



A Hunger Justice Journal

PHP POST

Summer 2023 | Presbyterian Hunger Program | www.pcusa.org/hunger

Addressing Root Causes



Enhancing Market Linkages for
and Urban Areas in Palestine

تعزيز الروابط السوقية للمناطق الريفية
والحضرية في فلسطين



Donor : The Presbyterian Hunger Program - PC(USA)

Executing Agency : Improvement & Development for Communities Center - IDC

Project Location : Gaza Strip / Palestine

Implementation Period : January - December 2022

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Improvement and Development for Communities Center



Holy Glimpses of Impact

By Rebecca Barnes, coordinator for PHP

What is “impact” and how do we measure it? How do we know if we really completed our goals and objectives?

There are some things we can measure — grants given, workshops led, learning gained, educational or worship resources produced and shared, new skills learned, seeds planted, food given, animals raised.

There are other things that are harder to measure — someone’s sense of confidence and empowerment growing as their leadership and capacity is growing in their grassroots organizing; the “fail forward” of a new model that didn’t exactly work but helped the participants learn something new and planted new ideas of how to try again; an oppressed community’s sense that they are cared for and related to and appreciated not for their product but because of who they are and how they live out their passion, intellect and efforts to improve their community.

This issue of the PHP Post is our Impact Report (the middle pages) surrounded by stories of impact as well as an invitation to continue to join us as we hope to continue to make impact with upcoming events and projects.

The mission of PHP is to alleviate hunger and eradicate its root causes, and yet we know that mission will extend way beyond our lifetimes and that it reaches far beyond the scope of one denomination’s hunger program. It takes all of us working together in all our areas of skill and expertise and passion, and still it goes beyond us — building on generations before us and extending to generations still to come. We give thanks to God that this work is the Holy One’s and that we are invited into it, to do our part. But the growth and impact are always God’s, and some of it we may never see.

At the same time, we do get holy glimpses into the work taking place — the reach forward

into hope, the spark of transformation, the stories of movements growing and people being nurtured. We invite you in this PHP Post to see some of these glimpses: how communities survive in times of drought, how bridging international concerns from one place to another in global solidarity has great impact, how sharing grief and food in North Carolina or providing housing options across the country give reason for the faith community to exist and keep trying to eradicate hunger and houselessness, how planting cordgrass restores a shoreline.

For these and all the hopeful and meaningful work that we engage each year, we give thanks and pray that God blesses all these efforts and those still to come.



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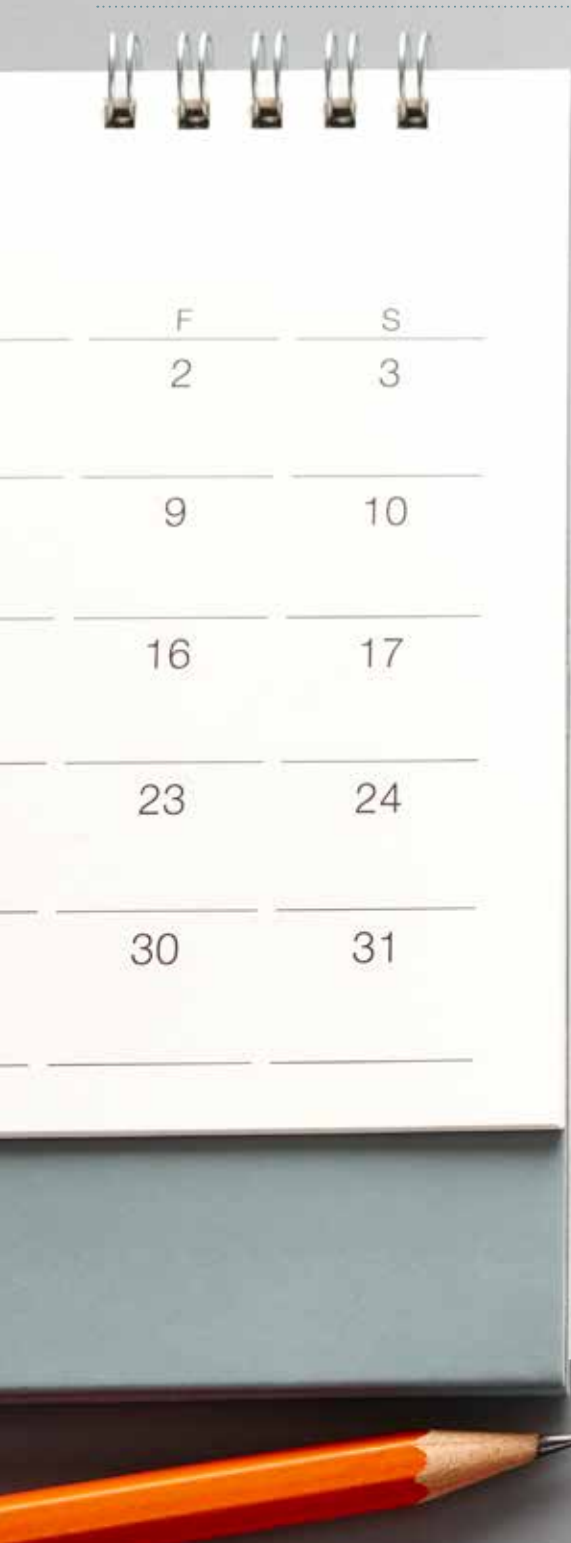
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Mark your calendars!

