

A photograph of a woman and a child in a rural setting. The woman, on the right, is wearing a red patterned shirt and holding a large bundle of ginger roots. The child, on the left, is wearing a red shirt and holding a baby. The background shows lush greenery and trees.

**HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD FOR EVERY COMMUNITY**



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## OUR GLOBAL SEEDS OF SURVIVAL PROGRAM: TOWARD TIPPING POINTS

What a year! 2015 marked our 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. With your generous donations, we completed a foundational five-year plan based on biodiversity and agroecology. These are central pillars of our Seeds of Survival (SoS) approach to feeding people well across our ever-fragile planet. The SoS approach puts the power to grow sustainable seeds and healthy food back into the hands of family farmers. Biodiversity and agroecology help these farmers face mounting barriers to growing food: soil erosion and degradation, loss of seeds adapted to their region, and water scarcity. Our founder, the late Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova, would be proud!

As these pages illustrate, through partnerships with impressive local organizations and extraordinary women, men and youth farmers and Indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Canada, these family farmers are now holding more than their own. They are transforming marginal landscapes and creeping deserts into green productive spaces and building communities with purpose and drive. They are making headway in preserving precious plant genetic diversity and building livelihoods that combine the best of local know-how with formal science. This is what we mean by agroecology, a farming systems' approach to growing food that is finally gaining attention in high places, such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. With agroecology

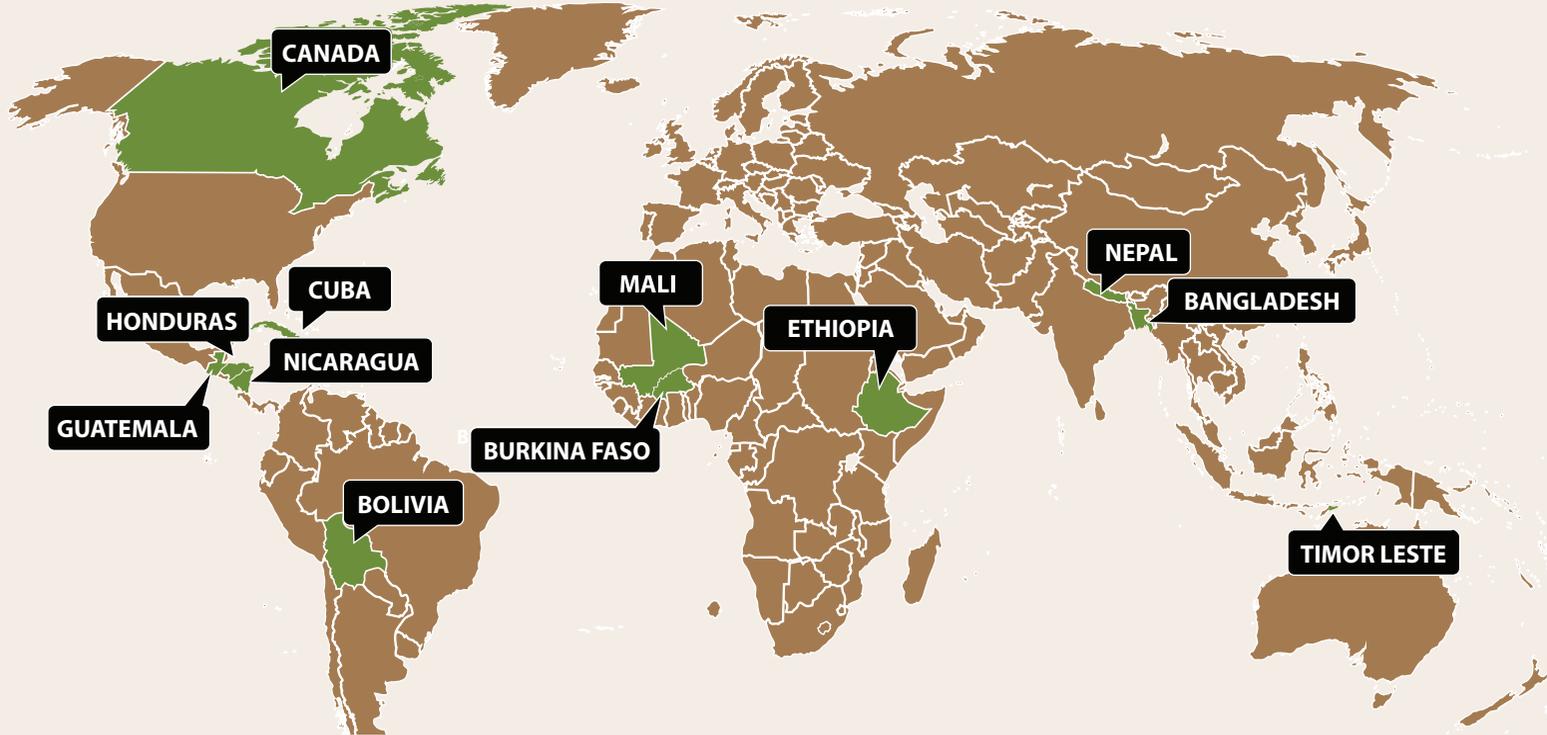
methods, farmers additionally help to mitigate climate change, reducing green house gases by drawing carbon back into soils that nurture life-giving plants.

