ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Self Help

INTERNATIONAL

Helping People Help Themselves Since 1959

Self Help

INTERNATIONAL

Helping People Help Themselves Since 1959

2015
HIGHLIGHTS

30 new chlorinator systems installed ensuring clean, safe drinking water for 21,978 more people in Nicaragua

461 children in five communities ate a healthy daily breakfast through the school feeding program

584 women empowered with training and micro-loans to increase income and better meet their families' needs

300 youth and farmers attended training sessions on practical agricultural enterprises

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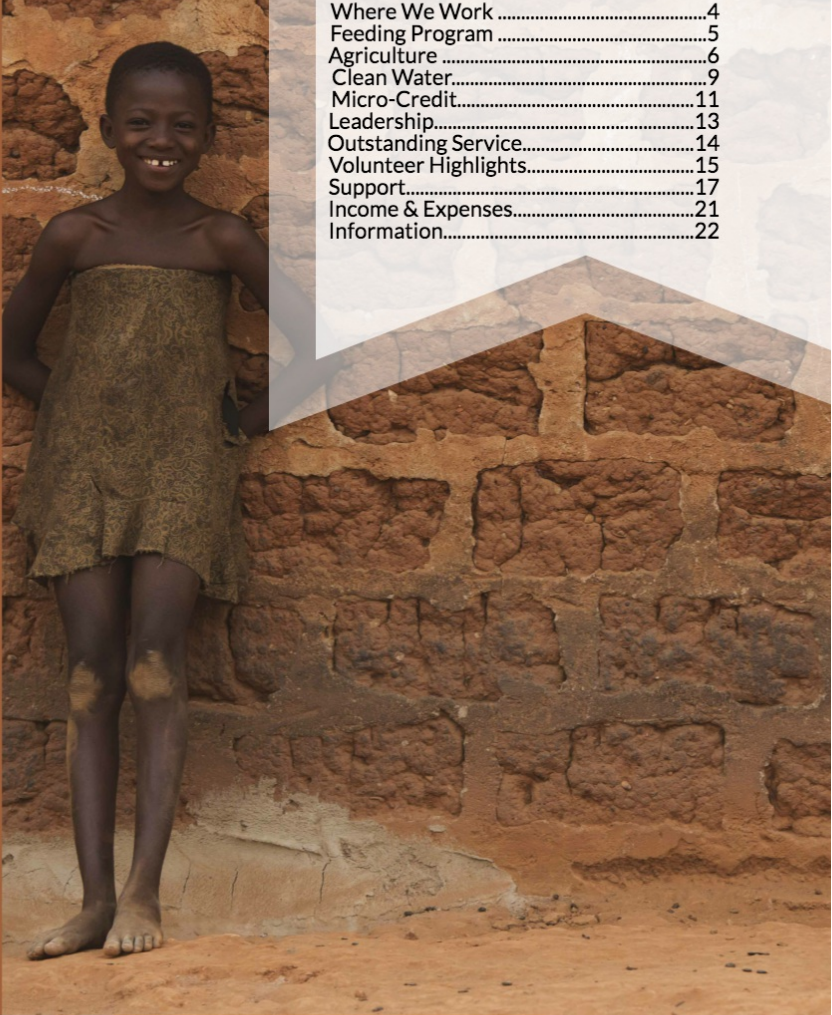

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WHERE WE

WORK

GHANA

Self-Help has been serving communities in rural Ghana since 1989, in partnership with Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Health Services, and other non-government organizations (NGOs) including Heifer International and Women's Health to Wealth. In 2015, Self-Help worked with families in 26 rural communities to improve quality of life with dignity.

- School Feeding
- Agriculture (QPM)
- Women's Micro-Credit

NICARAGUA

In 1999, Self-Help introduced the model of training and education programs that had been successful at alleviating hunger in Ghana to communities in Nicaragua, with adjustments to respect local cultural and community priorities. In 2015, Self-Help Nicaragua continued to expand the women's micro-credit and clean water programs, and Quality Protein Maize (QPM) seed breeding programs to promote economic development and improved nutrition for Nicaragua families.