Upcoming Dates and Resources

World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation September 1

Join the 2023 Season of Creation and download the latest resource themed "Let Justice and Peace Flow" at seasonofcreation.org.

Food Week of Action October 2023

Join the Global Food Week of Action, which includes World Food Day (Oct. 16), International Day for Rural Women (Oct. 15) and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (Oct. 17). Visit pcusa.org/foodweek for more information.

Hunger and Homelessness Sunday November 12

Hunger and Homelessness Sunday is part of Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, recognized in November by the PC(USA) and others across the United States. During this season, we challenge you and your congregation to raise awareness of the housing crisis and consider ways to act. Visit pcusa.org/homelessness for more information.

One Great Hour of Sharing is more than 60 minutes.

This special offering is a 365-day-a-year effort. And when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. Visit specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs/ or use this QR code to learn more about how you can do a little too.





TAMALES, WHEELS & AXES

BeLoved Asheville



By Rev. Amy Cantrell, co-director of BeLoved Asheville

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” Isaiah 55:1

The steam poured out of the large gleaming silver pot filling the air with a wonderful scent. The steam mixed with tears.

We stood in La Cocina de Mama/Mama’s kitchen, a food truck on a mission that is a part of our BeLoved Asheville work to build community and end hunger at the root.

We shed tears at BeLoved. Some are tears of joy — a new baby, trading in a backpack for a set of house keys, a child riding a bike for the first time. Some are tears of despair — no food left in the cabinet, memories of the long desert crossing walking past bones, belly aching with hunger, holding okra seed — a long-kept secret hidden in hair in the bowels of boats holding human souls floating toward a life of enslavement. Some are tears of pain. And today that is what they were. Monica had gotten a panicked call. Her brother had fallen five

stories on a construction site. He was on the brink of death in the hospital. A few days later, another call. Her brother’s son had gone to open the taqueria. Her brother’s second work to pay the bills and keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. The taqueria was robbed and his son shot and killed. Hunger is tragic today and every day.

So today, we made tamales with love, and they were mixed with tears. Cars streamed into the mobile home park to purchase tamales to help pay hospital bills and funeral expenses. Because food is love. Food brings us together. Food calls us across hidden boundaries in a segregated town like Asheville. Food helps strangers to care for each other. And so many hunger in this land of plenty for food and for justice.

Hunger is rooted in America. It is a part of our history. It is a part of our present. It CANNOT be our future. John the Baptizer, heart full of love, belly full of prophetic fire, honey and locusts on his lips, will declare: “The axe is at the root.” This is the only way to end hunger. We must place the sharp blade of the axe at the root.

“The axe is too heavy and the root too thick!” you may say. And this is why at BeLoved, we know we need community. Our food truck is a community kitchen, a place where we stand with grandmas and abuelas, sing and say the ancient stories, and pass on cultural culinary food ways to the next generation. We take up the axe together. We share bread and we dream and scheme to create justice, to lift the axe and swiftly cut the root!

When the food truck rolled out of Monica’s neighborhood it rolled past fields where farm rows stretched. Farmworkers barely housed will soon be picking produce for pennies. Put the axe to the root. We ride past grocery stores where those with privilege walk through produce sections brimming with all the colors and buy expensive fruits and vegetables picked by hands we know not at a price of injustice. Put the axe to the root. In line, we have to wait extra time while the mother with WIC (Women, Infants and Children nutritional program) rings up each voucher. The voucher pays for just 2½ weeks of formula. Put the axe to the root. The elder gets out her food

stamp card but there is not enough there for the meager offerings on the conveyor belt. Prices have soared. The news shouts the headlines of looming cuts to food stamp allotments enlarged during days of panic and isolation. We were food-insecure then. What happens now? Put the axe to the root.

