



GROWING
HOPE
G L O B A L L Y

Annual Report

2019-2020



As a Christian response to hunger, we link the grassroots energy and commitment of rural communities in the U.S. with the capability and desire of smallholder farmers in developing countries to grow lasting solutions to hunger.



Letter from the President

The Book of Acts is filled with stories of food – of sharing meals, of breaking bread, of providing for those who are hungry. The early church came together across the divisions of their day to unite in service to others. As they faced numerous challenges, they responded with grace. In fact, they created community.

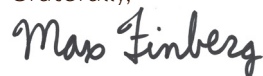
That is what we seek to do through Growing Hope Globally. Our work together allows us to live out our faith. We strive to ensure that those we serve have enough to share with their families and neighbors. We are a community of people connected by our desire to make a real, lasting impact in the lives of hungry and vulnerable people in a manner that instills dignity and hope.

As I write in Spring 2020, the COVID-19 crisis has reminded us just how essential food is. In many places around the world, hunger and poverty have become far worse. Extreme global hunger is expected to double in the next year. The work Growing Hope and our partners do to promote sustainable agriculture and food security is more important than ever.

Despite a challenging 2019 growing season in the U.S., our supporters have remained faithful, and we have been able to honor all of our overseas programming commitments. Thank you! This past year, we added new Growing Projects from coast to coast and found favor with foundations. We look forward to the day when we can once again gather in person as a community of people working together to end hunger.

Jesus focused on food when he taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” That portion of the Lord’s Prayer is even more poignant now. It is not a given for everyone. But with God’s grace – and your faithful support – that prayer is being answered all around the world with food people are able to produce themselves.

Gratefully,



Max Finberg
President



Max Finberg (left)
and Growing Project
volunteer Eldon
Christophel.

**“And God’s grace was so
powerfully at work in them
all that there were no needy
persons among them”**

Acts 4:34

We All Need a Hand Up

When Bob was just a freshman in high school, it looked as if he had lost his opportunity to work on his family's farm. His dad died suddenly of a heart attack, and his grandfather couldn't manage the operation near Delphos, Iowa, on his own. The family had to sell the farm and all of the livestock. It wasn't clear what opportunities Bob would find or how he would afford college.

An Opportunity to Learn

A kind neighbor, Ralph Brammer, reached out and offered Bob his first job. He started out picking up hay bales, doing chores and caring for hogs. As he worked, Ralph taught him all about livestock and he learned by doing.

Using some of his income, Bob bought some sows and started farrowing hogs, selling the offspring once they were weaned. He really wanted to take the next step and finish them out, but he couldn't afford the feed. Ralph suggested he go and talk to Farm Credit, certain that they'd give him a loan. Bob took Ralph's advice, and Farm Credit gave him a \$5,000 line of credit.

Bob (right) and Amy Sefrit (left) with Margot (center left) and Rony (center right) from the Haiti Northwest program.



Using the credit, Bob began finishing hogs. He got married and used the income to pay his way through college. After graduating, he used Farm Credit to get a reference, which helped him land his first job after college as a feed manager.

A Hand Up

He never really thought about why Farm Credit had given him such a generous line of credit in the first place. It wasn't until a few years later that he found out Ralph had cosigned the loan.

"That hand up shaped my entire career and life," Bob said. "That's exactly what Growing Hope Globally does through their programs. They give people an opportunity and a hand up. We may never fully know the difference it can make down the road as they apply what they have learned."

Bob got involved with Growing Hope Globally in 2007 as part of the local United Methodist Men's Group. He is the leader of the Fairfax, Missouri Growing Project and contributes the crops from one of his fields. Bob readily shares that as he is faithful in planting his crops for the Growing Project each year, God has been faithful in multiplying their efforts.

Passing on the Gift

A few years ago Bob had the chance to visit some of the programs that Growing Hope Globally funds. "There is pride – you see it in people's faces," he said. "They just need that hand up one time. They take off and go with it. That's what's amazing about all of this. You see how hard they are working to put it all into practice, and really you just have to admire the people and what they are doing for themselves."

One farmer they visited had received five acres through a loan and was then able to buy another five acres. "You know, I wouldn't be surprised if he had given someone else a hand up with that," Bob said. "Everybody needs it, but sometimes people don't have friends that can do that for them. We're able to be that hand up that they need."

"That's exactly what Growing Hope Globally does through their programs. They give people an opportunity and a hand up."

During Bob and Amy's visit to Nicaragua, Bismark completed his final loan payment for land that he was able to purchase through the program.