- Clean Water
- Agriculture (QPM)
- Women's Micro-Credit

NUTRITION

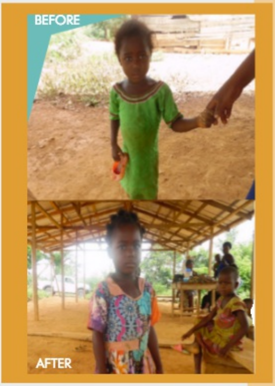
SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

Did You Know?

1 in 4 children in Ghana are stunted due to chronic malnutrition. In the rural communities we serve, it's closer to 1 in 3 children who lack adequate nutrition to achieve their biological potential.

Fighting Malnutrition:

We partner with rural communities to set up school breakfast programs, ensuring that children start each school day well fed and ready to learn. The program incorporates agricultural training, so the community grows much of the food that goes into the breakfast porridge. Schools see an immediate increase in daily attendance and typically double school enrollment after a feeding program is introduced, and teachers report that children are better able to learn and focus when they start the day with a warm meal than they did when they began the day on an empty stomach. Made from Quality Protein Maize (QPM), the high-protein porridge ensures children are consuming the protein their growing bodies need to support proper brain development.



AGNES' TRANSFORMATION

Agnes was born on September 7th, 2011 to Paul and Comfort of Beposo village, Ashanti Region, Ghana. Paul and Comfort prayed earnestly for a first female child, and Agnes' birth was considered an answered prayer from God. Being the only female and the youngest of three children, her parents had a lot of hope for her future.

This hope was short-lived. Paul said that at age three, Agnes could hardly talk or walk properly. It was difficult for her to mingle with her peers. At one point, they suspected Agnes was deaf but weren't able to access proper healthcare.The family began moving from one prayer camp to another. In Ghana, a prayer camp is where a group of people meet to pray for weeks and months to God for miracles to take place in their lives.

Finally, on February 4th , 2015, Agnes enrolled in school where she was served breakfast prepared from Quality Protein Maize (QPM) every morning. She was so weak that her older brother Samuel would carry her to school most mornings. It was very challenging at first, but finally Agnes began to gain strength.

In April 2015, at three and a half years old, Agnes weighed 28.5 pounds (13 kg) and was 32 inches tall. By August, she weighed 32 pounds (14.5 kg), an increase of more than 10 percent of her body weight in just 4 months.

Through continuous interactions with peers and regular protein intake through the school feeding program, Agnes' strength and speech is improving. She now recites poems and rhymes and she is no longer shy of her peers. Though she still walks with difficulty, her mobility has drastically improved.

Paul and Comfort are overjoyed at their daughter's mental and physical improvements, and give thanks daily for the transformation in Agnes' quality of life, which they consider an answer to their prayers.

HELPING FAMILIES FEED THEMSELVES

Self-Help International's approach to alleviating hunger in Ghana is to "teach people how to fish"- or in this case, how to farm- to better feed their families long after Self-Help is gone.

The Quality Protein Maize (QPM) program addressed the issue of hunger and malnutrition directly by serving 461 students at 7 primary schools a nutritious daily breakfast of QPM porridge to start the school day.

Each of the seven schools reported:

- anincrease in enrollment
- an increase in daily attendance
- a decrease in students abandoning class before the endof the school day due to hunger pains

...all as a direct result of starting the school feeding program.

In addition to supporting school feeding programs, the QPM team takes time to train parents and teachers about the importance of protein consumption to support childhood brain development.

AGRICULTURE

AGRONOMIC TRAINING SESSIONS

All twenty farmers from Beposo, Bedaabour and Fankamawe participated in the improved agronomic training sessions at the No Till Center at the Amanchia in March, where Dr. Kofi Boa, renowned researcher and agronomist, trained them.