We drive past ḌḥḄỌ Anikituwagi ancestral land stolen through colonization and powerful murals marking the proud presence of this people strong and brilliant to this day. Past the Southside community where African Americans had land seized by government right during urban renewal. And people rising for reparations, the healing of the nation. Both proud peoples stand and call for food sovereignty in their food deserts believing that we must put the axe to the root.

We drive downtown where cranes loom and hotels are being built. Meanwhile in the shadows, hunched figures carry all they own in this world on their backs. Our number of people who are unsheltered doubled during pandemic days. No room in the inn, you know. Caesar rendering people to invisibility. Gaunt cheeks, worn shoes and broken bodies. Hunger and homelessness stalk our streets in the richest nation in the world. Put the axe to the root.

We park next to the Elder and Sage garden. A garden we at BeLoved helped to build with elders living in subsidized housing in downtown Asheville. It started with a declaration from an elder who claimed food sovereignty over asphalt. Each week, I would walk a group of Presbyterian youth down and we would bring potted plants to the parking lot joining in the creative protest. Arturo would stomp the asphalt and tell the youth: "This is death!" and then would hold up the plant: "And THIS is LIFE!" I was always reminded of the ancient wisdom: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose life that you may live." Deuteronomy 30:19. Eventually the powers that be turned over the gravel lot next to the parking lot and

abundant life has been growing there ever since.

We open wide the window of La Concina. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the water, and you who have no money come buy and eat." Well, our "Ho" might sound more like "YO! Friends, you have to try this amazing feast! Welcome!" And warm cultural comfort food was shared! Duane smiled the biggest grin. He opened his box on the spot and popped a huge chunk of tamale in his mouth. "Wow, mouth full and not ashamed, this tastes amazing!" Strings wrote a tamale song right on the spot using

voices. It means we go to the "highways and byways" and make sure that everyone is registered to vote, and we can advocate for just policies together. It means working to transform our communities into places where we live in harmony with the Earth. That means at BeLoved that we give bikes to kids and families, we push for climate action, we work at the local level to ban plastic bags and for other sustainability action plans. We carry a huge planet Earth in the holiday parade with our friends dressed up like polar bears and remind everyone that there is "Only One Earth." We celebrate that Medicaid will finally



BeLoved Asheville

BeLoved Asheville food truck.

his brightly colored guitar tied with a string on his back. Ms. Diane made her way with her white cane tapping out a rhythm. "I couldn't see ya, but I could smell ya!" She said with a smile. "Can I take a meal to my neighbor, too?" "Absolutely, we said, and take our love to share, too!"

The plants are starting to grow in the garden after winter. The community around the garden never stops growing. We know that to end hunger, we must build a community that chooses the power of love, life and liberation together. It means we sit in the halls of power together and raise our

expand in North Carolina after years of working in concert with so many. And we plant seeds into small containers of soil to share Plants for the People because food sovereignty matters.

Queen Mother taught us the power of okra placed in the ground to feed the people with gratitude to the ancestors. Spoon in the pot stirring love and justice and inviting all the people to come. She is now in the great cloud of witnesses, but we remember and celebrate her powerful ancestral presence with us as Mama's Kitchen rolls on just like justice working to end hunger at the root.

Network Invites Us to Build Harmony, Bring Justice

Global Solidarity Network Provides Spaces to Learn, Serve Globally and at Home

By Cindy Corell, mission co-worker in Haiti, and Jed Koball, mission co-worker in Peru

Praja Abhilaasha



Sri Lankans march to demand that their stolen lands be returned.

It is nearly impossible to start the day without laying your hands on something — some product — that cannot be traced to distant lands and the peoples who occupy them.

Your cellphone likely contains critical minerals extracted from a far-off place, a place where the extraction poisoned and made barren a once-flourishing land. Your sugar bowl isn't as sweet as you imagine when you realize the sugarcane industry was a punishing system for those who were enslaved and a source of great wealth for those who owned the fields. The tag on the shirt you are wearing might indicate it was manufactured in Bangladesh, Haiti or Vietnam — likely a sweatshop in one of those places that does not value the worker's rights.

It is nearly impossible to go through the day without engaging in intimate if not heartbreaking ways a global economy that has emerged from the vestiges of colonialism and ties us all together. As Martin Luther King Jr. once preached, "We aren't going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality."

For more than 20 years, the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) has addressed the negative consequences of this interrelated structure through its Joining Hands initiative. From Cameroon to Peru, Haiti to Sri Lanka, India to El Salvador and many places in between, PHP has supported networks of churches and organizations around the world that advocate for human rights. Especially, these country-

specific networks advocate on behalf of communities made vulnerable by industries that provide goods and services for consumers and consumer countries.