A Passion for Helping Others

The Belmond-Klemme FFA chapter in North Central Iowa has always been dedicated to helping others. But they are particularly excited about the opportunity to get involved with Growing Hope Globally for the first time this year.

“Last year we did a school-wide meal packing event,” FFA member Lauren Crawford said. “Hunger is a huge problem in our world. While things like meal packaging are great, they are not a long-term solution. It’s like putting a Band-Aid on a deep cut. When I heard about Growing Hope, I realized that I had a chance to be a part of a long-term solution to this problem. Our chapter has a passion for helping others, whether it be in our own community or halfway across the world. Growing Hope is a way for us to pursue this passion. It allows us to see that even though we are one chapter from a small town we can make a huge impact.”

Lauren Crawford and her fellow FFA students are involved in a Growing Project for the first time this year.

Getting the Community Involved

This year the Belmond-Klemme FFA chapter is involved in a community Growing Project for the first time. They began by tapping into some of their existing connections. Former FFA members Craig and Kim Berhow and their family donated the use of 17 acres of land for the project. Lauren invited her parents, Matt and Brandy Crawford, to donate their time and the use of their equipment for working the ground, planting, and harvesting. The group also secured a donation of seed from their local Dekalb/Asgrow dealer and chemicals from AgVantage FS.



The students were determined to get started despite the challenges that came with COVID-19. FFA Advisor Debbie Barkela said: “It was definitely the students that motivated me to do this project. I was very skeptical that we would get everything to move forward, but Lauren was determined that we would be able to complete this even during the social distancing. These students really enjoy and have a deep passion for helping others.”

A Lasting Impact

When the crop is harvested and sold in the fall, the students will determine which program they want to support. They are excited about the lasting impact their efforts will have on communities around the world. FFA member Emma Carlson said, “Since everybody in our chapter has all these opportunities, we should be helping other people do the same things we can do.”



Belmond-Klemme FFA students fill the planter with seed that was donated by local businesses to their Growing Project.

How a Growing Project Works

Growing Hope’s unique model provides a way for U.S. farmers, agribusiness companies, churches and communities to make a difference around the world. Our volunteer-led community Growing Projects work together to raise money by growing crops, and Growing Hope uses the proceeds to fund overseas agricultural development programs.

Want to Start a Growing Project in Your Community?

- ♥ Gather donations of land, seed, other agricultural inputs, animals, and cash
- ♥ Grow a crop, raise animals or do something else in your community to raise funds
- ♥ Harvest and sell your grain or other agricultural products
- ♥ Choose which overseas programs your community wants to support