The farmers you support are also coming together to challenge policies that do not recognize their needs and rights. They are working for community resilience, control of their seeds, and access to land and water. This collaboration helps them tackle increasing climate extremes and shocks.

In 2015, the Government of Canada (Global Affairs Canada) expressed their confidence in USC Canada with a renewed and generous financial commitment for the next five years. With matching donations from you, and additional resources from family foundations, such as The W.Garfield Weston Foundation and the R. Howard Webster Foundation, we hope to take our Seeds of Survival Program to the next level – to tipping points that will deepen and spread our impact. On behalf of the farm families and communities we support, and all of us here at 56 Sparks Street, a very warm thank-you for your ever-generous contributions!

*Susan Walsh*  
*Executive Director*

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK AROUND THE WORLD



## RICH IN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Bangladesh struggles with disparities and political turmoil. Young women in rural areas are particularly vulnerable, their rights too often ignored, even within their own households. Land is scarce - in 2010, only 1% of program participants had access to even a small garden plot.

**Through the Seeds of Survival program, you support 10,000 young women in north-western Bangladesh.**

Your donations make training available for young women in eco-friendly farming and seed saving. They not only learn to conserve valuable seed, soil and water, but also have the chance to improve their livelihoods.

The establishment of community and home seed banks has also generated a wider interest in the conservation of seed diversity.

**Seed-saving by the households of these young women has increased in five years from 19% to 91%. A Model Seed Farmer program is also now in place. Last year 138 participants (100 young women and 38 young men) shared their seed-saving skills with others and have become seed ambassadors for their communities.**

As their valuable skills have grown so too has respect for these young women among their families and neighbours. They are the inspiration that is changing entire communities.

*Our Partners: Samajik Kollan Songstha (SKS),  
Udayankur Seba Sangstha (USS)*

*With your support, 26-year-old Firoza Begum grows 23 different vegetables.  
And she saves seeds from 15 of them!*

BANGLADESH



## A COUNTRY OF BREATHTAKING DIVERSITY

Years of introduced farming practices have left Nepal vulnerable to soil erosion and food insecurity. Once food self-sufficient, Nepal has become increasingly dependent on food imports and is susceptible to price shocks. USC Canada has been working in Nepal since 1977. Today, your donations help enhance food security by promoting greater seed diversity and ecological farming.

**Since 2010, 75% of our Nepal program has had an impressive boost in food production. Key healthy crops like beans and broad-leaf mustard doubled.** In remote Humla there has been an 18% increase in the number of households able to meet their needs with nutritious foods because of training and starter seed kits for their gardens.