And, it has done so with great success! In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, partners advocated for greater distribution of mining royalties for local communities. In El Salvador, partners were successful in banning dozens of dangerous pesticides. In Peru, partners created a unique law that will provide specialized human and environmental health care for communities affected by mining contamination. These are but a few of the victories we have celebrated over the years.

Along the way Presbyterians have joined in this important work by accompanying

partner networks from afar: amplifying their voices, advocating on their behalf, and praying with them in the face of great danger and risk. What we have learned is that the advocating efforts of global partners and Presbyterians together work! We have also learned that for these efforts to grow and have greater impact it requires greater solidarity both among the partner networks themselves as well as with those of us from consumer-oriented countries.

This is why today we are introducing the Global Solidarity Network (GSN). GSN is a movement mobilized by the PHP's Joining Hands Initiative that brings together Presbyterians in the United States with partners and allies from the global South to decolonize the global economy and to promote harmonious ways of living together in our one common planet.

GSN invites Presbyterians into a space of listening and learning, inspiring all of us not only to join our global partners in creating more just lives, but also in noticing — and responding — to the injustice that harms our neighbors in our own communities.

GSN will generate energy, develop tools and build resilience for such a movement by creating space for diverse peoples from both the global North and South to come together to:

- **deepen understanding** of political, economic and cultural systems, constructs and powers born out of colonialism;
- **strategize and coordinate** collaborative efforts to resist and confront such powers of the global economy on multiple fronts; and,
- **build collective strength** through prayer, mutual accompaniment, sharing of resources and continual growing of the network.

GSN is a place for Presbyterians with a heart for global relationships who are also committed to the Matthew 25 visions of



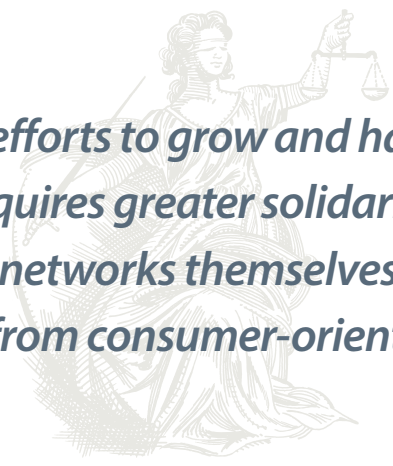
Peruvians impacted by mining contamination demand a Public Health Care Plan.

building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. Presbyterians have long been champions of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized peoples around the world. Many congregations dedicate substantial funds to anti-poverty and development efforts, some even travel

it is our belief and hope that Presbyterians also want to be empowered to do more to address the gross inequities in the world in respectful and meaningful ways.

GSN is a place where such empowerment happens through the coming together across cultures to learn together, encourage one

... for these efforts to grow and have greater impact it requires greater solidarity both among the partner networks themselves as well as with those of us from consumer-oriented countries.



to places of great need and develop lasting relationships, and many more pray weekly for the well-being of their siblings around the world.

another, act boldly, and celebrate joyfully each step we take toward the abundant life God wills for all of Creation.

Indeed, Presbyterians care. Presbyterians are generous. Presbyterians are faithful to God's work in the world. And, to that end,

If you or your church are interested in engaging with the GSN, contact Eileen Schuhmann at eileen.schuhmann@pcusa.org.



IMPACT REPORT 2022

There is an African proverb that says: "When you pray, move your feet." For the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), this is very much our philosophy. We must combine prayer with action to accomplish our mission to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes. We understand hunger as an extremely complex phenomenon with economic, political, environmental and other social implications. As we go about this work, we know God is calling us to a deeper level of understanding and response to the "root causes" that keep people in cycles of hunger and poverty.

In the Matthew 25 Scripture we're reminded to look on those around us as Christ, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency is calling us to join the Matthew 25 movement through dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, building congregational vitality, and addressing climate change, militarism and gender justice. PHP and our partners impact each of these vital components.

In 2022, you helped PHP give **90 grants** totaling **nearly \$1.2 million**, impacting **22** countries, including the U.S. PHP also partnered with **12** presbytery Hunger Action Advocates (supporting 700 congregations), **100** Hunger Action Congregations and **291** Earth Care Congregations across the U.S.

Our work and the work of our partners is difficult to quantify within the span of a year; long-term sustainable development, community empowerment and policy change take many years. But this report offers a few examples of how your gifts contribute to a more just world and well-being for all God's people and Creation.

We are grateful for the scope of work the One Great Hour of Sharing ministries are able to accomplish together through your generous gifts.

