

Through the Dust

A MAGAZINE
FOR CHURCH
LEADERS



Students Raise Funds for Nepal Earthquake Response Page 4

Celebrating Being Children of God at the AOYC Page 5

A Widow and Her Ducks Page 10

Global Partnerships and Local Missions Page 14

We Don't Just Want Your Money

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your support of World Renew. Much progress and many changes are happening! God is good all the time. All the time, God is good!

Carol Bremer-Bennett was approved by the Joint Ministry Council of World Renew to the office of Director in the United States. Carol has undergrad degrees from Calvin College and a graduate degree from Western New Mexico University. She joins Ida Kaastra Mutoigo, World Renew's Director in Canada since 2006. Carol's has more than 20 years of organizational leadership experience in teaching, administration, superintendent, and director positions in the Rehoboth, New Mexico, Christian school system. Carol has a deep passion for justice in domestic poverty issues, which translates into a powerful understanding of global issues. We're excited that Carol is coming on board at World Renew!

Kenneth Kim accepted a position as leader of the Disaster Response Team beginning April 1. Ken has nine years of leadership experience as director for the Presbyterian World Service and Development. He has also spent 11 years as a mission worker, mostly in Guatemala. He has also undertaken numerous international consultancy assignments and is a thoroughly qualified team leader.

As Ken took on his new position last spring, an earthquake and strong aftershocks affected moms, dads, and children in Nepal, killing almost 9,000 people in all. Many homes and other structures were damaged or destroyed—changing the physical landscape as well as people's lives and memories forever. World Renew acted immediately, providing food and tarps for shelter to 1,900 affected families. We will also provide tents, additional tarps, blankets, hygiene kits, water filters, and food to 1,300 more families.

World Renew is working in Nepal with Integral Alliance as part of an ongoing collaboration, providing assistance with dignity for those affected by the quakes. We hope to provide a \$3 million response to this disaster, giving help and hope in the name of Christ to those who need it most.

World Renew is also strengthening our connection with Christian Schools International (CSI) members across North America, to meet the schools' pedagogic needs and provide a "hand up" to those who live in poverty and hunger around the world. After receiving input from outside consultants, we are implementing a number of their recommendations. Stay tuned for new information about our connections with Christian schools.

As leaders in your churches (ambassadors, deacons, elders, and pastors), we covet your prayers. Please pray that Carol and Ken transition well into their new positions. Pray for the people of Nepal, for the response efforts, for safety, and that our work is wise, dignified, and effective. We ask that, where possible, you speak with CSI school leaders, encouraging them to connect with World Renew to explore a partnership with us. Please pray that World Renew will continue to be productive for the Kingdom.

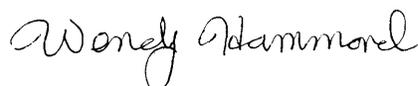
Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,



Peter Bulthuis

Associate Director, Church Relations



Wendy Hammond

Manager, Church Relations U.S.

Table of Contents



Students Raise Funds for Nepal Earthquake Response • Page 4

Celebrating Being Children of God at the AOYC • Page 5

Materials to Help You Promote World Renew • Pages 6-7

Life for Bimala after the Earthquake • Page 8



Disaster Response Services: More than Rebuilding Homes • Page 9

A Widow and Her Ducks • Page 10

A New Way of Living for Micaela and Her Community • Page 11



Fishers of Men in Uganda • Page 12

Healthier Soils and Better Harvests in Mozambique • Page 13

Global Partnerships and Local Missions • Page 14

The Impact of Advocacy • Page 15

Save the Date!

Suggested offering dates

The following dates are a great way to give your church an opportunity to learn about a specific topic and support World Renew. Will you miss a World Renew offering date or action day this year that you'd still like to schedule? No problem! Our materials are not dated so you can use them at any time during the year. These materials are all available to order from worldrenew.net/order, or you can download them from worldrenew.net/church-resources.

