The Power of Partnerships: Celebrating Five Years of Transforming Rural Communities
Dear Friends,

The idea of partnership was fundamental to us when we created Groundswell International five years ago. We believe that the best partner in spreading viable solutions to other families and communities is a farmer who has succeeded on her or his own land. Partnership is the best way to ensure that farmers like Woba in Burkina Faso and Sita in Nepal - whose stories follow – are able to feed their families, send their children to school, regenerate their land, and grow as local leaders who are creating healthy communities, farms and food systems.

We also believe that local leaders and citizens are the best partners in navigating a society’s shifting challenges and opportunities, so Groundswell works closely with carefully selected local partner organizations. This allows us to build on their rooted wisdom and capacities, and to collaborate in developing programs that add new skills and resources to strengthen and spread real solutions to more farmers like Woba and Sita. As a global network of partner organizations, our strategies are constantly enriched by the grounded lessons and innovations that emerge from each context.

Our donors are an essential part of this partnership. Thank you, as we could not have made all of the vital work of the last five years possible without your support. We are committed to continuing to grow this global partnership together.

Sincerely,

Steve Brescia
Executive Director

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Nearly 800 million people around the world don’t have enough to eat. Eighty percent of those are family farmers in the developing world. Yet there are real, lasting solutions that can shift how we grow and sell food so that it is plentiful, healthy and just for people and the planet.

Groundswell International strengthens and unleashes the power of family farmers in Africa, the Americas and Asia to cultivate, grow and spread environmentally sound farming practices that work with nature, not against it. The result is people igniting local change to grow an abundance of healthy food, improve incomes, and revive landscapes so that communities – and ultimately entire nations – are better able to feed themselves today and well into the future.

It all begins with farmers who, with the right kind of support, can begin to transform not only their lives, but also the lives of other families and whole communities.
OUR MISSION: Strengthening rural communities to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up.

OUR STRATEGIES:
- Partnering with cutting edge local organizations around the world to strengthen communities and build wider alliances for social change and policy reform.
- Galvanizing widespread farmer-led innovation and adoption of sustainable farming methods that produce more food and income and regenerate the environment.
- Strengthening farmer-to-farmer teaching and learning networks that multiply successful practices across villages.
- Building strong local markets by re-connecting family farmers’ organizations and consumers through the sale of healthy, local food.
- Empowering women’s groups to participate in decision-making and gain access to resources.
- Amplifying our voices globally by documenting and sharing what works.

OUR IMPACT IN 2014
- 90,608 people directly participating in programs
- 418,079 people’s lives improved
- 12,854 farmers learned ecological farming methods and supported an additional 25,507 farmers to learn these techniques
- 23,568 acres of land under agroecological production

OUR ROLES
- Spreading Solutions to Change Lives
- Strengthening Local Organizations and Grassroots Movements
- Amplifying Our Voices
Woba Koubilenla is a young mother living in the village of Gatabli in Burkina Faso. Like most women in her village, Woba cannot read or write. She wants to make sure that her children do not have to drop out of school like she did, so she works hard to earn enough income to pay their school fees.

Elders in Woba’s village tell her how years ago they used to let the land rest, allowing the plant growth to restore soil fertility. Fallowing is no longer an option, however, and the land is becoming more barren every year. When the rains do come, the water just runs off the hard packed soil. The weather is changing, and the almost complete lack of rain in recent years has made it harder and harder for Woba to grow enough food to feed her family. Too often, they have had to skip meals and go to bed hungry.

A few years ago, Woba took the initiative to visit and learn from women in a nearby village who were growing vegetables during the dry season to feed their families and sell at market. She began to try this on her own farm. Then Groundswell and our local partner Association Nourrir Sans Détruire (ANSD) supported Woba and the women in her village to organize themselves, learn about improving the soil to grow more vegetables, negotiate access to land from the village chief, and obtain tools like picks and watering cans.

Woba started with a few seedlings and a small garden. In the first year, she made about $30 from vegetables that she sold at the nearby market. She was thrilled, as she had never made that kind of money from her farm before. Now Woba is growing an abundance of onions, cabbage,
“I am excited by the success I’ve had so far,” Woba says. “I want to increase the size of my plot and diversify the crops that I am growing. I also want to buy tools, so that more women have access to the shared village tools and can earn income for their families as well.”

In 2014, over 20 million people in Africa’s Sahel region suffered food shortages. Groundswell is working with farmers like Woba and partners like ANSD to change this.
In 2014, 12,854 farmers supported an additional 25,507 farmers to learn ecological farming methods and techniques farmer-to-farmer.