Farmer-scientist research activities such as plant variety selection, seed management and natural soil enrichment have paid off. Last year more than 320 farmers, at least 200 of them women, assessed and tested multiple varieties of rice, wheat, maize, millet, greens, oil seed, eggplant, chili and legumes in 20 sites.

**Thanks to donors like you, USC Canada raised \$167,000 in response to the Nepal earthquake so farming families could recover, rebuild, and get back to their fields.**

***Our Partner:** Through a new central partnership with Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research, and Development (LI-BIRD) USC Canada works with 4 longstanding NGO partners: SHIP- Nepal, Parivartan, Dalit Welfare Organization, Machhapuchare Development Organization.*

*“Relearning how to farm in a way that supports greater biodiversity is exciting,” says Jit Bahadur Singer. You support farmers like Jit so they can become organic leaders in their communities.*

NEPAL



PHOTO: E. MANTHA

## IN THE WAKE OF A DEVASTATING WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

In 2002, the citizens of Timor Leste found themselves struggling to restore damaged landscapes and rebuild a healthy food supply. Almost a decade later, the vast majority still experienced up to 14 weeks of food shortages.

**Today, 75% of the households we work with have reduced the shortages to just 4 weeks a year.** The reasons for this remarkable change: **communities restoring the health of their land and soil, and more diverse, high quality seed.**

Terracing, agroforestry, and composting have transformed once barren landscapes into fertile food-producing gardens. **Last year, a force of 1,664 women, men, and young people turned another 36 hectares into agricultural land.** Farmer seed exchanges have created access to

vegetable and crop varieties that come to harvest during the critical hunger weeks period. New income-generating skills include the production of dried and other food products that bring in income to buy food.

With your support, our dedicated local team has formed a respected independent organization: RAEBIA. The Timor Leste government even looks to Director Xisto Martins and USC Canada for expertise while writing national seed policies. **Neighbouring communities who see the achievements of RAEBIA's field work with farmers are copying their methods - and spreading success!**

*Our Partner: Resilient Agriculture and Economy through Biodiversity Action (RAEBIA)*

*Your support helped make this Community Agrobiodiversity Resource Centre possible. Thank you!*

TIMOR LESTE



## A GENTLY ROLLING LANDSCAPE, A HARSH ENVIRONMENT

Burkina Faso is highly vulnerable to soil infertility, unexpected dry spells and drought. Since March 2012, the arrival of thousands of refugees fleeing conflict in Mali has helped increase levels of hunger in this fragile landscape.

USC Canada supports programs in 15 communities in northern Soum Province through the work of APN Sahel (*Association pour la protection de la nature au Sahel*). They focus on rehabilitation of degraded lands, agro-biodiversity, and strengthening the skills of women, men, and young farmers. Last year 137 women received technical support for the production of key crops such as gombo, peanut, bambara groundnut, fonio, and sesame. These crops constitute the main income of 59% of the women from 569 households. **Over the 5-year program your donations have helped support 2,800 women!**

**Since 2010, your support helped more than double the program's reach to 8,492 people in 15 villages.** Farmers have better access to good seed with the establishment of Community Seed Banks in 10 villages. In 2015 a new field seed bank, field school and a nursery was added in the village of Bani. It is enhancing the community's nutrition and financial situation.

**In spite of increasing climate shocks, 80% of households have reported a 25% increase in the yields of key crops.** That's what happens when farmers have support to naturally enrich their soils and plant local seeds they have adapted to their landscape.

*Our Partner: Association pour la protection de la nature au Sahel (APN Sahel)*

*Donors like you support crucial seed banks, like this one where Salimata Gondé is manager. Thank you!*

BURKINA FASO



PHOTO: M. SETTLE

## A WORLD CENTRE OF ORIGIN AND DIVERSITY

Ethiopia is the birthplace of our global Seeds of Survival program, established in the wake of a tragic famine 28 years ago. The work you support gives farmers access to diverse, local seeds, allowing them to be scientists in their fields, breeding and selecting crops to adapt them to an ever changing climate.