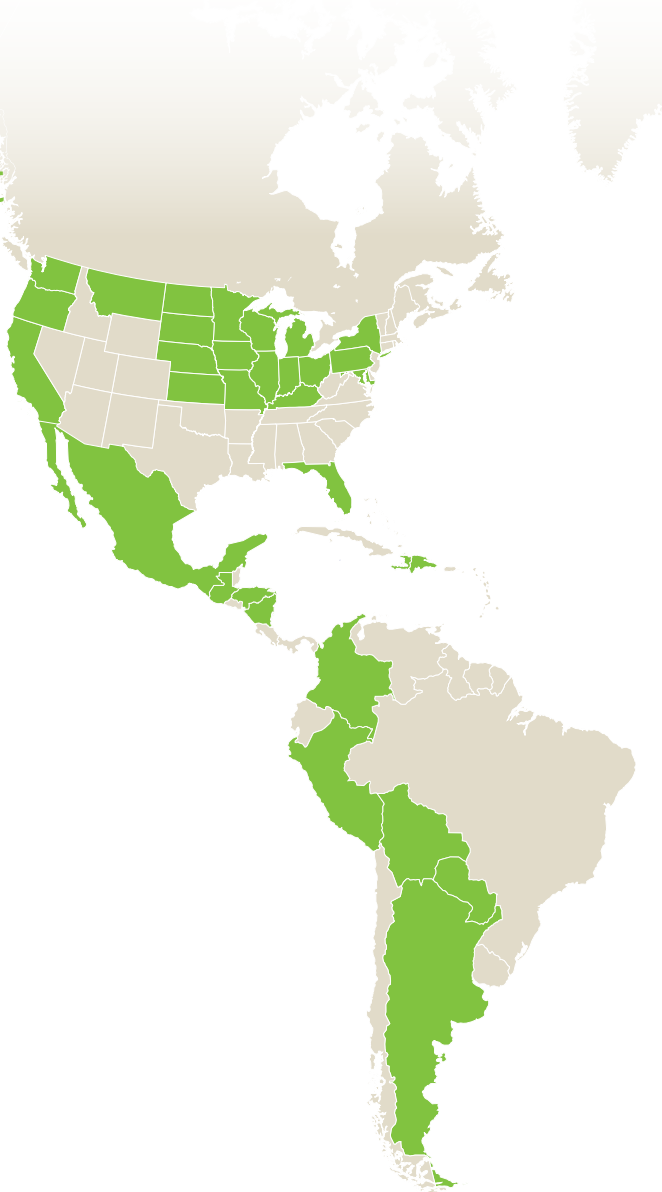
Our Global Impact

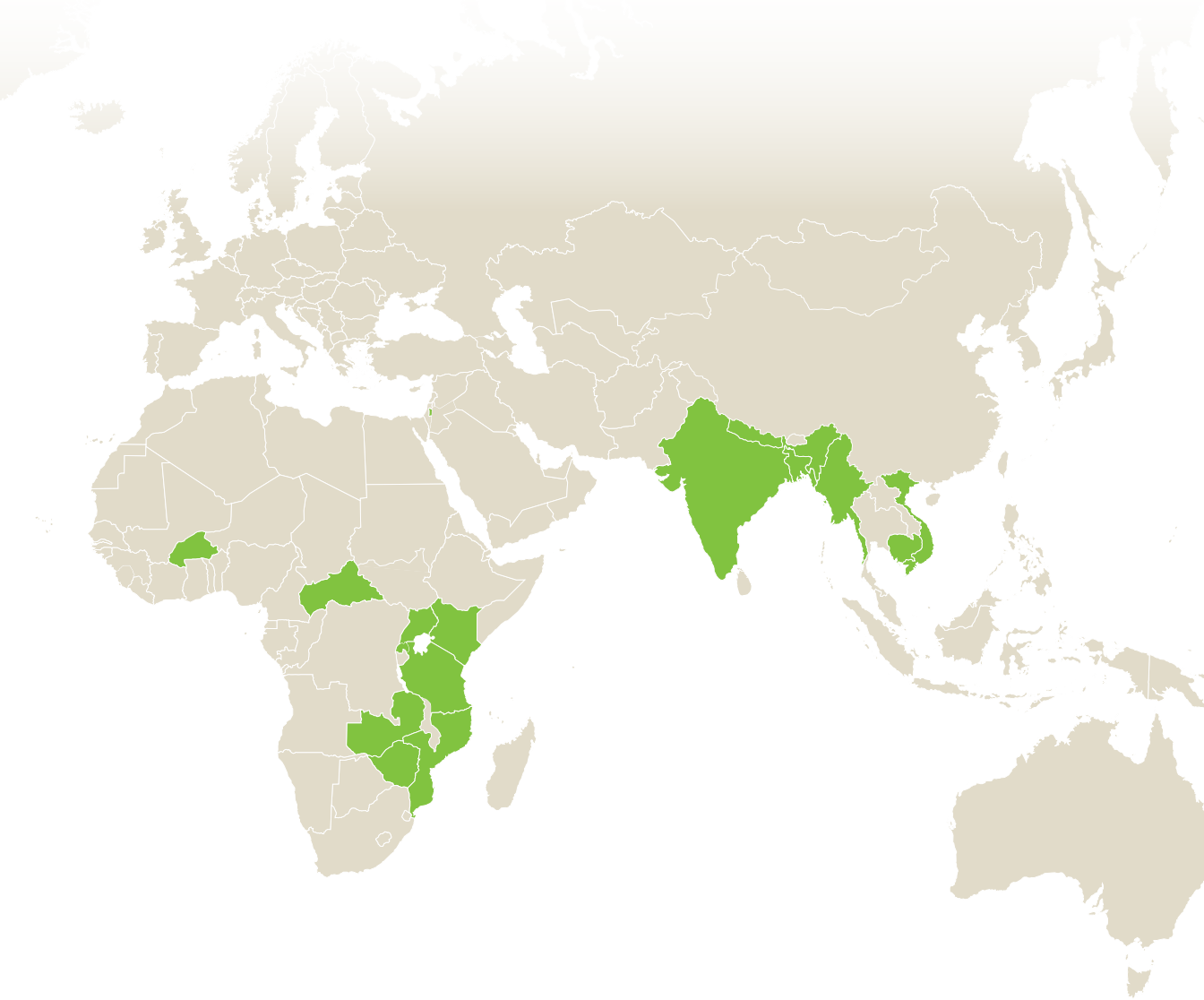
More than 820 million people are suffering from hunger around the world with a sharp increase expected this year. The majority live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

U.S. Growing Projects raise funds for agricultural development programs around the world. We are grateful for all the farmers, churches, businesses, and individuals that grew crops, raised livestock, hosted events, and gave of their time and resources this past year.

