



under the sun

NEWS FROM THE PRIMATE'S WORLD RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

AGRICULTURE



Gary and Ron Weir

Growing in faith

Canadian Foodgrains Bank connects farmers with churches, to provide food for people in need

BY JANICE BIEHN
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

IT IS MID-NOVEMBER and Gary Weir is waiting for the right day to harvest his grain corn. It has been a particularly wet season and the crop needs to dry more before it can be harvested. He also has to wait for the combine that he hires to be available.

Squares of farmland spread across the Ottawa Valley like a quilt, including Fitzroy Harbour where Gary and his wife Pat live. The village sits on the Ottawa River about 41 km northwest of Parliament Hill as the crow flies. Here Gary farms 200 acres of corn, soybeans and hay.

Just 40 minutes east of Fitzroy Harbour is Bells Corners, a suburban community of the City of Ottawa. If you popped into Christ Church Bells Corners (CCBC) for a Sunday morning service, you'd see a bustling suburban church where annual offerings are tithed, yielding approximately \$30,000

for mission and outreach.

For the past three years, CCBC has allocated \$2,000 to the Weirs to farm 14 acres of their 200 acres. This money is used for fertilizer or other input costs. The Weirs in turn donate the earnings to The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's account in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. It is a circle of giving that grows the gift.

Weir and his brother, Ron, had always been dairy farmers, but in 2009, they decided to also plant soybeans as a cash crop. "We wanted to give a bit to the Foodgrains Bank so we just sent in a donation from our earnings." In 2012 the Weirs' own congregation, St. George's in West Carleton, got involved. The year after it became a parish outreach project when St. Thomas', Woodlawn began participating as well. Since then the parish has helped with field cultivation, promotion and advocating for the Foodgrains Bank, fundraising and monetary donations.

By 2014, the project became the West Carleton Foodgrains Bank Growing Project and CCBC began sending their donation to help cover some of the field input costs. "This project is very empowering for the Parish," says the Reverend Kathryn Otley, CCBC's incumbent. "It gives a way to get involved in addition to just

giving money, as important as that is. CCBC's parishioners built a sign for the growing project and the project creates opportunities for the parish and also the Diocese of Ottawa's PWRDF committee to increase relationships and understanding between city and rural parishes."

"We're very pleased with the amount that CCBC gives us," says Weir. "The project wouldn't be possible without it." Weir notes costs are further contained through the donation of seeds from Bit-A-Luk Farms and weed control by SynAgri.

Weir plants the seeds and tends the crops over the growing season. Sometimes he pays for "custom work" for harvesting and/or planting. Sometimes he "works up" the soil for corn crops himself, and also subscribes to a no-till method of seeding for soybeans, which prevents soil erosion.

By late fall the crops are ready for harvest; corn is often sold for ethanol and soybeans for industrial use. That

\$2,000 investment from CCBC, plus donations of approximately \$1,000 from St. George's and St. Thomas', will result in a \$9,000 donation to PWRDF's Foodgrains Bank account.

Putting the money to use

Even though the crops from the growing project don't usually turn into food, the earnings will help feed people around the world. PWRDF withdraws funds from this account to participate in emergency food distribution programs in places such as South Sudan, Bangladesh and Haiti where the Foodgrains Bank is working. It allows PWRDF to get relief to desperate parts of the world quickly and efficiently. And even better, these programs receive a 4:1 match from the Canadian government, so the growing project's \$9,000 is effectively \$45,000. That's quite a return on the original \$3,000 church donations!

See *Room to Grow*, p. 2

THE AGRICULTURE ISSUE

As the saying goes, farming is an act of faith. Read how agriculture plays a key role across many of PWRDF's programs, from Canadian engagement and climate change to gender equality and poverty reduction.