The establishment of **Community Seed Banks (CSBs)** with our partner EOSA has been central to this program and an important model for our global program. **Since 2010, the number of CSBs in our Ethiopia program has tripled; farmer membership in community seed banks has exploded from 807 to 2795.** Women and youth groups have turned them into community hubs providing multiple

services: seeds, meeting spaces, and training. Women and youth quickly see the benefits: increased knowledge, skills, and confidence.

**CSBs and youth groups now have more female members and have, on average, women holding 40% of the leadership positions.**

The Ethiopian government is now using EOSA's expertise to create a community seed bank network in the south where food insecurity has been on the rise.

*Our Partner: Ethio-Organic Seed Action (EOSA)*

*Your generous support helps keep Community Seed Banks up and running! Sid Yasin Endro is chairman of a CSB in Agamsa where villagers can access seeds and training.*

ETHIOPIA



## RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Drought can devastate farmers - it can sometimes take three plantings to yield just one crop. When rains do come, they can often fall all at once, flooding fields and drowning parched plants. Your support helps produce locally adapted seeds capable of weathering this extreme environment.

Your donations are at work in 31 communities in the Douentza and Mopti regions and 14 villages in Safo, just outside Bamako, the capital city.

Conflict and political instability have seriously affected farmers the Douentza region. **But thanks to farmer networks that your support has helped establish, planting, harvesting and climate adaptation continued.** Incredibly, the network of Community Seed Banks even added 2 more (for a total of 9).

**Food security also increased in Douentza and Mopti from 17% in 2010 to 24.33% 2015. In Safo, the numbers of food secure households has climbed to 40% today compared to just 19% in 2012.**

The number of women-led market gardens, communities rebuilding soil health, and income-generating activity groups have all more than doubled in the past 5 years.

*Our Partners: USC-Mali and CAB Dèmèso*

*Abdoulaye Diarra and Nachata Fane, farmers from different areas of the country, evaluate crops they are testing in new regions.*

MALI



PHOTO: S. PERRY

## A STRIKING LANDSCAPE OF CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Andes have sustained numerous indigenous and rural communities for centuries. But loss of crop varieties, severe land degradation, inequity, and growing dependency on industrial farming inputs and practices have contributed to often severe levels of poverty and hunger.

With your support, farmers in 66 communities are conserving soil and water, and turning unique crops into nutritious foods and herbal teas to sell. **Your donations helped plant 38,860 trees and set up diversity gardens maintaining 65 potato, 28 oca, and 26 corn varieties.** There are 60 new small irrigation systems thanks to 161 water tanks that capture mountain run-off and rainwater for thirsty soils.

*Thanks to you, 13-year-old Claudia can show off the diverse vegetables she helps her father grow. That cabbage she has would never have grown at that altitude (4,000 metres) a few years ago.*

More and more families are able to eat fresh food year round.

A new small business enterprise that joined two farmers' cooperatives together in 2015 will multiply opportunities for families to market their produce. **Already, 230 households reported increased incomes due to the sales of their oca and herbal products.**

Our local partner is also playing an important role in the certification of organic products. The peer-review system they helped launch is now a respected guide for discerning consumers.

*Our Partner: Programa de Desarrollo Integral Interdisciplinario (PRODII)*

BOLIVIA



## CUBA'S TRANSITION TO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Going organic was a necessary response to the food crisis that gripped the nation in the early 1990s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and a longstanding trade embargo had severely constrained industrialized agricultural practices on the island and the availability of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Cuban farmers turned this into an opportunity to shift towards organic production with numerous environmental, social and economic gains.

With Canadian and Swiss government support, USC Canada joined Cuban colleagues within the country's national agricultural research institute (INCA) to help organic farmers diversify the number and quality of the seeds at the heart of successful organic practices.