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PHP is supported by generous gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing (OG300000).

For more about our grant partners and resources, go to www.pcusa.org/hunger.

Thank you for your financial contributions, time, energy and prayers!



MORE AND BETTER FOOD

We work so that people have sufficient money, seeds, land, water, equipment and training to feed themselves and their families. Better food also means everyone in the food production process is treated fairly.

- **Over 525,000 pounds** of seeds and seedlings were distributed for farming internationally.
- In Maine, **over 55,000 pounds of produce** was purchased from local farms.
- In Washington state, organizers won **expanded free school meals for more than 92,000 children** statewide.
- **Five seed banks** were set up to protect traditional seeds in Sri Lanka, and 498,157 pounds of cereals were distributed from cereal banks in Cameroon.
- **Over 875 chickens** were distributed in Guatemala and Colombia, and 40 goats were provided in Yemen.



KASOPE MINISTRIES



VIOPP

SOLIDARITY WITH PEOPLE

The solidarity work we do with vulnerable communities includes changing unfair structures and passing more just policies — around wages, labor, trade and job opportunities.

- **105 women became self-employed** due to the development of a bakery in a rural community in Malawi.
- In Alabama, the Maskoke people see the daily result of their language revitalization as **hope for Maskoke children**.
- In Maryland, organizers won **over \$120 million for affordable housing**, the highest annual commitment to date for the Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund.
- In Sri Lanka, **152 people won their land back** and **315 internally displaced families were resettled**. In Uganda, 20 women **received titles for their land**.
- In California, the United to House LA citizen's ballot initiative passed and **will raise over \$1 billion annually for homelessness prevention and affordable housing**.

A MORE LIVABLE ENVIRONMENT

Caring for Creation is a necessity to ending hunger and poverty, and the reverse is also true: Pollution, extraction and harm done to the environment significantly worsen social and economic conditions for people who are hungry.

- **75 potable water filters** were distributed in Guatemala and **40 water retention tanks** were provided to store water and irrigate family gardens in Bolivia.
- In the U.S., partners helped win a **national ban on the use of chlorpyrifos insecticide** on crops, protecting the lives of farmworkers, waterways and wildlife.
- Partners around the world planted more than **60,000 trees**.
- Proceeds of **fairly traded coffee and chocolate** purchased by congregations **contributed to a \$5,500 grant for small farmers in South Sudan**.
- **A total of 872 Presbyterian congregations purchased eco-palms** for sustainable forestry and livelihoods.



SOUL FIRE FARM

Planting Wetland Grasses as an Act of Love and Care

By Rev. Colleen Earp, program director at Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center

In 2014, I was first introduced to the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) as a Young Adult Volunteer serving in a wetlands conservation and education role in South Louisiana. PHP staff came to visit my small bayou congregation as well as to tour the marshes and swamps I was working in. PHP supported projects in the region and helped spread the word about these critical environments and the communities that depend on them.

During my time in Louisiana, I assisted with many planting projects: usually grasses and rushes planted along bayous to help strengthen the shoreline and reduce, or even reverse, erosion; sometimes trees along coastlines to help anchor the soil. I spent many days joyfully knee- or waist-deep in the mud, placing these plants with great

care, wondering if they would survive or get washed away in the next big storm.

One of the more memorable planting days was in Fontainebleau State Park, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. On that particular day, we worked with high school students to install hundreds of individual, spindly cordgrasses along an eroded bank in a more remote part of the park — somewhere that people wouldn't often see, but was important to the well-being of the whole environment nonetheless. Most of the planting projects I did that year were in remote areas, accessible only by boat, and I figured I'd never see them again. I often wonder how they're doing.

It would seem that many of our earth care efforts are like this — it's difficult to see

the impact of a single project or practice. Planting something can take years to demonstrate any kind of visible effect on the environment. Individual practices to reduce impact and recycle waste, neither of which is a perfect system, can be hard to imagine making any kind of significant difference in our world.

Even the smallest act of caring for Creation can invite some wonder about and connection to our planet though. Eco palms, fair trade coffee, adding a couple of meat-free meals to your week, taking the steps to become an Earth Care Congregation — the actions certainly add up in each of our little corners of the world, but perhaps more importantly, they inspire bigger things. People start learning and talking and advocating for greater change, and that impact ripples outward.

I recently returned to New Orleans to visit some beloved people and places, and one

Cordgrasses planted in 2014 in Fontainebleau State Park (Louisiana) by 2021 had greatly strengthened the shoreline and reversed erosion.