The farmers learned, among other things, that to obtain maximum maize yields, every acre requires 10 kilograms (kg) of certified seed, 100kg of fertilizer (NPK) , 50 kg of Suphate of Ammonia, 1 liter of Nicoplus (herbicide), and 2 liter of Sunphosate (herbicide), in addition to learning that for rain-fed agriculture, time is of the essence.

After the training, the farmers demonstrated a good understanding of the subjects taught during the training sessions, and some even shared their new knowledge and trained their colleague farmers who did not attend the training. But even with this new knowledge, not all of them had the funds necessary to buy the right quantities of inputs to put their knowledge into action and plant on time for the rains.

HANDS-ON

TRAINING FOR FARMERS IN NICARAGUA

Nicaraguan farmers are eager to increase yields to better provide for their families, but often have limited or no access to the knowledge and resources needed to increase yields. These factors make the Quality Protein Maize (QPM) demonstration plots at the Fred Strohbehn Training Center so important. At the training center, farmers learn improved growing practices which can double yields. They are also able to access loans to purchase drip irrigation systems to grow food even through the dry season, and grain storage bins that reduce post-harvest loss by as much as 37%.

By planting and growing QPM, farmers can improve the quality of their families' diets. Protein consumption is critical to childhood brain development, so QPM provides an affordable and accessible option for subsistence farm families who cannot afford traditional sources of protein such as meat, dairy, and eggs.

QPM was adopted widely in Nicaragua when first introduced because it produces higher yields and tastes better than traditional corn varieties. QPM is used to feed the family, make tortillas to sell, and saved to plant next year, for a lasting improvement in both the family's and community's nutritional intake and finances.

Because the supply of QPM in the country was completely depleted, Self-Help imported QPM from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in Mexico and spent much of 2015 developing a breeding program with farmers in Los Chiles and Ochomogo to restore the supply in the country.

DID YOU KNOW?

Quality Protein Maize (QPM) is a conventionally bred corn that is high in lysine and tryptophan, which are essential amino acids for humans. Containing 90% of the protein found in a glass of skim milk, QPM is an excellent source of protein for human consumption.

Self Help International
Semilla Certificada
Maiz
NB-6
Certificada

GHANA YOUNG ADULT TRAINING CENTER

The Self-Help International Frances Mueller & Virginia Lageschulte Young Adult Training Centre (YATC) was established in 2013 to reduce unemployment in Ghana, especially among youth, and to reduce related social vices such as robbery, prostitution, and unwanted teenage pregnancies.

Thankfully, young adults including Bernard of Kumawu, Samuel of Offinso, and Veronica of Obuasi, were able to gain employment and even become employers after receiving successful training at the Training Centre.

YAW'S STORY

For Yaw, his encounter with the Centre brings him more than employment-it also provides him more joy and satisfaction. Yaw is married to Eva and they have a three-year old daughter, Nana. In 2008, he completed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology with a degree in Industrial Arts. From 2009-2011, he worked as a sales manager in a furniture manufacturing company. He later joined a brewery company and finally an insurance company, all as a sales person. He tells SHI he never found satisfaction in any of those places due to workplace politics. "I almost lost my life", he lamented.

In January 2015, Yaw enrolled at the SHI YATC and successfully graduated in mushroom production in February 2015. He has since been producing and marketing mushrooms. His business is named NASEY. This is a combination of the abbreviation of his name, his daughter's and his wife's. They produce pure organic mushrooms to the delight of many vegetarians in his community.

His experience as a sales person has enabled him to quickly establish contracts with restaurants and supermarkets. Demand for NASEY mushrooms is fast growing and he plans to mobilize past graduates from the training centre into an association to be able to control mushroom production and marketing, and to meet demand from clients.

Though he acknowledges there are challenges, Yaw tells Self-Help there is joy in self-employment. It is indeed refreshing to see Nana lend a hand to her father.

It is gratifying, realizing that the training centre is providing opportunities for the unskilled and marginalized in society as well as for people like Yaw and their families who seek jobs they can do with passion so they can experience returns beyond the bottom line: inner joy and satisfaction.