How a Grow Hope Project works

PWRDF invites Anglicans to engage with farmers in a growing project. Your PWRDF Diocesan Representative through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's regional representative can identify an existing local growing

project near you that would welcome participation. Or start a new **Grow Hope** project by sponsoring acres with Anglican farmers interested in donating some of their crop to PWRDF's work around the world.



1. An individual, parish or youth group would like to support a Grow Hope project by sponsoring an acre or part of an acre. They make their donation to the parish or the diocese, depending on who is the main contact with the farmer. (Tax receipts are issued by the parish or diocese as usual.)



2. The farmer grows the crop.



3. The farmer and parish group get to know each other. Parishioner field trips or work visits can be set up.



4. Once the crop is harvested and sold, the money is donated back to the parish.



5. The diocese or parish transfers the donation to PWRDF's equity account at the Foodgrains Bank, indicating which Grow Hope project the funds are from. (Secure payments can be made easily online, by calling PWRDF or by cheque.)

Image: Natykach Natalia

Climate change a daily reality in Tanzania

BY GEOFF STRONG
PWRDF DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE
DIOCESE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

CONSERVATION agriculture depends on good soil management through three guiding principles:

- minimum soil disturbance
- permanent soil coverage (e.g., with mulch)
- crop rotation

This has become even more important in the face of climate change that is occurring in large parts of Africa due to desertification (which is defined as an already dry land becoming even drier). While Tanzania has not been as adversely affected as other east African countries, it is nevertheless threatened by drought from both the north (Somalia and Kenya) and south (Mozambique and Malawi) as global warming pushes boundaries of both the Sahara-Arabian and Kalahari Deserts.

Not surprisingly then, the first stages of drought are being felt in the Masasi District of southeast Tanzania, where I found myself last May. I was part of a PWRDF delegation to the Diocese of Masasi. Our purpose was to observe development projects in Food Security and Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH). Our visit coincided with the start of the dry season in southeast Tanzania, which has a Tropical Savannah wet climate. Crops were also maturing



Watch Joyce Mtauka talk about her experience learning improved farming techniques in "Joyce, Profile of a Tanzanian Farmer" at [youtube.com/pwrdf](https://www.youtube.com/pwrdf). PHOTO: SUZANNE RUMSEY

during this period, so that any impact of drought, and how farmers were coping, could be assessed.

Farmers appeared to be following the three guiding principles above, and farmers in three of these villages (Ruponda, Mkumba, and Ndonmoni) grew a variety of crops, including cassava, maize and rice, which they rotate annually. Most crops appeared to be maturing well. Healthy harvests of cashew nuts and coconuts were evident. While we encountered no rainfall during our stay, post-inspection of on-line data indicated that most soil moisture in this area was close to normal for

that time of year. Given the droughts being experienced by most neighbouring countries, it is imperative that Masasi farm communities continue their current soil management practices.

This is an economically depressed region of Tanzania. Mtwara on the coast has the only commercial airport, there is no railway, and roads are extremely poor at best. Farmers in this region certainly cannot afford vehicles in any event. These factors hamper attempts to get produce to market, so that most marketing is local. The same impediments apply to animal husbandry. A few isolated herds of up to 50 goats

or cows were observed while driving through the district, but individual families in the villages visited owned no more than single or pairs of cows or goats. PWRDF support to the Chip Agro-Vet Centre in Nachingwea provides ongoing assistance with a local source of seeds, fertilizers, herbicides and veterinary supplies, which would not otherwise be readily available.

Despite the set-backs and extensive poverty in Masasi District, funds donated through PWRDF have clearly raised their standards of living in less than five years. Farmers who have received PWRDF support were visibly grateful, proud to discuss their gains, and everywhere we were greeted warmly by song, dance, and 'karibu' (welcome).

Room to grow

Continued from p. 1

When the Foodgrains Bank started 35 years ago, the government's policy stipulated that foreign aid must be spent on Canadian grown food. That meant the Foodgrains Bank shipped most grain from Canada to where it was needed overseas. But in 2008, the government changed its policy, making it possible for the Foodgrains Bank to buy food closer to the area of need in the developing world.