We work with trusted local partners to give rural families a hand up. The programs we support give the gift of dignity and hope that comes with growing their own food, earning an income, and providing for their own needs.

Programs provide training and tools for agriculture and so much more. They respond to local needs by improving nutrition and sanitation, increasing access to markets, creating savings groups, and practicing community building. Together we are growing lasting solutions to hunger.





Overseas Programs

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| ♥ Argentina | ♥ Haiti | ♥ Palestine |
| ♥ Bolivia | ♥ Honduras | ♥ Paraguay |
| ♥ Bangladesh | ♥ India | ♥ Peru |
| ♥ Burkina Faso | ♥ Kenya | ♥ Rwanda |
| ♥ Cambodia | ♥ Mexico | ♥ Tanzania |
| ♥ Central African Rep. | ♥ Mozambique | ♥ Uganda |
| ♥ Colombia | ♥ Myanmar | ♥ Vietnam |
| ♥ Dominican Republic | ♥ Nepal | ♥ Zambia |
| ♥ Guatemala | ♥ Nicaragua | ♥ Zimbabwe |

West Africa program not shown for security reasons.

Changing Lives and Cultures

Kendua, Bangladesh and Holland, Michigan, appear to have little in common. In Kendua, people grow a few acres of rice or work as day laborers, struggling to get by. In Holland, few people farm, but those who do grow hundreds of acres of corn and soy. Despite the differences, these places have become connected.

The Bangladesh Kendua program began in 2016 and addresses high rates of stunting and malnourishment through nutrition-focused agriculture. Since that first year, the Holland Growing

Project has been supporting the Kendua program with their harvest proceeds. But no one from Holland had ever met the people of Kendua.

That all changed last year when Ryan and Whitney Draisma-Hirdes traveled to Bangladesh with Growing Hope staff member Rachel Conley. Whitney and Ryan said: “Our visit to Bangladesh was overwhelming in the best sense. Our lifestyle differs so greatly. We witnessed growth and development, both in our own minds and in the communities we were able to visit.”

In rural Bangladesh, most people are conservative Muslims. Men make most family decisions and do everything outside the home while women stay at home and stay silent.



Rachel Conley, Whitney and Ryan Draisma-Hirdes, with staff from SATHI and World Renew.

A Life-Changing Program

World Renew and local partner SATHI have developed a unique self-help group structure that works within the culture. At the primary group level, men and women meet separately. These groups include savings and lending as well as teaching on basic literacy, health, agriculture and other topics. Delegates are elected from each primary group to represent them in community-wide leadership committees. This allows both men and women to have a voice in local leadership and take ownership in the development process.

Angura and her husband are members of self-help groups. They have learned how various kinds of food impact their nutrition and the importance of including each type in their daily diet. They have also learned how to grow seasonal fruits and vegetables using low-cost organic methods.

A Cultural Shift

For the first time, women like Angura have the opportunity to be farmers. Initially their husbands were skeptical, often giving them “useless” land to farm. The women were successful anyway. Their husbands quickly realized that it is helpful for women to be farmers too. Now a cultural shift is happening, and women are being treated with greater respect.

In the past Angura’s husband worked as a day laborer. She was dependent on him to make enough money for their family. When he didn’t find work, they all suffered. Now Angura is a vegetable and chicken farmer and contributes to her family’s income. She is growing nutritious food for her family with plenty left to sell in the market.

A Life-Changing Visit

“We witnessed how effective a community development program can be,” Whitney said. “Growing Hope has our ongoing support and respect as an effective and responsible organization. We saw first-hand the benefits in physical health, alleviated financial stress, stronger community, gained sense of purpose and greater respect for one another.

“These visits changed our lives for the better. It was an absolute honor to have experienced such genuine joy with communities that were once strangers and are now in our hearts forever.”

“We witnessed how effective a community development program can be. Growing Hope has our ongoing support and respect.”

Angura proudly shows visitors an eggplant almost ready for harvest, one of the many crops she is now growing.



Bananas Bring Blessings in Rwanda

We usually think of bananas as a nice breakfast fruit, not as something that can change lives. But Stephanie knows better. The simple fruit has brought about big changes for her. When Growing Hope Globally staff and supporters visited the Rwanda Rubavu program, Stephanie greeted them with a huge hug, sharing about the difference that the program made in her life.

A Different Kind of Banana

Farmers in the Rubavu region are no strangers to growing bananas. Many people in the area grow beer bananas. They are similar to the varieties used for cooking or eating raw, but they have a harsh taste. Most farmers sell their beer bananas and purchase edible bananas that are imported from Uganda.