CLEAN

WATER IN NICARAGUA

PROVIDING ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

This year alone, 125 Nicaraguan children will die because of their dirty drinking water.

That's 125 too many.

We've now installed 74 chlorinators, bringing clean, safe drinking water to 59,000 people living in Nicaragua (and counting!)

Self-Help International partners with rural communities to install a simple, affordable water chlorination system made from locally-available materials. This system completely eradicates disease-causing bacteria from the water system, enabling children and parents to lead healthier, more productive lives.

We offer free training on basic sanitation and hygiene education to each community to ensure they reap the full benefits of access to clean water. We train local leaders to maintain the water systems within their community, creating jobs, leadership, community engagement, and sustainability for years to come.

Did You Know?
60% of children under the age of 5 in Nicaragua suffer from completely preventable waterborne diseases

How Does Our Program Work?

The community contributes a nominal fee towards the system parts and covers all ongoing costs (typically $6/month for a community of 500-1,000 residents) to ensure community ownership and sustainability.

After installation, teachers report an immediate increase in daily school attendance, and health clinics report a significant reduction in cases of waterborne disease- enabling families to lead healthier, more productive lives.

World Water Day 2015

CLEAN WATER

In celebration of World Water Day on March 22, 2015, rural communities celebrated by promoting shared experiences and success stories to communities currently using the CTI-8 technology, and to communities seeking to learn more. Self-Help hosted two grand celebrations in honor of World Water Day with the community water committee (CAPS) from Nueva Guinea and Rio San Juan. World Water Day was held in Nueva Guinea and was considered an immediate success. The staff had the participation of 30 community local CAPs leaders.

Seventy-one people attended from various communities, local authorities, including Mr. Francisco Miranda Villachica from the Mayor's office (UMAS) and Dr. Fernando Canales Aleman from the Environmental Department, the Director of the Minsitry of Health (SILAIS-MINSA) from Zelaya Central, and Mrs. Nicolasa Jarquin from Epidemiology of MINSA, TV and radio journalists, as well as Mr. Sergio Romero Alvarado, the CTI Nicragua Country Director. Self-Help's Country Director Mr. Jorge Campos Solis and Program Officer Orlando Montiel Salas were also in attendance.

They shared an educational video regarding CTI maintenance, correct use of purified water, and the positive impact the CTI-8 Chlorinator is having in the communities already installed as well as the challenges the organization and CAPS area are facing with regard to clean water all over Nicaragua.

Among the topics discussed were the importance of safe drinking water, weather changes, sanitation and environmental health, micro-biology, and treatment of the water for human use, emphasizing the use of CTI-8 chlorination in the rural gravity aqueduct. Most of the CAPS members agreed that installing the CTI-8 chlorination system would benefit their communities, and ten of them immediately asked for an initial visit by the Self-Help Program Officer for Clean Water to explore the possibilities for installation starting as soon as in April 2015.

It is often a challenge for Self-Help to serve all of the southeastern side of the country, since it is over 200kms distance from their main Nicaraguan office in Quinta Lidia, and requires travel over unpaved and unmarked dirt roads. Nonetheless, our goal is to serve all the rural areas where the need for clean, safe drinkable water is great, for the good of the rural people who we know will be grateful to have such a beneficial opportunity.

GIVING THANKS FOR IMPROVED HEALTH

Marla, a CAPS leaderfrom the community of Empalme Los Sanchez, Nicaragua, was so thankful to have clean water in her village, that she went out and bought fresh mango to give to the US volunteer delegation who visited her in May!

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN GHANA

We believe that all women should be able to control their financial futures, no matter where they were born. We invest in women's futures by offering the practical training and access to start-up capital they need to start up and expand businesses, generate income, and better provide for their families.

Out of the 400 women participating in the micro-credit program, the 100 strongest leaders were invited to participate in the summit. Women from the communities of Abompe, Asuogya, Bedaabour, Beposo, Kwamedwaa, Afari/Nerebehi, Kwaso, Nkawie, Adagya and Worapong traveled up to two hours to reach the summit.
During the full-day program, they interacted with one another, shared business ideas, discussed their experiences and the benefits to their families, and exchange contacts to strengthen market linages.