- Thanksgiving, 🇨🇦 October 12, 2015
- World Hunger Sunday*, 🇨🇦 🇺🇸
November 1, 2015
- Thanksgiving, 🇺🇸 November 26, 2015
- Giving Tree Project, 🇨🇦 🇺🇸 Advent 2015
- Christmas Day*, 🇨🇦 🇺🇸 December 25, 2015
- Disaster Response Services Sunday*, 🇺🇸
Canadian Foodgrains Bank Sunday, 🇨🇦
March 6, 2016
- Refugee Sunday, 🇨🇦 Foods Resource Bank
Sunday, 🇺🇸 April 10, 2016
- Maternal and Child Health Sunday*, 🇨🇦 🇺🇸
May 22, 2016

*The Christian Reformed Church Synod recommends that CRCs take four offerings for World Renew each year. World Renew does not receive ministry shares from the denomination.

Students Raise Funds for Nepal Earthquake Response

In June 2015, World Renew staff had the joy of presenting a certificate of appreciation to the staff and students at Calvin Christian School in Hamilton, Ontario, to thank them for helping people half a world away.

“Calvin Christian is one of the schools that continues to have a strong relationship with World Renew,” said Peter Bulthuis, Associate Director for Church Relations. “This is a wonderful example of authentic learning, where intensive studying connects with both meeting the needs of hurting people, and demonstrating how an active faith works in practical ways.”

On two days in early May, students and staff were invited to “show support and compassion to the people of Nepal through a fundraising endeavor,” said Vice Principal Arn Boonstra. “They were encouraged to bring any amount of money to put toward meeting the needs of the earthquake victims.” As a show of solidarity with those they were helping, the students and staff wore blue, red, and white clothing to reflect the colors of the Nepalese flag.

The staff and students realized that the need was great: the earthquake was the worst disaster to hit Nepal in more than 80 years. But, working with Christian churches in Nepal and international partners, World Renew



is providing water purification tablets, filtration systems, food, and cooking fuel to those in need. Much of this support is reaching communities near the epicenter of the quake, where local congregations assessed their established networks so that they could distribute the emergency supplies.

That kind of local and international coordination is one way that World Renew puts donations like the one from Calvin Christian to efficient and effective use.

“The students and staff at Calvin Christian School raised an amazing \$4,600 during the 2-day fundraiser,” Boonstra said. The funds they raised were channeled through World Renew, matched by the Canadian government, and sent to help alleviate the suffering of the earthquake victims.

In the aftermath of the initial earthquake in late April and subsequent tremors, many are without food and water, three-quarters of a million are without shelter, a million students had no classrooms to return to when school started in May, and more than a million people were without a latrine or water facilities.

“We are thankful that we can both come alongside earthquake victims like those in Nepal, and partner with Christian teachers and students in fundraising, service-learning, and justice education,” said Bulthuis.

To find out how the earthquake in Nepal affected Bimala’s family, see the story on page 8 of this magazine.

Ambassadors, we need your help! If you know of a Christian school in your area to connect with World Renew, let us know. In the U.S., contact Renate Smits at rsmits@worldrenew.net. In Canada, email Peter Bulthuis at pbulthuis@worldrenew.net.

Celebrating Being Children of God at the AYOOC



What does it mean to be created in the image of God? How does it impact how you see yourself? How will you respond to the brokenness you see in others? Nearly a thousand young people reflected on these and similar questions during an extended weekend in Waterloo, Ontario, at the 2015 All Ontario Youth Convention (AOYC).

While this annual conference traces its roots back to 1975 when a group of young adults began hosting provincial-wide gatherings for young people within the Christian Reformed denomination, today it draws youth and leaders from a variety of denominational backgrounds across Ontario. World Renew is blessed to be part of this event each year as well as partner in an annual Spring Break “service and learning” trip with a few of the attendees.

The activities for the AOYC this year were built around “Imago Dei,” the image of God. From soccer and ultimate Frisbee to personal devotions and mass worship, the young people were encouraged to reflect on God’s intent for them as His children.

They learned about the importance of meeting people where they are as a way of living out their identity as Christ’s image bearers.