Colleen Earp



Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice Fund

Trees take in carbon dioxide and release life-sustaining oxygen. Now needed more than ever, trees can sequester carbon to help mitigate pollution and climate change. In 2022, the 225th General Assembly called for the development of a fund that will support reforestation and greenhouse gas sequestration. Congregations and individuals can choose carbon offsets as one way to lower your carbon footprints, by giving to the Presbyterian Hunger Program's (PHP) Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice fund — E865715. For years, PHP has supported partners in the United States and around the world who have included tree planting in their objectives. Together we will continue to value caring for Creation, and with increased support for this fund, explore more opportunities for tree planting and carbon sequestration.

You Can Do Something!

- Plant trees! Trees help reduce the carbon dioxide load in the atmosphere.
- Discover your household's carbon footprint. www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator
- Take the PHP Climate Care Challenge to reduce your carbon footprint. pcusa.org/cc
- Learn more and give to E865715 to support reforestation and carbon offset efforts. pcusa.org/environment
- Contact your elected officials about climate change action. votervoice.net/PCUSA/home
- Learn how your congregation can be a refuge by helping plan for the impacts of climate change. blessedtomorrow.org/moving-forward-guide
- Help others learn about the issue. The Woodland Trust offers a two-minute video, "How trees capture and store carbon." youtube.com/watch?v=vJY3DTaE0sl

of my stops was Fontainebleau State Park. The area was badly damaged by Hurricane Ida in 2021, so many areas were closed off, but I found my way back to what I thought was the planting site. I spent some time staring out at the gentle waves of the lake, searching for where I'd expected to see a line of grasses — where I'd hoped they'd filled in and helped protect the shoreline against the storm.

I didn't see them.

My heart sank, for the precious environment in that particular place, and for the kids who'd installed those grasses, who are now surely adults who have fully inherited our world marked so heavily by climate change and environmental destruction.

Then I realized: I was standing on them. The grasses had filled in so well, the shoreline had expanded outward into the lake, standing strong against Ida and other storms and floodwaters that had passed through in the years since I'd left. They did that whether or not I would actually get to see it with my own eyes. It's a good reminder of the many ways that small acts of love and care toward Creation take time to make a visible impact. In the meantime, we keep doing the work, and holding these things in our hearts, which instills another kind of change — encouraging us to keep making the effort to love God's good Creation, wherever we are, however we can.

How Congregations Are Increasing Affordable Housing and Addressing Unhoused Populations

In 2008, the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA) approved recommendations in the report “From Homelessness to Hope: Constructing Just, Sustainable Communities for All God’s People,” including “Encourage congregations, presbyteries, synods and other church-related entities to pursue comprehensive responses to the crisis of homelessness and affordable housing.” The PC(USA)’s Matthew 25 vision also calls us to be actively involved in the world around us in eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism and building congregational vitality. With diminishing affordable housing options across much of the United States, many congregations are considering ways to affect change by utilizing untapped resources such as land. The following are a few examples of congregations and communities of faith thinking creatively about land use and building a more just community for all.



Westminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., discovered that the equity of their property had grown due to the location’s demand. Westminster decided to build a new building, and later the church found developers to build affordable housing with the additional equity. Westminster is now co-owner of a 123-unit apartment complex and a church building that, once it’s constructed, will be 2½ times bigger than its current building.

 **Read more:**

<https://bit.ly/phpposthousing1>



BeLoved Asheville, a Presbyterian Hunger Program grant partner in Asheville, North Carolina, is building a village of 12 microhomes called BeLoved Village. This resourceful solution provides deeply affordable homes where social connection and equity lead to better health, more opportunities and long-term stability. BeLoved Village truly works to sow seeds of community. The 440-plus-square-foot houses are built primarily with donated labor and materials. They’ve also received in-kind donations from architects, engineers, surveyors and other industry professionals. Additional generous contributions from the greater Asheville community have funded more than 70% of the construction cost.

 **Read more:**

<https://belovedasheville.com/projects/belovedvillage/>





In the parking lot of **First Presbyterian Church of Hayward** in Castro Valley, California, a village of five tiny homes is the most visible manifestation of the church's effort to address homelessness. "We've come to the theological place, maybe philosophical, that housing is a human right," said the Rev. Jake Medcalf, Hayward's lead pastor. "If we don't provide housing in our neighborhoods, especially in an area like the Bay, we are literally — I don't think it's dramatic, I think it's real — condemning people to die on the streets."