Recent highlights include:

- USC Canada's seed security specialist, Dr. Pratap Shrestha, trained our Cuban partners on community-led Seed Security Assessments. Cuban farmers have successfully implemented Dr. Shrestha's training in three regions.
- Two farmer-to-farmer exchanges in Canada and Ethiopia between Cuban and Canadian farmers and Cuban and Ethiopian farmers brought farmers together across continents to learn from each other and share their deep knowledge of seeds and diversity.

*Our Partner: Program for Local Agricultural Innovation (PIAL)*

*Your donations help build on years of work by Cuban farmers toward a healthy, organic country.*

CUBA



PHOTO: M. ROU

## FOOD SECURITY DEPENDS ON SMALL FARMS

80% of Hondurans live on rugged mountain hillsides. Small-scale farmers must make their living on thin, eroding soils under more and more extreme weather conditions.

**You support more than 800 farmers in 61 northern communities, organized into farmer research teams (CIALs).**

With the support of our partner FIPAH, farmers have developed 6 new varieties of maize and 7 varieties of beans. In 2014, Don Rey, named for a local farmer, was the first farmer-scientist bean variety released at the national level. This is a breakthrough based on a decade of collaboration between farmers, researchers and the government in Honduras.

In the last year, the Honduran government named FIPAH and the farmer-researcher teams as key partners

for seed and technology development. It is timely. Dry conditions in the last two years have led to significant crop losses and disease outbreaks across the country. **But the farmers involved in our SoS program have been less affected. Their average maize yields actually increased by 56%, thanks to your support!**

Program support for youth is crucial as lasting impacts depend on a new generation of young farmers willing to stay and work in their communities. Out of 130 CIALs, 37 of them today are run by young people and provide a range of training and help forming co-ops for marketing opportunities. Youth participation has tripled since 2010!

***Our Partner:** The Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers (FIPAH)*

*Thanks to your support, farmers like Magdalena Flores can work with networks of other farmers to find creative farming solutions.*

HONDURAS



## GUATEMALA

In 2015 USC Canada added two new countries to our global Seeds of Survival program, responding to Global Affairs Canada's interest in spreading and strengthening our farmer research program in Central America. We look forward working with two strong new partners in these countries.



*Marcos Gaspar in Guatemala.*

ASOCUCH is an association of indigenous farmers' cooperatives that works on marketing, transformation and product sales. With USC Canada's SoS resources, ASOCUCH plans to pilot the farmer-research committees that have proven so successful in Honduras. Another important goal this year is to support women in their efforts to occupy at least 40% to 50% of leadership positions within their cooperatives, and to encourage the creation of women-led enterprises.

*Our Partner:* Asociación de Organizaciones de Los Cuchumatanes (ASOCUCH)

## NICARAGUA



*Marisol, a farmer, standing beneath her squash crop.*

A leader in Nicaragua's 2,300-strong cooperative movement, FECODESA, a federation of co-ops, focuses on the conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity, organizational development, and the production and commercialization of seeds and grains. This year the organization plans to pilot farmer-research committees and expand farmer exchanges that promote the conservation of local varieties and the adoption of agroecological practices.

*Our Partner:* Federación de Cooperativas para el Desarrollo (FECODESA)

## OUR CANADIAN SEEDS OF SURVIVAL PROGRAM

The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security addresses the need and demand for locally adapted, biodiverse seed. We are building community and capacity for a Canadian seed system that is resilient in the face of climate change. Working with farmers, seed producers, researchers and regional partners, the program promotes agroecology and keeps knowledge and seeds in the hands of the people who grow our food.

Highlights from the past year include:

- Building partnerships with 66 groups at regional, national and international levels.
- Leading 29 training sessions on diverse topics attended by more than 1,500 people.
- Supporting 92 producers growing and observing 245 varieties of seeds from Seeds of Diversity Canada,

under a wide spectrum of conditions. A portion of the seeds were then returned to Seeds of Diversity to keep them widely available to the public.