The theme was rooted in 1 John 3:1, which says, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

1 John 3:1 also fit well with the youth team that went on a service-learning trip to Nicaragua with World Renew during Spring Break in March 2015. The team of ten people completed small construction projects, enjoyed fellowship and worship, and developed relationships through games, question-and-answer sessions, and other activities with the local YMCA group in Santa Lucia, Nicaragua.

Some of the young people on the trip talked about their experience at AOYC in Waterloo. They led two workshops about what it was like to walk alongside and learn from God’s children in Nicaragua. “Everyone in the audience seemed interested

and excited,” said World Renew staff member, Ryan Geleynse. “It was a great way for more youth to learn about World Renew’s ministry and think about opportunities to serve internationally through the Global Volunteer Program.”

This year’s focus was on raising awareness and support for adolescent health programs in Senegal, where poverty puts young people at greater risk for early marriage and other harmful activities. Over \$750 was raised—all of it matched three-to-one with funds from the Canadian government.

World Renew is deeply grateful to all who make the AOYC event and partnership possible! These opportunities equip today’s youth to grow in their faith and celebrate being children of God who are created to do good works in His world.

Are your congregation’s high school and college youth interested in volunteering globally but not sure how to get there? We can help! Check out World Renew’s Global Volunteer Program at worldrenew.net/globalvolunteerprogram.

World Hunger Campaign 2015



Fish for Change

Join World Renew for the World Hunger Campaign in 2015! The annual all-church project focuses on

addressing global poverty and hunger among those who live on less than \$2 a day. While the materials suggest that churches participate in the days leading up to November 1, 2015, they can be used at any time during the year.

The 2015 World Hunger theme is *Fish for Change*, based on the miracle of the loaves and fishes. In Luke 9, God takes the seemingly impossible and creates a miracle. The story is an example for us in providing for the poor and needy in our world. The sheer scope of global hunger can overwhelm us: we wonder what we as individuals or congregations can do to make a lasting difference. But God provides in amazing ways as we act in faith.

When we give from what we have—our time, our prayers, our talents, and our financial gifts—God blesses and multiplies our efforts. The resulting miracle is one where not just the poor—but the whole world—are able to eat and be satisfied!

These new World Hunger Campaign materials are available for order from Faith Alive Christian Resources

(faithaliveresources.org) and are downloadable from worldrenew.net/worldhunger. You'll find daily adult and family devotions, activities, Peter Fish Banks, children's resources, youth activities, worship suggestions, and much more.

Peter Fish is going mobile!



For World Renew's World Hunger Campaign this year, check out the **Feed Your Fish App** for Android and iOS devices!

Anyone with a smartphone can help end global hunger as a part of everyday life—and participate in *Fish for Change* in 2015. **Download the FREE app and check it out at worldrenew.net/feedyourfish.**



Videos
Free A Family®

East Africa: *Meet the Onchenge Family*. An introduction to the Onchenges from Banita Gichagi, Kenya, as they begin to improve their lives through World Renew's

development programs in their community.

Latin America: *A Morning in the Life of the Mejia Avila Family*. The day starts early in the Mejia Avila family. This video provides a visual introduction to daily life in communities of poverty such as El Burillo, Honduras.



Maternal and Child Health

An introduction to three women who live in hope and are improving their lives and families through better health, hygiene, nutrition, and education.

- *Hope in Time for Phelis and Jemima and Their Families*
- *Hope in Time for Gertrude and Her Family*
- *Hope in Time for Eline and Her family*



Land Rights

Prosperity in Time for Samuel and His Family. Gaining legal title to land is a challenge in poor communities

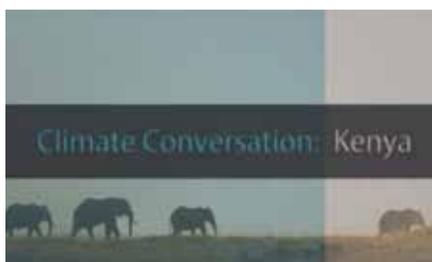
You can find all of World Renew's videos on our YouTube Channel! Just go to worldrenew.net/videos or to www.youtube.com/c/SeeWorldRenew for a visual catalog.

around the world. Meet Samwel Manyama in Itagumba, Kenya, and follow his journey to becoming the first deeded land owner in his community.



