program's (PHP) *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* fund – E865715. For years, PHP has supported partners in the United States and around the world who have included tree planting in their objectives, and below are some examples. Together we will continue to value caring for creation, and with increased support for this fund, we will be glad to be able to explore more opportunities for tree planting and carbon sequestration.

### Nicaragua

PHP partner *Asociación Fénix* has worked with rural communities in Nicaragua to reforest areas affected by erosion. Young members of the community helped collect moringa seeds and plant tree seedlings around their school; and teachers, parents, and students worked together to establish agroecological school gardens.

In El Bálsamo and El Jazmín, participants in a beekeeping project found that honey yields were low due to high levels of deforestation in the area. So after training on reforestation and managing plantations, the beekeeping families planted a total of 700 fruit trees in their yards. When mature, the trees will provide a source of nutritious food — like mangoes, avocados, and citrus fruits — and generate income. 1,000 trees of timber and honey species were also planted and will help protect water sources, improve environmental conditions, and ensure the flowering required by bees.



*Asociación Fénix*

### Nigeria

PHP has partnered with the *Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication* (CISCOPE) since 2018. Members of the coalition work together to reduce poverty and build resilience in Northeast Nigeria. Along with training and other support for community income generation, 300 participants in one of their Group Savings and Loan Associations each received five trees. The 1,500 mango, guava, yellow cassia, tropical almond, eucalyptus, mahogany, and black current trees that the participants chose will be a source of income when mature and will provide erosion control for the land.

### United States of America

PHP partner *Soul Fire Farm* (SFF) in New York focuses on food sovereignty, offering training for BIPOC farmer-activists, food justice workshops, urban gardens, and more. Regenerative farming practices are prioritized on their land, which includes a healthy forest and 3 acres of silvopasture – an area where trees and grazing livestock operations are integrated. At SFF, Nubian goats share space with apple, peach and cherry trees, benefitting both the animals and the land. SFF shared that pastureland stores carbon in the biomass of grasses, shrubs and trees, and each acre of silvopasture can trap 42 tons of carbon each year. In 2021, the organization engaged five farms across the northeast in a carbon sequestration program.

## 🌿 Madagascar

*Fianangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara* (FJKM – Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar) is a long-time partner of the PC(USA). PHP is supporting its Fruits, Vegetables, and Environmental Education program. Women and men attend trainings on planting, growing, and propagating fruit trees by grafting. They receive trees and a set of essential supplies. Some participants attend further training to become volunteer technicians and then share their knowledge with their families, churches and communities. With the assistance of a technician, the FJKM church at Mahatsinjo started a tree nursery. Members of the church learned to set up a nursery and to graft.



FJKM

## 🌿 Colombia

Tree planting is often one component of a project that benefits families and environments in multiple ways. Our partner in Colombia, *Fundación Diaconia Pazos*, is involved with a project that includes water management as well as planting. More than seven acres have been used for the planting of passion fruit vines, cashew bushes, and Creole plum trees. The interspersing of the plants benefits the soil and avoids monoculture.

## 🌿 Peru

The Presbyterian Hunger Program is not alone in this work of caring for creation. PHP's Joining Hands network in Peru, *Red Uniendo Manos Peru* (RUMP), made an inspiring move. They host short-term mission trip participants who want to learn from and connect with their mission. Visiting requires air travel for most participants, so the organization wanted a way to offset greenhouse gas emissions generated by the travel. They established a tree fund and will donate \$20 to the fund for each Presbyterian short-term mission trip participant. The fund will be used to support the work of the Conservation Committee of Villa El Sol. Over the past 20 years, the committee has led the planting of more than 30,000 trees to restore life on the hills outside of La Oroya, one of the most polluted towns in the world. Following flooding, RUMP also received support from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance that allowed them to focus on the long-term struggle against climate change. With their strategies – including planting of diverse native plant species – they hope to help retain water in the mountains, remediate toxins, and return nutrients to the soil.

### You can do something!

- 🌿 Plant trees! Trees help reduce the carbon dioxide load in the atmosphere.
- 🌿 Discover your household's carbon footprint. [www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/](http://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/)
- 🌿 Take the PHP Climate Care Challenge to reduce your carbon footprint. [pcusa.org/cc](http://pcusa.org/cc)
- 🌿 Learn more and give to E865715 to support reforestation and carbon offset efforts. [www.pcusa.org/trees](http://www.pcusa.org/trees)
- 🌿 Contact your elected officials about climate change action. [votervoice.net/PCUSA/home](http://votervoice.net/PCUSA/home)
- 🌿 Learn how your congregation can be a refuge by helping plan for the impacts of climate change. [blessedtomorrow.org/moving-forward-guide/](http://blessedtomorrow.org/moving-forward-guide/)
- 🌿 Help others learn about the issue. The Woodland Trust offers a 2-minute video, "How trees capture and store carbon." [youtube.com/watch?v=vJY3DTaE0sI](http://youtube.com/watch?v=vJY3DTaE0sI)

[www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment)

