

Working Together

An bi-annual review of CRWRC –CFGB programs

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You don't have to be a farmer to grow something good

Anita Otten is not a farmer. Like most Canadians, she gets her 8-10 servings of fruits and veggies a day from her local grocery store. Though corn may not grow in her backyard, Anita believes that there's enough food to go around. Anita believes that she can do something about hunger.

Although Anita lived in the country near Clinton, Ontario, she had no experience growing food. Be that as it was, Anita encouraged her husband to ask their church to consider starting a growing project, but the church thought it was too last minute to get a crop going for that year. Anita then called David and Kathryn Mayberry, regional coordinators for Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) to ask them what they thought.

"Most of our corn had already been planted and I knew the Clinton area should be just as far ahead as we were," recalls David. "I did admit that it was



probably getting too late to get organized to plant corn but if she was thinking of planting soybeans there might be a 2-3 week window left (depending on the variety). Less than two hours later she called back to say that she'd called some people and was having a meeting at her home the following evening — would we come?"

By the time the Mayberrys arrived at the CFGB growing project

meeting, Anita had recruited several volunteers from a number of churches in Clinton, secured 40 acres of land for the project, received enough soybean seeds to plant, and recruited farmers willing to plow, disc, cultivate, plant, spray and harvest.

"The guy at the co-op told me we'd need something called inoculant," said Anita, much to the amusement of the farmers attending the

meeting. "I don't know what that is but I got some anyway!"

"We came away from that meeting so energized and inspired by this young mother," says David.

Unfortunately, an unexpectedly dry summer — particularly in the Clinton area — rained on Anita's hopes for a successful growing project. "Across the highway she could see the field from her kitchen window and on harvest day she was dreading having to go over and face all the people that she'd talked into being involved," David remembers. The growing project had yielded a disappointing 22 bushels of soybean per acre, as compared to 45 bushels per acre, by another growing project just 20 minutes up the road.

"Anita mustered up the courage and went over, not so much to watch the harvest but to apologize," says David. "But as Anita approached the harvest spectators, someone turned to her with a smile and asked, 'What are we growing next year?'"

Growing food is a chance to grow closer to friends and neighbours by doing something together. Knowing how to grow food has less to do with success than having passion and hope.

Kenya: Two healthy meals a day in Turkana

Christin's parents are of the Turkana tribe. They migrated from Turkana to Eldoret to find casual labour before Christin was born. Then on January 17, 2008, during the post election violence in Kenya, Christin's uncle paid for bus fare for her to leave Eldoret. Though her husband was of the local tribe, Christin was not — and had to flee for her safety and that of her six children.

In the morning Christin and her children eat porridge for breakfast. The family does not normally have a noon meal; at night they eat their main meal of corn flour with some split peas. To have the corn ground into flour they exchange 4.4 pounds of the 110 pound bag. When food runs out, Christin cuts and sells wood to keep her children fed.

CRWRC is now distributing rations of corn, split peas, and oil to the local communities of Turkana, as well as internally displaced people like Christin. "We found



that locals were in need as much as those who had fled to Turkana for safety," says Jacqueline Koster, international disaster response program coordinator. "More than 18,000 vulnerable people are now receiving food." Before CRWRC, people were eating less than 1.5 meals per day. Now through a Canadian Foodgrains Bank project, the average person eats at least two meals a day.

In addition to the corn, split peas, and vegetable oil many people are also including potatoes, yams, and other root vegetables; salt, sugar or honey; and dairy products in their daily diets. The food is often purchased with money earned from odd jobs and small businesses.

The project is led by CRWRC in partnership with the Reformed Church of East Africa and the Kenyan Red Cross.

— based on a blog by CRWRC international relief managers Dwayne and Darlene Nienhuis. For more of their stories, visit <http://www.ddnienhuis.blogspot.com>

Pakistan: Food for families fleeing conflict

Muhammad Akber Khan never wanted to leave home, especially in his aging years. "The continuous shelling compelled us to leave our native town and home," explains Khan, one of nearly two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) displaced by military conflict in northern Pakistan. "We left everything back home as we were given only 20-25 minutes to leave the town. All that we could have carried were the cloths that we were wearing at the time of migration."

Homelessness has meant being hungry for millions of Pakistanis. "Due to lack of facilities my family

and I are not able to even fill our stomach with two times meal," says Bahadur Khan, who fled the Swat district of Pakistan with his family when the insurgency began.

While the United Nations' World Food Programme has been shipping food mostly to displaced persons living with host families, Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its members, including CRWRC has provided emergency food to families in IDP camps. CRWRC, through its local partner Interfaith League Against Poverty (ILAP), helped feed 2,000 families living in IDP camps over three months. ILAP received \$444,656.68 to



Photo by Kashif Mardani



purchase oil, lentils, salt, sugar, and wheat flour for predominantly women-headed households and widows. CRWRC committed \$58,931 to the total project. The project ran through the end of August 2009.

“When we arrived we had nothing to buy and eat,” says young Samina Gul, who has been living with her family in her uncle’s home. “However we were received by people with great hearts”.

CRWRC had already provided families like Gul’s with mosquito nets, sleeping mats, and water containers in May and June.

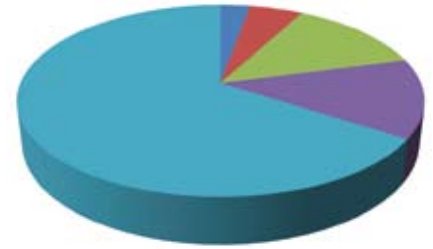
“CRWRC’s approach is to fill the gaps in aid that organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) might not,” says Grace Wiebe, CRWRC disaster response program manager. “People need to cook the food they receive. They

need to lie down and rest. They need to protect their children from mosquitoes that carry malaria. CRWRC is helping people meet these needs.”

The conflict in northwest Pakistan is a result of the Pakistani government efforts to force rebel Taliban forces out of the country. A government led program began assisting a small number of IDPs back to their homes in August, but strong fear still exists as to whether or not the Taliban has been expelled from the country. ILAP, with support from organizations like CFGB and CRWRC, has been a source of hope for many Pakistanis amid fear and uncertainty.

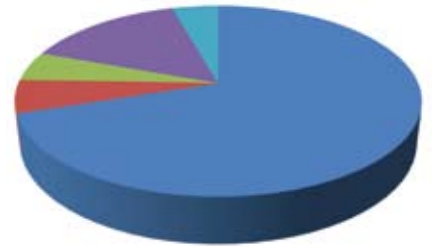
“Such actions of cooperation and solidarity (showed) us the human unity and solidarity with each other,” says Gul. “We are hopeful and praying for peaceful time.”

Sources of Funding



- \$6,702,477 CIDA Matching
- \$1,355,277 CRWRC Equity
- \$1,329,806 Food Security Account
- \$513,864 General Fund
- \$285,524 CFGB Members

Location of Programming



- 70% East Africa **\$7,226,275**
Ethiopia \$1,377,330
Kenya \$3,593,406
Sudan \$1,164,950
Uganda \$1,090,589
- 6% West Africa **\$592,151**
Liberia \$498,934
Mali \$27,944
Niger \$65,273
- 5% Southern Africa **\$492,524**
Malawi \$492,524
- 15% Asia **\$1,421,738**
Afghanistan \$140,000
Burma/Myanmar \$452,819
India \$194,180
Laos \$176,972
Pakistan \$444,657
Sri Lanka \$153,110
- 4% Latin America **\$454,262**
Haiti \$454,262