Peace-Building in Disaster Response

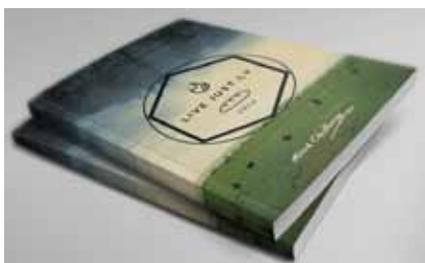
Peace in Time for Jamarose and Her Family. World Renew's disaster response programs include not only natural but also human disasters: ethnic and religious violence, war, and militant attacks that displace people from their land and homes. Follow Jamarose and her family as they begin a new life with help from World Renew's peace-building, reconciliation, and trauma counseling programs.



Study Materials for Adults Climate Conversation: Kenya

This series of four 5-minute videos and trailer introduces viewers to subsistence farmer in Kenya for

whom climate change is not simply a political debate—adapting can mean the difference between life and death. This series gets viewers past the statistics and arguments to present an invitation to conversation.



Live Justly Curriculum

This 9-week course for churches, campus and small groups, and individuals is from World Renew and the Micah Challenge U.S. It begins by asking, “What is biblical justice?” and concludes with tips for developing a personal action plan and a group direction for church engagement in biblical justice. Focuses on foundational concepts and practical engagement in living justly in six life areas: advocacy, prayer, consumption, generosity, creation care, and relationships.

2015-2016 Gift Catalog

When you select items from the *2015-2016 Gift Catalog*, you **Do a World of Good**. Include the catalog in your Christmas giving, birthday, and anniversary celebrations this year – and make God's love visible



among people who live with hunger and poverty. Choose from items that are .50 cents and up, and see the corresponding **Giving Tree Project**, below, for use by churches, schools, and groups!



The Giving Tree Project

The Giving Tree Project provides your family, classroom, school, or congregation with a set of 32 unique and colorful Christmas tree ornaments, poster, and mailbox/bulletin insert for each church or group member. Use with the new *World Renew 2015-2016 Gift Catalog*—all of your favorite items are included! Quantities are limited so check it out and order soon from the link on worldrenewgifts.net.

Order Resources at 800-333-8300 or worldrenew.net/order.

Life after the Earthquake for Bimala

“Yes we could use some blankets—any kind you give would be so welcome.” Bimala said. “Our house completely fell in the earthquake and buried all of the bedding we had.” She smiled as though trying to put off the weariness she clearly felt.

Bimala looked at me with sad eyes, her baby’s head glistening in the heat. They certainly didn’t need blankets yet. My friend Annie (a World Renew International Relief Manager) and I were trying to determine what kind of blankets would be best in the coming months because the heat, with no rain, wouldn’t last long. After the monsoon rains come, the weather will turn colder in the steep hills of Manikamana, Nepal.

With a baby on her back and a three-year-old holding tightly to her hand, Bimala explained that their oldest daughter was at school, studying outside because the school building had completely collapsed in the earthquake.

Being a mom of three myself, I know the tiredness that comes with a busy family. But I will never know the kind of exhaustion that Bimala feels. She and her husband have no food and no house. They are unsure how they will continue doing the work they normally do. The seed for their fields was buried in the earthquake, too. After she puts her children to bed at night, Bimala can’t retreat from worry.



“We are a very poor family,” Bimala’s husband told me, “and now the earthquake has taken even more away from us.” He is a farmer, a *kissan* who grows corn and rice, but the corn plants are all dried up because the rain has stopped for a few weeks now.

“We are sleeping under a tarp and will dig small ditches to collect rain water to drink at the sides of our tent when monsoon starts. We will be able to stay dry, but we can’t retrieve anything from our home.” He turns to Shristi, the three-year-old who is crying and comforts her. Smiling

shyly at me, he explains, “She’s tired, hungry, and hot—poor little one.”

The bucket we bring the family, with two kilograms of lentils, two liters of oil, a tarp, some rope, and some hygiene supplies, is a welcome gift from World Renew. The rice will hold off hunger for the family of five for at least a month.