A participant in the Rwanda Rubavu program carries edible bananas to market.

Beer bananas fetch a low price at market and create negative social impacts. A recent study showed that 42% of families in the region suffered from poor nutrition. Hunger and malnutrition have many causes. In Rubavu low-value and low-nutrition crops were factors.

Local churches asked Nazarene Compassionate Ministries to help them improve the food security in their communities. NCM consulted with the Rwandan Government and found that encouraging farmers to grow edible bananas was the best choice.

A New Opportunity

At first, some farmers were hesitant to remove their beer bananas and start over. New plants take 18 months to produce their first harvest. However, most were convinced to make the switch because the edible variety offers better nutritional value and a well-tended plant can produce fruit year-round for 20 years. Most importantly they can be sold for up to seven times the price of beer bananas at market!



The Rwandan Government provided NCM with several varieties of banana shoots as well as training guides. NCM distributed most of them to program participants and used the rest to establish demonstration plots. These plots serve as a place for program staff to experiment and to provide hands-on training to farmers. They also produce additional shoots that can be distributed to new participants.

Stephanie's Success

Stephanie participated in training and later received her own banana plants. Some of the varieties she planted are now producing well. She has been able to sell several bunches, earning enough to purchase a goat and expand her garden. The extra income has made a big difference. Because of the genocide in the 1990s, Stephanie is a widow and cares for seven grandchildren. The bananas and her hard work help her to meet the needs of her family.

Learning for the Future

After seeing the initial successes, the visitors and local staff discussed how the program might expand in the future. Growing Hope provided program staffers Joseph and Simon with a grant so they could attend an agricultural conference. There they learned how to intercrop bananas with other plants that serve as a natural fertilizer. This method allows production of a wider variety of crops while reducing expenses.

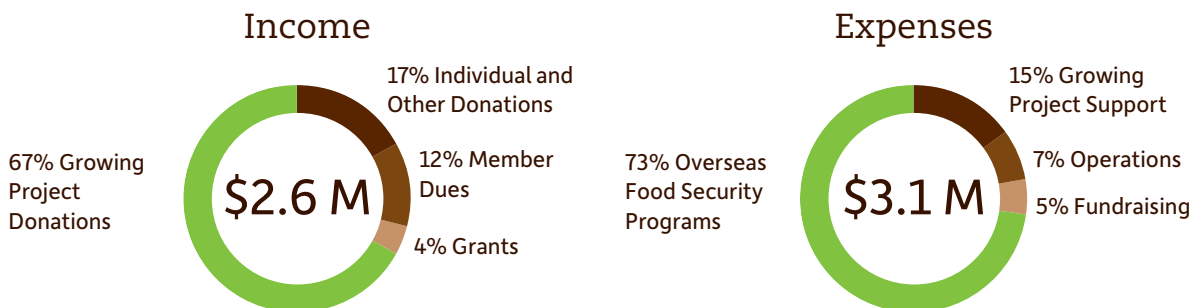
They also connected with an organization doing similar work in nearby Burundi. This new connection will give them access to different banana varieties and help them to further improve their methods. “By learning from their experience, we are doing better than we did before,” Simon said. “We are expecting a big impact in Rubavu.”



Eric Mattson gets a hug from Stephanie. The program has made a huge impact in her life and the lives of her grandchildren.

“The extra income has made a big difference in her life. The bananas and her hard work help her to meet the needs of her family.”

2019-2020 Financial Report



The 2019 growing season was challenging. With a large portion of our funding linked to U.S. agriculture, our income declined. We continue to make adjustments to ensure that the sustainable development programs we fund continue uninterrupted. That includes being good stewards of the resources we receive. We are proud that 88¢ of every \$1 we get goes toward programs.

We are grateful for all who faithfully support the work of Growing Hope Globally. Together we have made a positive difference in more than 2.1 million lives.

2019-2020 Impact



- ♥ 222,403 people benefited from sustainable development programs
- ♥ 15 New or Expanded Growing Projects
- ♥ 139 Active Growing Projects in 21 states
- ♥ 46 Overseas Programs supported in 28 countries

Partners

Catholic Relief Services
Church of the Brethren, Global Food Initiative
Church World Service
Evangelical Covenant Church - Covenant World Relief
Lutheran World Relief
Mennonite Central Committee
Nazarene Compassionate Ministries
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
World Hope International
World Renew
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Week of Compassion
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
Alliance to End Hunger
Asian Rural Institute
American Friends of Asian Rural Institute
Bread for the World



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Maurice Bloem - Church World Service
Sara Lisherness - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
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