Read more:

<https://bit.ly/phpposthousing2>



Many communities are grappling with questions from the safety to the legalities of living in one's car and are creating "safe lots" for the vehicular homeless to park in. Some of these safe parking lots are owned by the Department of Transportation or the Department of Public Health. Other lots are owned by faith organizations, such as **Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church** in Northglenn, Colorado. The Rev. Sheri Fry shared that the process was a months-long effort to convince neighbors that opening the parking lot at night for people to stay safely in their vehicles was a good idea.

Read more:

<https://bit.ly/phpposthousing3>

<https://bit.ly/phpposthousing4>



Whether advocating on affordable housing issues or the need to test school water fountains for lead, "there's definitely influence and power when you have a lot of organizations working together," said Pastor Timothy Stern of **Ark and Dove Presbyterian Church** in Maryland. He also noted, "Community organizing is a great way of organizing a congregation" because it involves doing "one-on-one meetings with people so that you can create relational power."

Read more:

<https://bit.ly/phpposthousing5>

Ideas for congregations:

- Use church buildings to host neighbors experiencing housing insecurity.
- Provide social services and assistance in finding stable housing for neighbors experiencing housing insecurity.
- Donate property for affordable housing.
- Partner with qualified organizations to build affordable housing units on church property.
- Provide church parking lots as "safe lots" for individuals living in vehicles.
- Find, join or form a Congregation-Based Community Organizing (CBCO) team to advocate for affordable housing.

Getting Started:

1. Find out if there are groups working with unhoused people in your area and support or complement their efforts.
2. If there aren't local groups doing this work, begin by listening to and assessing the needs of the community through listening sessions.
3. Contact local and state agencies to get a clear understanding of assistance options.
4. Envision a realistic plan for how church property could be used.
5. Assess the skills in the congregation and partner with knowledgeable people – community organizers, lawyers, builders, accountants, financial partners, community leaders and officials, journalists, etc.
6. Before developing property, assess the value and buildable square footage.

Resources:

Affordable Housing:

<https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/>

<https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Enterprise-Paper-Leveraging-Property-Owned-by-FBOs-January2020.pdf>

https://nbpfoundation.org/documents/NHPF_FaithBasedAffordableHousing_Articles.pdf

<https://nabt.org/our-partners/development-partners>

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/cbco/>

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/homelessness-report2008.pdf>

Find a CBCO near you:

https://www.uua.org/files/documents/au/cbco_near_you.pdf

Unhoused Services

<https://familypromise.org/what-we-do/programs-services/>

<https://safeparkingla.org/>

<https://www.thepeaceplan.com/4-steps-to-move-your-church-to-address-homelessness/>

<https://nationalhomeless.org/>

Conflict and Climate Change Push Millions Close to Famine in Somalia

Somalis Abandon Their Homes in Search of Food, Water and Aid as Drought Deepens

By Yusuf Abdirahman, humanitarian coordinator for Kaalmo Relief and Development in Somalia

Kaalmo Relief and Development



Fathi Mohamed Ali sits with 2 of her children outside of their makeshift shelter.

A devastating drought has displaced 1 million Somalis since January 2021, and more people are expected to flee as communities face the prospect of famine in 2023. First, the rains failed, then Al-Shabab, an armed group that controls large swathes of south-central Somalia, started to impose hefty taxes on local farmers like Fathi Mohamed Ali.

With the river dry, no food for the children and no money to pay the tax, the 45-year-old mother of seven fled her home in Lower Shabelle where she and her husband had once grown fruits and vegetables. “Some people were killed [by Al-Shabab] and others arrested, including my own mother,” she said. “We had to escape for our lives; I could not even bring all my children. I left four of them with their grandmother. I just took the youngest three kids with me.”

Sitting on an empty jerry can in front of her makeshift shelter, cobbled together from tree branches and pieces of old clothes, she described the perilous 15-day journey she took to reach a camp for internally

displaced people in Dolow, southern Somalia. “It was extremely difficult,” she said. “We put the kids on donkeys and the adults walked for miles on end. Some of the people we came with lost their children along the way.” “Food is our priority. We can think of education and other things when we get food.”

Fathi and her husband and children survived the ordeal and joined thousands of other displaced families living in crowded settlements set up by the local authority on the outskirts of Dolow. The site she settled in has no toilets and only one tap. “We came to an empty land with no shelter, and we had nothing in our possession as we left everything behind,” she said.

Somalia, like much of the Horn of Africa, is facing its worst drought in 40 years. Following the failure of four successive rainy seasons, more than 7 million of the country’s 15 million people are experiencing severe hunger. Experts warn that the next rainy season between April and May will also likely fail, pushing several parts of the

country into famine before the end of the year, unless aid efforts are urgently ramped up. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis have abandoned their homes and embarked on perilous journeys in search of food, water and humanitarian assistance. Since the drought started in January last year, over 1 million people have been forced from their homes, including 857,000 so far this year. A further 366,000 have fled due to conflict and insecurity.