“This is really helpful,” Bimala says, looking at the hygiene supplies. “Thank you for your kindness.” Her smile truly brightens as she glances down at her middle daughter. The one thing the earthquake didn’t take away is this family’s beautiful love for each other. It clearly sustains them emotionally.

Your donations and prayers can sustain families like Bimala’s spiritually and physically. Will you consider giving today?

by Shelli Fyneweaver

Find out more about the selfless, courageous work World Renew’s partners are doing in response to the earthquake in Nepal, go to worldrenew.net/nepal.

More than Rebuilding Homes

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS)? There is a good chance that "rebuilding homes" was your first thought. If so, that is great! Home rebuilding is a major service World Renew DRS provides. But, there is much more to World Renew DRS than rebuilding homes. Here are a few of the unique ways that DRS helps communities prepare for and respond to disasters.

Meeting Needs Long after a Disaster

Teresa (name changed) lives in Pensacola, Florida, and undergoes dialysis and chemo treatments in addition to having heart and vision problems. Last spring, Teresa's home was flooded with three or four feet of flood water and she had to evacuate. She lost all of her belongings. Her home needs major repairs, but she hasn't been able to do any work on it because of her physical limitations and low income: her home looks the same as it did the day after the flood. Teresa is currently living with her daughter but really wants to be able to return to her home.

Teresa was identified through the World Renew DRS unmet needs assessment conducted in her community five months after the Pensacola flood occurred. She and 300 other residents were interviewed by World Renew DRS volunteers and their needs were reported to BRACE, the community's local recovery group. A caseworker was assigned to Teresa and other people who were in need in her community to ensure that their needs would be met.

Helping Communities Get Started

Disaster recovery takes time, and a community's recovery depends largely on a local body that will organize their efforts. World Renew DRS trains local community-based recovery groups in the best practices of recovery, orients them to the FEMA process, and helps them develop a group of case workers and a system for properly identifying vulnerable people in their communities.

Stay up-to-date on the latest disaster response activities at worldrenew.net/drs.



Helping You Prepare

You can't stop a hurricane or an earthquake. You can't know if a church member will have a heart attack during a Wednesday night church meeting, and you can't guarantee your children will be with you if a tornado comes your way. But your church and family can take steps to prepare for emergencies like these.

From helping you recognize the threats in your area to thinking through details such as running safety drills during weekday church activities, the World Renew DRS Disaster Preparedness Plan will help your church and family prepare for the unthinkable.

Visit worldrenew.net/prepare-disasters to learn more!

A Widow and Her Ducks



She's caring for her daughter's baby and her aging mother. Her husband left her for another woman, effectively leaving her a widow. How can Manjura earn her own livelihood as a poor widow living in northern Bangladesh? The answer is...ducks!

Bangladesh has a lot of water. Many ponds last through the dry season and are replenished by the monsoons. Fortunately for Manjura, there is also a special kind of duck that lays up to 300 eggs a year. They are called Khaki Campbell ducks. Right now, Manjura has just a couple of these ducks. She treasures them and has their nest basket for laying eggs hidden in the darkness under her own bed. Manjura was willing to show us this special basket. (There was another basket for her chickens and one of them flew out when I shined a light on her—The chicken was quite upset!)

What to feed these important ducks? Animal food is expensive. So, Manjura goes out into her neighbor's flooded rice fields and collects tiny green plants that float on top of the water. I'm pretty sure it's a species of "duck weed." Manjura mixes the plants with some rice bran, makes a curious little call to the ducks, and they come "a-running," paddling actually.

I hope that World Renew can expand the initiative with Khaki Campbell ducks in Bangladesh. World Renew just completed a nutrition assessment in Manjura's district and found that nearly 59% of the babies there become stunted after they are weaned from breast milk.

Tragically, stunting harms the children's mental and physical

development, and unknowing parents simply assume that their children's nutritional needs are the same as an adult's. However, we know that high-quality food after weaning from breastfeeding—along with prevention of diarrhea, respiratory infections, and malaria—can make a huge difference. We also know that animal protein, vitamins, and minerals are more easily absorbed by the human body than from vegetable sources.