Today there are 250 community growing projects across Canada from Foodgrains Bank member denominations. Growing projects happen when a number of farmers and community members come together to grow a crop, says the Rev. Cathy Campbell, PWRDF's liaison on the Foodgrains Bank board. 'It's not usually a single farm or farmer registering as a growing project, although that's how the Weirs have done it. In 2015 and 2016, 12 of these growing projects included contributions to PWRDF's account. There's definitely room to grow.'

Since starting their project, the Weirs and their parish, with the help of CCBC and local businesses have contributed \$60,000 to PWRDF's account.



'Sisters, keep the seeds in your hands!'

Women farmers in Bangladesh

by Suzanne Rumsey
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OFFICER,
PWRDF

BANGLADESH, like Canada, is a country rich in biodiversity, at one point boasting more than 15,000 varieties of rice. Yet thousands of those varieties were lost when a limited number of 'higher yielding varieties' of rice were offered to Bangladeshi farmers. It was this so-called Green Revolution, coupled with the devastating floods of 1987-88, that brought farmers in the Tangail region of Bangladesh to PWRDF partner UBINIG to ask for help.

Farida Akhter, founder and director of UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternative) based in Dhaka, says it became clear that the effects of the floods were more devastating because of the farmers' dependence on a reduced diversity of rice seeds. "They could not afford to bear the additional costs of fertilizers and pesticides," she says.

The farming communities of Bangladesh who were practising biodiversity-based ecological agriculture joined together to form The New Agricultural Movement, or Nayakrishi Andolon. The Bangla word 'krishi', Farida



In the summer of 2016, PWRDF welcomed Farida Akhter to a workshop in British Columbia to help us make connections between biodiversity and food security issues in Bangladesh and here in Canada. PHOTO: SUZANNE RUMSEY

explains, means "cultivation of the relation between human beings and nature that transforms both and functions as an integral whole, as the single organism... It is an act of reciprocal nurturing."

Another casualty of the Green Revolution was the role of women as seed bearers. Farida repeats the rallying cry of a Bangladeshi women farmer at a Nayakrishi rally: "Sisters, keep the seeds in your hands!" Central to the movement is the Nayakrishi Seed Network (NSN) – a web of household, and community seed huts and 'wealth centres'. Their goal is to

keep seeds in farmers' hands because "control over seed is the lifeline of the farming community and ensures the command of the farmers over the agrarian production cycle," says Farida. "Strengthening farmers' seed system is essential for innovation and knowledge generation."

Nayakrishi Andolon is enabling women to reclaim the role, and thus, return to them a certain measure of social and economic power. According to Farida there are now 300,000 farming households in Bangladesh practising Nayakrishi. More than 3,000 varieties of rice seeds are now collected and catalogued by the NSN, along with a host of fruit, vegetable, cereal, pulse and plant varieties.

However, despite Nayakrishi Andolon's best efforts, there are fewer and fewer options for Farida and other farmers in Bangladesh, other than a limited number of genetically modified (GM) seeds. This is a global phenomenon. In the face of this global reality, how does humanity continue to be 'seed bearers'? There are no easy answers, but the women farmers of Nayakrishi Andolon in Bangladesh, are an inspiration and example of resistance and hope.



Kasiita Robert and his siblings work in their cabbage garden. PHOTO: SEND A COW UGANDA

Education restores health and reduces poverty

'My child would not have died if Send a Cow Uganda had come earlier'

RUTH and Vincent live in Mitwizi village as members of the Tukwatirewamu Orphan's group, whose 30 members all care for orphans. They have six children ranging from seven to 17, but there used to be seven.

"My children often fell sick and were ever anemic," says Ruth. "One fell sick so often she eventually died. When we joined Send a Cow Uganda (SACU), and started attending training – especially about feeding and hygiene – I realized that my daughter would not have died if I was applying what the project is teaching us today."