Droughts are not uncommon in Somalia, which is ranked the second most vulnerable country to climate change in the world. There have been recurring dry spells, interspersed with flooding, over the past decade, including a devastating famine in 2011 that killed over 250,000 people. Nomadic pastoralists and farming communities have little time to recover from one disaster before another strikes.

Read the full article in the Together for Justice blog at https://www.presbyterianmission.org/together-justice/2023/02/02/conflict_climatechange_famine_somalia/

Hunger Action Advocates Working to Address Root Causes

Hunger Action Advocates (HAA) are a keyway that some presbyteries have chosen to support their hunger, poverty and Matthew 25 ministry foci. While operating within the presbytery, HAAs are also covenanted with the Presbyterian Hunger Program on the national level. Right now, 12 HAAs together do 160-plus hours a week of hunger action and advocacy work and serve over 700 congregations.

A few of many transformative ministries that HAAs help bring to pass include:

In **Presbytery of the Western Reserve**, HAA Laura VanDale facilitates Matthew 25 efforts as the presbytery studies, visions, and acts on issues of systemic poverty and structural racism, including a recent presbytery-wide study of Howard Thurman's writings with PC(USA) staffers invited as guest speakers.

In **San Gabriel and San Fernando presbyteries**, HAA Wendy Gist assists the presbyteries to discern and act on ways to use congregational property for affordable housing ministry, supports local groups serving neighbors in need, works collaboratively with neighboring presbyteries to educate and build capacity around immigration and immigrant justice, and helps the presbytery explore ways to connect and partner with leaders of the local Indigenous community on common efforts.

In the **Presbytery of the Pacific**, HAA Heidi Worthen-Gamble celebrates recent legislative victories after serving on a county-wide affordable housing coalition for the past three years and is currently working on implementation and funding for affordable housing solutions while also supporting a huge increase in community members served by feeding programs in Los Angeles due to rising inflation.

In **San Jose**, HAA Ryan Althaus is getting creative in his effort to help Presbyterians address the diversity of the region's despondent neighbors, dismantle stereotypes and address root causes of houselessness by writing, gardening, sailing and even retreating alongside those living with disabilities, struggling with addiction and/or living unsheltered. You can follow his personal and programmatic work, catch an episode of his mental health podcast and dive in with his writings at www.thesurfingmango.com.

In the **Presbytery of Eastern Virginia**, HAA Jessica Fitzgerald recently hosted a Peanut Butter & Jelly drive at a recent presbytery meeting. A total of 276 jars was collected to support First United Presbyterian Church (Norfolk, Virginia)'s bread ministry, which is part of their hunger action team.

Q&A with the Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee

“What keeps you going in this work of helping to shape a more just world? What practices allow you to feel refreshed, or what enlivens or inspires you?”

“The neighborhood we live in had five precious chickens roaming freely through our streets when we moved in. Luckily enough they had chosen the oak tree in front of the house as their sleeping place. When Tom and I moved from a farm life to the city, seeing these creatures walking freely around made us feel at home. Of course, we could not resist making friends, feeding them each morning. They now lay eggs in our porch and await for the morning to greet us once they have flown down to the street floor. Word has gotten out, and now wild ducks from a nearby river also roam and take rest around us. These precious morning encounters fill our souls and prepare us for the day. A feeling of unconditional love and God's grace in nature responding to our care is a blessing to our life.”

- *Neddy Astudillo*

“Others who walk this road with me, those who desperately need food to feed their families, folks who do the work of actually feeding those in need, along with advocates who speak up on behalf of those who are hurting, inspire me to work to end hunger. I believe God is multiplying our efforts like the fish and loaves!”

- *Frank Dew*

“What inspires me are the people — our partners around the world who are working for their communities, often in difficult situations. A practice that refreshes me is a walk in nature — reconnecting with God's beautiful world.”

- *Eileen Best*

“To refresh my vision to work for economic justice, I look at pictures of oranges. As a refugee of the war in the Korean Peninsula, my grandfather settled on the poor Jeju Island to serve the people as a tentmaking pastor and taught the economically distraught island community how to grow oranges by utilizing the island's readily available natural resources to become economically self-sufficient and take control of their future.”

- *Sunny Kang*

“I love any opportunity to be creative! Art brings me a lot of joy, and my Saturday morning watercolor class is a great way for me to recharge, be inspired and make new friends.”

- *Ann Elyse Hicks*



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