I hope that Manjura's small success with Khaki Campbell ducks will grow into a much bigger impact for children in her community, district, and in northern Bangladesh in their first one thousand days of life.

by Tom Post

Support World Renew's maternal and child health programs and learn more at <http://worldrenew.net/mother-child>.

A New Way of Life for Micaela and Her Community

In Baja Verapaz, Guatemala, there is a small community called Cabulco where every inhabitant is from an indigenous background and lives by the customs they have been taught since childhood. Micaela López Teletor is a 47 year old woman from the Maya Achi ethnic group and a lifelong resident of Cabulco.

In the Maya tradition, girls do not attend school and often marry as young teenagers. That was exactly what happened to Micaela. When she was 12, she was given in marriage to a man named Domingo Álvarez. They have two children, a boy and a girl, who both have hearing and speech disabilities. The family was very poor. They had no land to grow food, and there was little work available. Looking for a better way of life, the family moved to the region of Petén.

When Micaela and her family arrived in 2002, they settled in the village of Valle Nuevo where they bought some inexpensive land. Even though they were land owners, their lives were not much better than they were in Cabulco. Valle Nuevo is isolated and the soil is poor, making it difficult to grow food or earn an income to support a family.

One day, Micaela met with a health promoter from APIDEC (Asociación

Civil Programa Integral de Desarrollo Cristiano), a local partner of World Renew. The promoter invited Micaela to take health and agriculture training offered by APIDEC in Valle Nuevo. Micaela and Domingo learned a lot there, and they started to implement the new techniques they were taught. They planted a home garden and began growing peppers, tomatoes, and herbs for their family to eat and to sell in the local market.

When they harvested and sold their produce, they were able to purchase materials to repair and improve their house. As their children grew, they too became involved with APIDEC's programs.

“The best thing that could have happened to us in life is to know about God through the Bible and the people of APIDEC,” Micaela said. “They taught us to grow crops to eat and sell. We have radically changed our lives because we know that the APIDEC staff will treat us with love and respect.

“My family and I are happy, living in a community that is improving because of our own hard work. Now, our community is less isolated because a road has been built. During the last few years, we have also established schools, hired teachers, built health centers that provide care for our children, and set up a licensed cemetery. These are changes that we



have achieved and that we will all benefit from. We hope to continue growing as families and together as community.”

Micaela's life changed completely. She and her family feel blessed and are grateful to God, and to World Renew and its partner, APIDEC.

by Sadoc Aguilar Palma

Learn more about World Renew's work in Guatemala at worldrenew.net/guatemala.

Fishers of Men in Uganda



In February 2015, I had an opportunity to visit two World Renew partners in Uganda over 11 days. I talked with World Renew Uganda staff, our partner staff, and community members in both western and eastern Uganda. It is amazing what our Heavenly Father is doing among us!

Two World Renew partners in Uganda, PAG Kabale and PAG Kaberamido, began year-long HIV innovation projects in July 2014. The Kabale project focuses on increasing male involvement in HIV testing and disclosure, while the Kaberamido project focuses on promoting faithfulness among fishermen at two boat landing sites, Akampala and Apai. The projects all work on changing behavior by addressing the barriers that keep men from adopting less risky behavior.

In the boat landing project, PAG Kaberamido is working to influence fishermen ages 18 to 40 to be faithful to one sexual partner for six to 12 months to protect themselves and their sexual partner from HIV. On my visit, I saw the fishermen at the Akampala boat landing in action at a boat race that also provided an opportunity for a free HIV blood test and counseling.

As fishermen gathered for the boat race, and the landing site filled with people. Some were tested for HIV, and others came to get results from a previous test. Never before have I seen people run to get in line for an HIV test. Times have changed!

HIV- and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, though present in these communities, no longer prevents people from finding out their HIV status. The boat race, in coordination with ongoing community dialogue through World Renew's Stepping Stones group training sessions, has created an opportunity for community transformation. It was clear by the response to the testing event that, in less than 12 months, people's lives have been changed dramatically by this intervention.

