



## Presbyterian Hunger Program Partners Around the World: Listening, Learning, and Supporting the Empowerment of Communities

We learn from each other. Parents teach children, young people share new ideas and insights with older generations, educators offer skill-building opportunities, and community members share what they have learned with each other. One of the things the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) has learned is how much our partners around the world have to offer as they work in their communities to identify the inequities that cause hunger, poverty, and displacement, and as they work with local people to find lasting solutions.

Training is often an important component when people are working toward sustainable livelihoods. We are glad to share examples from our partners of people in communities who have been at work in recent years learning, working together, and sharing their knowledge with others.

### 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 (FVEE) program.

In 2020, 82 women and men attended trainings on how to plant, grow, and propagate fruit trees by grafting. They received trees and a set of essential supplies. In addition to the basic training, 17 parish representatives from across the synod attended volunteer technician training. The technicians learned how to assist others in growing and propagating grafted mangos and on setting up mango nurseries.

Romain (in the photo) is one of the volunteer technicians. He has helped the FJKM church at Mahatsinjo start a tree nursery and trained members of the church how to set up a nursery and graft. He continues providing follow up with those who attended the pilot farmer training, and each week he goes to the fruit center to lend a hand and to increase his horticultural skills. Other technicians are also sharing their knowledge with their families, churches, and communities.

### United States



PHP partner *Soul Fire Farm (SFF)* in New York is an Afro-Indigenous-centered community farm committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system. Along with providing for the establishment of home gardens, working to regenerate 80 acres of mountainside land, helping to direct funding to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farming and justice organizations, and advocating for just policies, SFF offers a variety of on-site and online training opportunities. These include farming immersion, building immersion, uprooting racism trainings, and other skill sharing opportunities. Alumni of the farming immersion training reported that not only were more than half of them growing food for their communities, but 75% were teaching others about farming and food justice.

During the pandemic, SFF pivoted to serve their community with more online opportunities. On the monthly call-in show, "Ask a Sista Farmer," experienced Black womxn farmers answer questions about gardening, livestock, agroforestry, plant medicine, business operations, and food preservation. SFF also co-hosted bilingual skill-shares for BIPOC farmers, welcoming 24 speakers and reaching 700 attendees. SFF also continues to provide an ever-growing list of pandemic resources to support the farming community.

## Haiti



The Movement Paysan Papay (MPP) has partnered with PHP over the years to train hundreds of peasant families in agroecological techniques that conserve resources, can be accomplished with little land, and produce nutritious food. Families take the knowledge learned and create gardens at home in their small yards. Then those families use their gardens to demonstrate to their neighbors how the techniques are applied, and they assist their neighbors in establishing their own gardens.

Marie Yolène Jean, a young trainee, proudly testified her satisfaction at having set up her market garden plot. *“At 24 years old, I had the chance to participate in a training session on the techniques of production and use of compost and natural insecticides. This was new knowledge for me. I applied these techniques .... Thanks to the use of insecticides, I managed to avoid the havoc that insects could cause, and my production has doubled. Before I was not able to feed my family without help from my parents and neighbors. With the income I earned, I was able to pay hospital bills, run small errands for the family, buy two young goats, and I have already made the decision to expand the area of my plot for the next season in order to produce much more.”* —Marie (in the photo)

## Uganda



PHP partner *Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment* (ARUWE) is helping landowners and those who rely on the land for their livelihoods learn about their legal rights and how to secure land titles or leases. Without a properly registered title, if a man who owns land dies, his wife may have no legal standing and can be forced to leave. Many people are unaware of their land rights and have been unfairly evicted from the land where they reside. ARUWE has trained residents who are willing to serve as

paralegals. The paralegals are equipped to offer education on land policy and land registration to local community members and to help individuals find pathways for additional support. Photo: a community meeting conducted by a paralegal before gathering restrictions in 2020.

*“I feel so happy that I can pass on such important knowledge to my fellow community members to enable them to secure their land. As farmers, land is our livelihood and without it we can’t survive. Before the project, we had no access to such information on how to register our land. This is an important step for us to deal with land conflicts in our community. Even amidst the restrictions in the movement because of the COVID-19, I can still do the home visits.”* —Nimirimu, a paralegal in Kitabona.

## Nicaragua



Students from rural communities in the dry zone of Nicaragua are not only learning in typical classrooms, but in school gardens and in their communities as well. Working with PHP partner *Asociación Fénix* (AsoFenix), teachers, parents, and students received training, and they established agroecological school gardens. Teachers facilitate the work of the gardens, and students and parents work together with them to produce corn, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, papayas, and more. Parents use some of the produce to prepare snacks for students during their school days. Members of the communities share a greater respect for the environment, sustainable agricultural practices, and healthier eating habits. Young community members have also helped with reforestation efforts.

Along with the provision of inputs, PHP partners are offering medicinal agriculture training in Haiti; bookkeeping and post-harvest management training in South Sudan; agroecological training in Honduras; set-up of sweet potato demonstration farms in Cameroon; and health hygiene education in Nicaragua. **Around the world, people are learning new skills and new ways of caring for the earth and each other. PHP is glad to be a participant in this work.**