- Participating in 123 Seedy Saturdays, workshops, and conferences.
- Leading a participatory research initiative in partnership with the University of Manitoba and growers across the country. Farmer-selected varieties of wheat outperformed standard varieties in yield, early vigour, regional adaptation, and micronutrient content.
- Helping our partners leverage our resources to raise \$2.1 million in matching funds

For more information please visit,  
**[seedsecurity.ca](http://seedsecurity.ca)**

*Our Partner: Seeds of Diversity Canada*

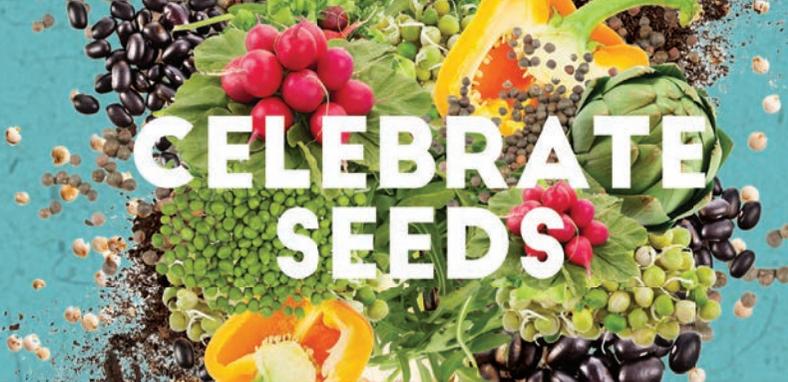
*Shannon Jones of Broadfork Farm, works to scale up organic seed production in New Brunswick.*



## STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF FARMERS

During the last year USC Canada worked closely with our partners, both in programming and in policy work, to ensure that the voices of those who produce food are also central to making food and agriculture policies. Our staff and partners actively participated in civil society mechanisms that engage with the Committee for World Food Security, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture, and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. In Canada, we also co-organized a public event called Eat, Think, Vote (part of more than 60 events across the country, coordinated by Food Secure Canada) to invite all candidates running for office in the October Federal Elections to articulate the policies related to food and agriculture in their party platforms. Finally, we maintained Seedmap.org as an online portal on seeds, food and biodiversity.

PHOTO: F. AHMED



# CELEBRATE SEEDS

## REACHING OUT TO YOU - AND YOU ARE REACHING BACK!

In February 2015 USC Canada launched the I Am a Seed Saver campaign. Amy Millan (Stars), Leslie Feist, Sam Roberts, Jim Cuddy (Blue Rodeo), Tim Baker (Hey Rosetta!), Ian Thornley (Big Wreck), Tim Kingsbury (Arcade Fire) and Bruce Cockburn lent their voices to help explore the crucial link between local seeds and diverse, healthy, planet-friendly, local food. We took our Celebrate Seeds theme to 36 Seedy Saturdays across the country and 12 food or gardening events and conferences.

And we had some amazing help from many of you who volunteered your time and energy with us: 220 volunteers were involved in tabling, giving presentations about our work, helping out at our Ottawa office, and fundraising through our Run for Biodiversity events.

Overall, this year, we estimate we engaged 8,000 Canadians in direct conversations, and had more than 85,000 Canadian get to know USC Canada during a wide-range of events.

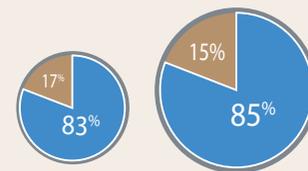
## USC CANADA STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	636,848
Advances to partners	214,549
Short-term Investments	334,923
Capital assets	57,233
	<b>1,243,553</b>
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	299,603
Due to USC Foundation	200,641
Deferred contributions	403,376
	<b>903,620</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>339,933</b>
<b>Statement of Revenue and Expenses</b>	
Global Affairs Canada	2,481,450
Support form general public	893,810
USC Foundation	825,000
Kenoli Foundation	13,000
Other (including investment income)	1,872,599
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>6,085,859</b>
Program expenses	5,161,256
Non-program expenses	922,970
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>6,084,226</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>1,633</b>