PWRDF recently gave SACU a grant of \$21,000 to support an ongoing program in Rakai, which has the highest proportion of children under 18 who have been double orphaned, mostly from HIV and AIDS related causes.

Before joining SACU, Ruth and Vincent used traditional farming methods on their three acres of land. But their nutrition was

very poor and the children were malnourished. Their income was very low because they had less produce to sell and their medical expenses were high.

With SACU, they learned to apply sustainable farming methods like mulching, contour digging and intercropping. They grow coffee, matooke, maize, beans and ground nuts for both cash and food, earning 80,000 to 100,000 Ugandan shillings (\$28-\$35 Cdn) each month. Ruth says their yields will increase even more.

Kasiita Robert, 22, and his brother Matoyu Gerald, 17, are caregivers to three younger siblings in Kibonzi Village.

Kasiita was recently elected a Community Resource Person (CRP) with SACU and received training in sustainable organic agriculture, social development and improved animal management.

Now the family grows vegetables around their compound. They eat at least two meals a day and have money to buy basic home items like paraffin, soap, salt and even sugar. "I never thought that we would have sugar in this home but now we are able to buy it," he says.

Thanks to you

ANGLICAN PARISHES ACROSS CANADA
ARE GETTING INVOLVED WITH PWRDF –
AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



Rohingya relief

Folks at **St. Anselm's, Vancouver** dedicated their annual PWRDF Day to learning more about Rohingya refugees. Shirin Theophilus prepared prayers and a skit in place of the sermon. Parishioners brought to life the Rohingya Muslim's plight in Myanmar, depicting a family and their grandparents running from their burnt down village. The freewill offering of \$1,250 was donated in time to take advantage of the government's Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund matching program.



It's pie time

Volunteers at **St. John the Evangelist in Corner Brook, N.L.** rolled out the dough and then the dough rolled in. To honour late parishioner Eileen Churchill, bakers made 700 pies from Churchill's apple tree for the second year in a row (last year was 500), then sold them to raise money for PWRDF and a local food bank.



Party on!

Once the PWRDF learnin' at **St. John the Evangelist in Middle Sackville, N.B.** was out of the way, revellers got down to business at the church's second annual variety show in benefit of PWRDF this past May, organized by Sue Heenan. Barbershop Quartet music from Octopi, and music from Cape Breton and Newfoundland brought the house down, while \$1,000 was raised for PWRDF!

Kids care

Sunday School children in the Diocese of Ottawa's Parish of Huntley had the job of spending \$645 in PWRDF's World of Gifts guide. "Are you sure you adults should trust us kids with spending that much money?" asked one student. The congregation gave them a whole-hearted yes and the kids set to work with Monopoly money and a copy of the guide. "Many of us adults expected them to buy a ton of cute ducks and goats," says the Rev'd Monique Stone, "but their spending was thoughtfully discerned." Their purchase included emergency food relief, medical kits, seeds, food supplements for 200 children, suicide prevention for Indigenous youth, and yes, 15 ducks and a goat.



Right to Water

Mike MacKenzie of the PWRDF Youth Council offered a workshop on PWRDF's ministry at the **Anglican Parish of Liscomb and Port Bickerton, N.S.** After watching a powerpoint presentation, each group did an activity to learn how the Pikangikum water project is improving access to clean water in this fly-in Indigenous community in Northern Ontario.



RESOURCES

NEW DEVOTIONALS TO DOWNLOAD

PWRDF's free Lenten Resource provides a wonderful opportunity to pray during Lent while deepening your understanding of the work of PWRDF. Download the PDF or subscribe to receive a devotion every day in your inbox at pwrdf.org/resources.

PWRDF Youth Council has created a Devotional resource that will look at development and relief issues around the world and how PWRDF, guided by Christian faith, is working to support people in need. It also has plenty of information on how YOU CAN HELP! Available for download at justgeneration.ca and pwrdf.org.

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