Outstanding leaders including Olivia from Kwaso and Abena from Beposo shared their success stories with the attendees. Outstanding groups and individuals were awarded with certificates of honor to recognize their leadership, dedication, commitment and problem-solving abilities.

The Women's Leadership Summit rewarded hardworking groups and challenged groups who have not yet been recognized to step up their performances. Following the summer, several women's groups who were not invited to the summit reorganized and elected new leaders with the hope to win additional awards at the next summit.

OTHER GHANA PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Self-Help Ghana partnered with local non-profit Women's Health to Wealth (WHW) to extend free medical services to 95 women from four communities, including measurements of height, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, body mass index, and screening for cervical cancer.

Women at risk were referred to the local hospital. Additional topical training sessions throughout the year included the correct use of agrochemicals, the protection of their environment, and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

HEALTH

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN NICARAGUA

In 2015, the Self-Help Micro-Credit Program worked to empower 125 women in the Rio San Juan and Rivas departments of Nicaragua. By providing training and the funds to put their newfound knowledge into action, women are able to start and successfully operate their own businesses. The women take pride in using their skills and talents productively to generate profits and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to receiving financial literacy and business training from Self-Help, the women have begun working together to learn from one another outside of the regularly scheduled training sessions.

Francisca is the leader of the micro-credit group in El Empalme de Cruz Verde. Anxious to share her skills and learn new ones, she reached out to members in the micro-credit group in the neighboring village of Cruz Verde to coordinate a series of open-forum seminars. While some of the women had learned skills and trades during Self-Help's training sessions - such as preparing jams, piñatas, funeral wreaths, cakes and other baked goods - other women had missed those training sessions for various reasons and still wanted to learn.

To create a fun and collaborating atmosphere for the seminars, Francisca even used a portion of her profits to host a cooking class at El Empalme de Cruz Verde. After the class, participants ate in celebration of a group member's birthday!

In addition to learning skills at these seminars, women were able to compare notes on good business practices during this meetings. For example, Vincenta has had more success selling her product door to door in her community, while Francisa sells the various baked goods from a small storefront. Both have become popular treats in their pueblos.

The initiative Francisca displayed in coordinating these meetings is remarkable. As the groups now seek to collaborate for the sake of mutual betterment, they embody the self-sufficiency and empowerment through education that Self-Help International strives to promote. Though the first meeting only consisted of three attendees, it has since grown to an average of nine participants, with meetings taking place as often as twice a week. Many women bring their daughters so they can learn the nuances of the different businesses and prepare to become self-sufficient as well.

LEADERSHIP

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INTERNS

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Erell Marie Francois, Wartburg College
Mauricio Gutierrez Salazar, Wartburg College
Megan Jorgensen, Wartburg College
Aimee Menhusen, Iowa State University

Nicaragua
Layne Woodruff, Micro-credit, Northeastern University
Mack Thompson, Clean Water, University of Arizona

No interns were placed in Ghana in 2015 due to health concerns surrounding the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE

MARIA MAIXNER NAMED CEDAR VALLEY BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Maria Maixner was named Cedar Valley Board Member of the Year on April 6th, 2016 at the 12th annual Cedar Valley Nonprofit Awards Luncheon at the University of Northern Iowa. The award from the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance honors outstanding individuals for their commitment to advancing the public good through exceptional nonprofit board leadership.

During a period of staff transition in 2015, Maria volunteered more than 20 hours per week, serving as interim office manager as well as Development Committee Chair on the Board of Directors. She developed strategies to improve accounting, scaled up fundraising efforts, and was lauded by fellow board members for securing a match forall donations made during #GivingTuesday. Maria also led research into best practices in nonprofit governance and drafted policies which the board adopted to ensure the organization met and exceeded industry standards - all while bringing a cheerful attitude to each task.