## USC FOUNDATION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	311,745
Due from USC Canada	200,641
Investments	7,637,740
	<b>8,150,126</b>
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	12,130
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>8,137,996</b>
<b>Net Assets Comprised Of</b>	
Lotta Hitschmanova Legacy Fund	7,620,974
Stewart Moore Endowment	217,606
Manson & Mary Toynbee Endowment	201,245
Kurt & Evelyn (Russell) Haas Endowment	93,171
Rick McTaggart Memorial Fund	5,000
	<b>8,137,996</b>
<b>Statement of Revenue and Expenses</b>	
Bequests	178,931
Investments	564,281
Donations	53,146
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>796,358</b>
Administrative & Fundraising Expenses	112,419
Contribution to USC Canada	825,000
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>937,419</b>
<b>Excess (deficit) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>-141,061</b>

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



2013-14

2014-15



For complete audited financial statements, visit [usc-canada.org/accountability](http://usc-canada.org/accountability) or contact us by phone at **1.800.565.6872** and press **1** for fundraising or by email at: [fundraising@usc-canada.org](mailto:fundraising@usc-canada.org)

# THANK YOU!

We're very fortunate to have the backing of thousands of individual donors, businesses, corporations, foundations, employee funds, and United Ways from across Canada. We'd also like to acknowledge the crucial and ongoing support of **Global Affairs Canada**, the **R. Howard Webster Foundation**, the **Manitoba and Saskatchewan**

## Special thanks also goes to:

- All our Unitarian friends, volunteers and supporters
- Community Foundations from across Canada and United States
- Employee Funds
- United Way Chapters
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- International Development Research Centre, Partnership Division
- Ken and Oli Johnstone Foundation
- Lievre Valley Investments

**Councils for International Cooperation.** Finally, a big thank-you to **The W. Garfield Weston Foundation** and the organic farmers and local seed enthusiasts across Canada who are helping make The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security a success!

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- The Laura L.Tiberti Charitable Foundation
- The Newall Family Foundation Trust
- The Sisters of St Joseph
- The Slight Family Foundation
- The Stephen Ross & Mary O'Riordan Family Foundation
- The Solomon Dawit Foundation
- The Stone Store Natural Foods
- Victoria Foundation (Doreen and Bernard Crook Fund)
- West End Well
- Woodbridge Investments Corporation

# YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

By supporting our Seeds of Survival program, you're helping farmers around the world to grow good food for their families in ways that are kind to the environment and that enhance biodiversity.

## Donate Today



**Donate online.** It's easy, fast and secure!  
**Just visit : [usc-canada.org/donate](https://usc-canada.org/donate)**



**Call our toll-free number 1.800.565.6872**



**Mail your cheque.** Send your donation to  
USC Canada, 56 Sparks Street, Suite 600  
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Every dollar you donate to USC Canada's international work will be matched with three dollars, thanks to Global Affairs Canada.

## 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 Hirschmanova Legacy Fund of the USC Foundation, and are prudently invested to support farming communities for generations to come.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters who donated to our Legacy Fund, \$825,000 was distributed last year in support of farmers.

For more information about leaving a legacy gift visit [DrLotta.ca](http://DrLotta.ca), or contact Brian McFarlane at 1.800.565.6872 ext. 249

*I love USC! You combine commanding knowledge and compassionate ingenuity.*

*– Frances Moore Lappé,  
author Diet for a Small Planet*

*Seeds are our future. Their protection must be kept in the public consciousness. Thank you for your work!*

*– KS, Ottawa*

*Seeds of Survival is doing essential work. I really value the fact that it builds human capacity in local communities at the same time that food security issues are addressed.*

*– JH, Saskatchewan*



**YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR KIDS  
LIKE ASIS AND RIMA IN NEPAL**

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PHOTO: K. CLARK

## USC CANADA

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**Charity Registration No.** 11927-6129-RR-0001

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