Family communication has improved. Alcohol consumption has been reduced. Even more impressive is the way that the fishermen have adopted safe sex practices. This is the first time that World Renew is implementing an HIV intervention among fishermen in east Africa, and the results are promising! We plan to grow this project to reach more fishermen in other boat landing sites. The response in Akampala is a promising practice that others can use to curb new HIV infections in fishing communities. Please pray for these efforts.

Pray that more fishermen will become health champions and become "fishers of men" at boat landing sites and in the surrounding communities. Pray that the zeal and momentum for HIV testing will spread to other communities so that people know their status and can live healthy, productive lives. Pray that through community dialogue, gender issues will be addressed. And pray that more people will turn to Christ through these projects and experience abundant life.

by Nema Aluku

Find more prayer requests by following World Renew on Facebook and Twitter and look for #praymonday.

Healthier Soils and Better Harvests in Mozambique

Did you know that 805 million people in our world experience hunger on a long-term basis? Most of those who are struggling to feed their families are small-scale farmers who live in developing countries. Despite their hard work, they have trouble producing good harvests due to issues such as desertification (soil degradation), climate variations, and inaccessible markets.

World Renew is committed to helping small farmers feed their families and earn income through agriculture practices that protect and nourish the land. In Mozambique, World Renew works in four regions, supported by funding from the Canadian government, where rural livelihoods programs are helping farmers learn new farming techniques that can help them increase their yields.

In Lasifa, a small village on the shore of Lake Malawi, Agnes is experiencing positive change as a result of trying out these new agricultural methods. She joined a group of other farmers and began experimenting on their demonstration plot. She began to practice the conservation farming methods she learned to grow maize, peanuts, and sweet potatoes.

Eventually, Agnes took what she learned from the demonstration plot and started to experiment on her own. She turned her corn plot into a small experiment comparing



the traditional way of planting corn (on ridges and mounds) with conservation farming methods. On one plot she used mulch and also weeded. The other plot was mulched but not weeded. When Agnes compared the results, it became very clear to her that weeding is an essential practice for good corn production!

Even after a year of heavy rains and flooding, the conservation farming methods have greatly improved Agnes' harvests and the harvests of those in her farming group. She is looking forward to receiving more training and support—not only in new farming methods, but also on improved ways of selecting and storing seed for the next season.

Agnes's success story is an excellent example of the transformation taking place in Mozambique as a result of World Renew's sustainable livelihoods programs. Investing in healthier soil is investing in a better future for farmers and their families.

by Adele Konyndyk

Note: World Renew is working with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank on "The Good Soil Campaign" in 2015. The campaign is an initiative to encourage the Canadian government to continue fighting global hunger by increasing foreign aid funding to assist small-scale farmers. In the U.S., World Renew partners with the Foods Resource Bank. Find out more at worldrenew.net/frb.

Consider supporting World Renew's agriculture program by participating in the annual World Hunger Campaign. Find out more at worldrenew.net/worldhunger.

Global Partnerships and Local Missions



Escalon Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in California has had a growing partnership with the community of Kanjobal, Guatemala, for three years through World Renew's Global Partnership Program.

“It has been a great experience to work with World Renew and lean on your knowledge about missions,” says Phil Vander Meulen, an Escalon CRC member. “One thing that was critical for us was preparation before we left the U.S. Many of our meetings focused on the value of relationships rather than tasks. We were not going to Guatemala to build a building; we were going to Guatemala to build relationships; to encourage, to pray for, and to enjoy the people of Kanjobal.

“Preparation was critical for us as Americans who tend to get frustrated and impatient when we ‘just want to get things done.’ Focusing on relationships made it much easier to enjoy the people and culture instead of feeling pressured to see who could swing a hammer faster. I think each member of our team realized that the people of the community were perfectly capable—more capable than we were at building something in Guatemala. They often taught us how they do things, and it was a fun experience.

“We met with leaders from several communities to hear about the issues they were facing as well as their hopes

and concerns for the future. The meetings were good for everyone: the community members were encouraged to know people are concerned about them and praying for them. We were blessed by encouraging and praying for them. And we found out how big the body of Christ really is.