Maixner served on the Self-Help International Board of Directors from 2007-2015 and remains active as an Emeritus Board member. During her three terms of board service, Maria served in several leadership roles including Development Chair, Secretary, and Vice President.

TED WAITMAN RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARD FOR SERVICE TO SELF-HELP INTERNATIONAL

Ted Waitman received the 2015 Governor's Volunteer Award from Governor Terry E. Branstad during a special recognition ceremony on June 11 in Cedar Falls. Waitman was honored with an Individual Volunteer Award by Self-Help International for volunteering his time to plan the annual Lags Memorial Golf Tournament benefiting Self-Help's work to alleviate hunger in Ghana and Nicaragua.

"Each year, Ted donates hundreds of hours of his time and expertise to organize the annual Give A Hoot Fore Self-Help Weekend, and each year he manages to make it bigger and better," said Self-Help Executive Director Nora Tobin. "He's raised nearly a quarter million dollars over the years to alleviate hunger through the golf tournament and surrounding events." Funds raised with Waitman's assistance have enabled hundreds of families to get the training, education, and loans they need to improve their quality of life.

The Governor's Volunteer Awards (GVA) program was created in 1982, with inaugural awards presented in 1983. What began as a small program for state government agencies has expanded over the years and now provides all Iowa non-profit, charitable, and government organizations with a way to honor their volunteers with a prestigious state-level award.

LUCIA VEGA AWARDED INAUGURAL MERRY FREDRICK LEADERSHIP AWARD

In 2015, Lucia Vega, Program & Operations Manager for Self-Help Nicaragua, received the Merry Fredrick Leadership Award for her outstanding leadership particularly in the areas of accounting, reporting, and program management that have elevated the overall quality of Self-Help's work to alleviate hunger.

Thanks to the additional administrative support Lucia has provided since joining Self-Help Nicaragua, Self-Help has been better able to seek, implement, and report on grants in support of the training center and micro-credit program, as well as to share stories of beneficiaries, giving readers the opportunity to learn the impact they are making.

The Board of Directors created the award in honor of previous Executive Director Merry Frederick, who led Self-Help International for 16 years until her retirement in 2013, to recognize, promote, or reward leadership activities. Recognizing that leadership is provided at all levels of Self-Help's work, by the heads of the three offices, as well as by each and every staff member as we seek to teach and empower future leaders in Ghana and Nicaragua, the award is determined based on merit and fulfillment of Self-Help's mission.

2015 VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

For farmers, the field is the classroom.

In March, a group of four volunteers traveled to Nicaragua to help design the demonstration plot to be planted on the training center grounds. Board Member and Nicaragua Committee Chair, Bert Schou, led the trip and introduced Brian Foster and William and Jane Edwards to Self-Help's work in Nicaragua. The team spent their days on farm tours of Los Chiles coop and Ochomogo seed bank members, participating in micro-credit workshops, and planning and laying out demonstration plots, a trial comparing both QPM and non-QPM varieties as well as the impact of differing levels of nitrogen treatments.

The staff in Nicaragua prepared the land by laying drip irrigation so the plots could be planted even before rainy season officially began, and a second group of volunteers traveled to Nicaragua in May to help the SHI staff plant the demonstration plot area.

The planting was done, the same way the Nicaraguan farmers do it: by hand. Volunteers used simple sticks to measure the distance between kernels for consistent spacing and mark the space where a hole should be dug. Since the rains hadn't come, digging holes was hard work, but the team persevered. After each hole was dug, the next person in line dropped a seed in the hole, then covered it with the loose soil. Small plots were planted within the demonstration area and marked to indicate which variety of corn that was planted.

While planting by hand may seem basic, this method of planting in a straight row with event spacing is improving yields for farmers over the traditional method of simply scattering seed. The eldest volunteer in the group, Kelly Tobin, is an 83 year old farmer from southwest Iowa who reported that despite farming all his life, it was the first time he'd ever planted corn by hand. Volunteers gained a new appreciation for the labor intensive work the farmers engage in each growing season to produce enough food to feed their families, saying, "I've never been so hot or worked so hard!"

