

STANDING STRONG TOGETHER

SEE THE DIFFERENCE YOU'VE MADE

30,000
FARMERS

140,000
FAMILY MEMBERS

670
COMMUNITIES

60%
WOMEN

47%
YOUTH

12
COUNTRIES

Bontu Haji Hussein (in blue), a seed bank member in Arsi, Ethiopia.

We owe you a huge thank you.

Thanks to your support, our movement reached a new milestone in 2017: 30,000 farmers strong!

These farmers are growing better food and saving the world's seed diversity. They are also solving some of their communities' most pressing problems and sharing solutions with other farmers and governments.

None of this would be possible without you. As Josefina, a Seeds of Survival participant in Nicaragua, said so beautifully, "We are together, like grains on a corn cob." Here are a few things your support accomplished this year.



Photo: Blanca Iris Castro Birones

Through their new youth cooperative, Geovania, Osiris, Deybin and Bayardo from La Cofradía, Nicaragua, are diversifying their family farms with garden vegetables like the *Pipían* squash seen here.



Photo: Yann Vergrière/USC Canada

Here, seed bank members from Arsi, Ethiopia examine local wheat. "Local seeds are so delicious compared with recently introduced varieties," says Bontu (cover). "And since they were grown without chemicals or inorganic fertilizers, we like using them for our families."



Photo: Sylvie Perras/USC Canada

Salimata Traoré, from Pathia, Mali, is an innovative seed breeder. She decided to grow carrot seed - notoriously tricky to achieve in her climate - and succeeded! She was the only one of four people given seeds who was able to do it. She is pictured here with fellow farmer, Abdoulaye Diarra.



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Ivanoff

"The climate in Ontario has become unpredictable," says farmer Rebecca Ivanoff (far left). "The pepper seeds we are producing will be adapted to these changes. I'm grateful to the Bauta Initiative for helping small-scale farmers in Canada become seed breeders."

Rural youth find meaningful work close to home

It may look like basic seed saving training, but for young participants, the Seeds of Survival program is a school of life. Seed work requires discipline, problem-solving skills and teamwork. So does starting a small business – a key activity for many of the youth cooperatives you support in Nicaragua.

"It's important to be organized. We are listened to more. We feel proud," says Mario Hernández Vanegas, president of his youth co-op. And there's lots to be proud of. Alumni of these co-ops have become agronomists and leaders in the cooperate movement. Others now run their own family farm.

It starts with seeds, but your support grows fulfilling futures. Best of all, for these young participants and for their rural communities, these futures take root right at home, close to their families.

Farmers build contingency plans for a changing climate

The climate is changing, making it difficult for farmers everywhere to anticipate the growing season ahead. When crop failures hit communities with limited government support and no formal insurance, community seed banks are where farmers turn to bounce back.

For the last three years, farmers in Arsi, Ethiopia have been stocking their new community seed bank with local grain varieties able to cope with a whole range of conditions. So if a crop of wheat, teff or sorghum fails due to drought or disease, they can quickly sow another variety with different traits and a shorter growing season.

Of course, community seed banks do more than help farmers adjust to climate change. They also preserve the flavours and diversity cherished by each community.

Women's knowledge gets a chance to shine

Dig deep enough into a community's seeds and you'll usually find women as key holders of seed diversity and wisdom.

For several years, we've worked with communities to take stock of their seeds using a tool we call a "seed security assessment." It starts with a workshop in which farmers list all the seeds they save. They sort varieties according to how many people grow them, and on how much land. The end result shows which seeds are safe in numbers, and which are at risk.

In Mali, where your donations supported 10 assessments last year, an interesting pattern emerged. Men knew a lot about the varieties used to grow crops for market, but women brought the knowledge of traditional varieties. When women talked, the seed list would grow and grow, revealing rare and valuable varieties. For example, during one workshop, Fanta Traoré, from Zorokoro, surprised everyone by revealing seeds from a sorghum variety called *Nguené* which was thought to have been lost.

Your support helps communities get a clearer picture of both the seeds and the expertise they hold. Then farmers of all genders can work together to protect their precious agricultural heritage.

Canadian farmers grow better food for you through seed breeding

Would you be surprised to learn Canada does not produce enough vegetable seed to meet farmers' needs? The vast majority of vegetable seeds Canadian farmers plant are imported, year after year. For organic farmers, seeds bred to grow well in Canadian organic conditions are even harder to find.

With your support, this is starting to change. Our Canadian program, The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, teams up with farmers across the country to harness the power of seeds. Together, we're breeding new organic varieties of wheat, oats, potatoes and corn. We're testing 400 varieties of vegetable seeds for local conditions. We're also training interns who then bring their new abilities back to their farms.

Former intern Rebecca Ivanoff is now working with farmers Greta Kryger, Annie Richard and Katherine Rothermal (above) to breed a flavourful new red pepper adapted to organic farms in southern Ontario. Within a few seasons, this bred-in-Canada pepper variety – grown without synthetic pesticides, adapted to Ontario's growing conditions and delicious – could land on your plate!

IN 2017

14,000+
YOUNG FARMERS IN OUR
GLOBAL PROGRAM

61
COMMUNITY SEED
BANKS

330
IN-HOME SEED
BANKS

18,000+
WOMEN FARMERS IN
OUR GLOBAL PROGRAM

30
SEED SECURITY
ASSESSMENTS

184
CANADIAN FARMERS WORKING TO
ADAPT OR BREED LOCAL SEEDS

"We are together, like grains on a corn cob."

- María Josefina Zambrana, from Nicaragua



Photo: Blanca Iris Castro Birones

Josefina Zambrana (far left) stands with Beatriz Oliver, USC Canada program manager, and fellow co-op members Juana, Angela and Flora, in Pueblo Nuevo, Nicaragua.

USC Canada seeks to change the food system so farmers today can live better lives, so the food on your plate can be healthier for you and the planet, and so tomorrow's children can grow up in a fair and sustainable world.

Our vision: an equitable world sustained by just and resilient food systems.

Funding our work

Revenue \$7,132,483

- Global Affairs Canada: 43.6%
- Support from general public: 31.2%
(including through USC Foundation)
- Other (including investment income): 25.2%



Expenses \$7,132,290

- Program expenses: 87.3%
- Non-program expenses: 12.7%



Visit usc-canada.org/accountability for complete audited financial statements of both USC Canada and the USC Foundation. You can also call 1.800.565.6872 and press 1 for fundraising or email fundraising@usc-canada.org.


Leave a Legacy


Over the years, hundreds of caring Canadians have generously left gifts in their wills to USC Canada. These gifts are deposited into the Lotta Hitschmanova Legacy Fund of the USC Foundation, and are prudently invested to support farming communities for generations to come.

Visit usc-canada.org/donate for more information about leaving a legacy gift, or contact **Brian McFarlane at 1.800.565.6872 ext. 249**.

DONATE TODAY

We can't continue this life-changing work without your help.

 Donate online. It's easy, fast, safe and secure.
usc-canada.org/donate

 Call our toll-free number: 1.800.565.6872

 Please mail your cheque to USC Canada,
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   @usccanada | *How we grow our food matters*

USC CANADA 

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Charity registration No. 11927-6129-RR-001

USC Canada was founded in 1945
by Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova as the
Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.