“For me personally this was a very reassuring trip,” Vander Meulen said. “When I think about missions and outreach in our church, I often question where God wants us to be. But when I look back over the last three or four years of working with World Renew in Guatemala, I can see the many ways that God has led us. Being in Guatemala once again to see friends we have made, hearing community leaders openly express concerns and joys with people they trust, seeing members of ECRC realize how big God is, these are just a few of the things that confirmed for me that we are in the right place.

“My hope is that this brotherhood, this community, will continue to grow. We wrestle with what our partnership means in Escalon. On one hand, it has already affected people on a personal level: we have a deeper understanding of the importance of relationship and community. We care deeply for the people of Kanjobal and have learned what it means to be content.

“Has this partnership led to a specific program or outreach to the local community? Not yet. But we have a new perspective because of our time in Guatemala, and we now welcome all those we come into contact with in the name of the Lord. The people of Kanjobal showed us how to see the value in each person who happens to visit our church. I believe that our partnership with the people of Kanjobal is lifting up both communities because we are both seeing that we are equally important parts of the body of Christ. Our church is enthusiastic about this venture.”

by Wendy Leep Hammond

Is your church interested in the Global Partnership Program? Visit worldrenew.net/globalpartnership.

The Impact of Advocacy

Kyle Schaap wondered if his message to his Senator's office would even be remembered, let alone change anything. So he asked, "What actually happens after I advocate to you on an issue?"

The answer to this question matters because *advocacy* is one of the ways that World Renew partners for community transformation. "Advocacy" is recommending a specific policy to whoever is in power. When someone recommends that "girls attend school beyond 5th grade, the same way boys do," that is advocacy. When it succeeds, it has a transformative impact far beyond "giving a man a fish!"

Unless you live in a perfect world, advocacy is a call for *all* Christians. The command to "defend the cause of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the immigrant" is repeated throughout Scripture. God knows that when His people are silent it is easy for the powerful to ignore the marginalized. In the U.S. and Canada, vulnerable groups are often a low priority for policy makers, and the voice of Christians can bring transformation.

Have you ever called your Congressperson or P.M. to advocate for something that is important to you? It's easy to feel like your voice might not be heard. Here is what Kyle found out about advocating to a government representative in the U.S.

"I sometimes feel hopeless when doing advocacy: a phone call or



an email can feel so small. A while back, I asked a staffperson in my senator's office, 'What happens after this? Will the Senator even know that I was here?' The staff person looked at me blankly and said, 'Of course!' He explained that the staff collects public comments and communicates them to the senator on a daily basis, including the notes from our meeting. He explained that there is a point system assigned for different types of contacts: an email is one point, a phone call, two, a handwritten letter is three points, and a personal meeting, five.

'Every time the office receives a communication, the point value is entered into a spreadsheet and shared with the Senator daily. If number values are high for a given issue, then the Senator will know that this is an issue her constituents care about,' the staffer explained. 'Hearing the daily numbers is one of the Senator's favorite parts of her day.' Some Congress people have mentioned that

even three to seven contacts can be enough to put an issue on their radar.

"I was dumbstruck by such a clear and simple system of accountability. I asked the staffer if this was unique to their office. 'No,' he said. 'This is standard practice. Every legislator's office does this.'"

It's easy to assume that your effort to change something important to you doesn't matter and that your voice won't be heard. Speaking truth to power, advocacy on behalf of those who are poor and marginalized, is part of our Christian calling.

To learn more about advocacy, check out World Renew's new small group study, *Live Justly*, at worldrenew.net/livejustly. You will also find group resources and advocacy opportunities there for immigration reform, climate change, and global poverty.

Follow World Renew on Social Media



Did you know that World Renew Ambassadors are on Facebook? You can keep up with fellow Ambassadors, check out ideas from other churches, and find out what's new on the "World Renew Ambassadors" page.

World Renew is also very active on other social media platforms, including Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Take moment and check it out next time you're online. You'll be glad you did!

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