The plot included both quality protein maize and other non-QPM improved seed varieties. During the growing season, farmers were able to see and compare the different varieties of corn planted beside each other, and see first-hand the impact of applying different rates of fertilizer on the growing plant and the yields. The initial fertilizer application was 15-15-15 (NPK) and later the SHI staff applied 46% urea. Farmers could easily make comparisons when they visited the plots and learn about the economics of each plot area to help them determine which option would work best for their personal circumstances.

Thanks to these volunteer trips, American volunteers gained new appreciation for the daily challenges faced by Nicaraguan farmers and shared their expertise to teach hundreds of farmers to improve yield through the practical demonstration plot area. This education, paired with micro-loans for inputs and post-harvest storage, empowers farmers to improve their quality of life and take important steps toward self-sufficiency.

VOLUNTEER TRIPS

Nicaragua, March:
Bert Schou, William Edwards, Jane Edwards, Brian Foster

Nicaragua, May:
Beth Grabau, Keegan Kautzky, Nancy Swanson, Keith Swanson, Fr. Chuck Tobin, Jim Tobin, Kelly Tobin, Susan Tobin, Terry Tobin

*There were no volunteer trips to Ghana in 2015 due to health concerns surrounding the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa.

Nicaragua Volunteer Trips

2015 DONOR LIST

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all who made this life changing work possible

$15,000 +

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First UMC, Cedar Falls
First UMC, Coon Rapids
Gladbrook UMC
Hazel Dell UMC
Melvin UMC
Muscatine Wesley UMC
Nemaha UMC
New Hope UMC, Des Moines
Republic Community UMC
Ruthven UMC
Springdale UMC
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St. John's UMC, Davenport
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Bethel UMC
Bowman Chapel UMC
Bridgewater UMC
Carbon UMC
Christ UMC, Toledo
Christian UMC, Humeston
Churdan UMC
Collegiate UMC, Ames
Cottonwood UMC (New Life Parish)
Cresco UMW
Danbury UMC
Eagle Grove UMC
Eldridge UMC
Fairbank-Oran-Hazelton UMC
Farmers Chapel UMC
First UMC, Algona
First UMC, Boone
First UMC, Centerville
First UMC, Doon
First UMC, Shenandoah
Grace UMC, Brooklyn
Grace UMC, Glenwood
Grace UMC, Spencer
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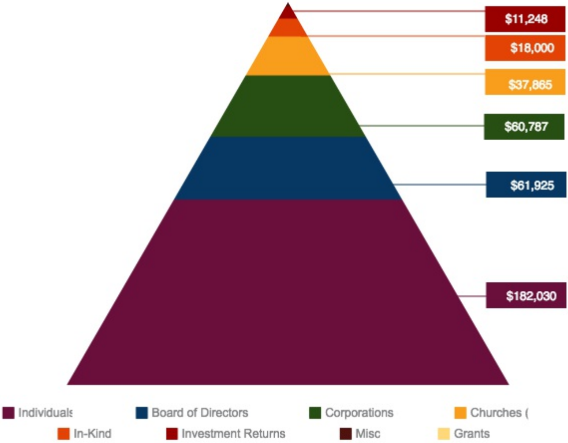

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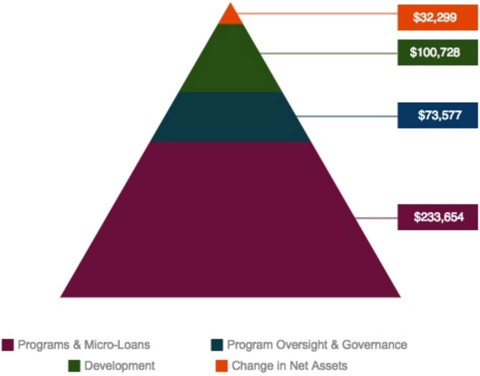

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