Five years ago, Sita Pandit struggled to feed her family of nine. Like many other women in her village in the rural Sindhupalchowk District of Nepal, Sita was isolated in part because she is female, with few opportunities to learn valuable skills. So, Sita was cautious but eager to get involved with BBP-Pariwar, Groundswell’s partner organization in Nepal, who visited her village and talked with women about changing things. BBP-Pariwar supported Sita and 13 other women to start a women’s savings and credit group, providing them with a precious opportunity to learn, share ideas, and create savings funds. The women of the village also learned sustainable vegetable gardening techniques, allowing them to stop using expensive chemical fertilizer and grow more nutritious food. Sita now grows beautiful cauliflower, garlic, onions, radishes and other crops to feed her family and sell the rest at the market to earn income. She has taught six other families about the ecological vegetable farming techniques, and together, they sold enough vegetables last year to earn a combined income of over $3,600. Sita was also selected by the local government agriculture office to serve as a vegetable garden demonstrator so that she can teach other farmers.

Groundswell is supporting BBP-Pariwar to work with 475 women and 22 women’s groups so they can become change agents in their own families and communities. The result: empowerment of women, more and better food grown, regenerated farm land, increased savings and income, and better family education and health.
“We have worked closely with Groundswell International to create this program to enable rural communities to dramatically improve their lives. Their support and collaboration has been invaluable. Groundswell also creates opportunities for us to share our strategies and lessons with other partners in the Americas, Africa and Asia, and learn from their successful strategies as well.”

– Cantave Jean-Baptiste, Founder and Director of PDL

Groundswell works side-by-side with carefully selected local partner organizations to tap into, strengthen and spread the rich store of homegrown knowledge and capacity. This ensures that solutions to hunger, poverty and environmental degradation are locally rooted, lasting and can flourish.

Groundswell and Partenariat pour le Développement Local (PDL) began their partnership in October 2009, strengthening farmers’ organizations to improve the lives of rural people in Haiti. We began by working with three peasant organizations. At that time, almost all of PDL’s funding came from Groundswell. After five years, Groundswell and PDL are now working with 17 peasant organizations representing over 209,000 people, and only 50 percent of PDL’s budget comes from Groundswell.

**What’s next?** We will work together to develop farmer-led businesses to supply food to nearby communities, to scale savings and credit cooperatives, and to enable rural citizens to make local government work more effectively.

**GROWTH OF HAITI PARTNERSHIP SINCE 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Organizations Supported</th>
<th>2010: 3</th>
<th>2014: 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of PDL’s Budget from Groundswell</td>
<td>2010: 100%</td>
<td>2014: 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of People Reached</td>
<td>2010: 104,438</td>
<td>2014: 209,934</td>
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**GROUNDSWELL & PDL’S EVOLVING PARTNERSHIP**

- Strengthening farmers’ organizations
- Sustainable farming, savings and credit, community health
- Creating farmer managed business to feed local populations
- Engaging citizens to make government work
- Convening stakeholders for regional development planning
Groundswell strengthens farmer-to-farmer teaching and learning networks and builds wider alliances that advocate for positive change from field to policy. We support partners and citizens to engage constructively with local government to create supportive policies that enable sustainable development.

**Citizen engagement:** For Kelle Gregory, a farmer in the Upper West region of Ghana, farming had become increasingly difficult. “In the past decade,” he said, “I have witnessed increasing trends of degradation in my community.” Kelle and his neighbors face parched and eroding soils, government policies inviting corporate GMO seeds, and low prices for their harvests. Groundswell and our local partner in Ghana, the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD), supported Kelle and other farmers to learn to restore moisture to the soil, allowing them to shift away from chemically intensive agriculture. CIKOD has negotiated a place at the table for farmers to work with district government officials to create more effective food security plans, and has allied with a coalition of Ghanaian NGOs to successfully block the rush to pass pro-GMO legislation without citizen input.

**Sharing innovations across borders:** Groundswell also creates a space for our partners to share innovative ideas with each other. In Ecuador, our local partner, EkoRural, is working in collaboration with Colectivo Agroecológico, on a national campaign to promote the importance of consuming responsibly grown, local food. Launched on World Food Day in 2014, the “250,000 Families” campaign is a five-year project to recruit 5% of Ecuador’s population to commit to invest at least 50% of their family food budget in ecologically grown food. Partners in Guatemala and Honduras are now developing similar strategies to celebrate and encourage people to eat food grown sustainably by family farmers.

**Documenting practical solutions:** In September 2014, Groundswell partners, staff and board convened in rural Haiti for a week, to share and document grounded strategies to spread agroecological farming. Look for our publication *Pathways to Spreading Agroecology* in the fall of 2015.
HOW YOU CAN GET MORE INVOLVED

Donate. Invest in building healthy, resilient communities. Donate today, or become a sustaining monthly supporter.

Sign up for our e-newsletter. Updates from the Ground comes out monthly and features stories and updates from around the world. Sign up on our website.

Host a house party or film screening. Invite a group of friends over for a dinner featuring local food and hopeful stories of global change. Groundswell will provide you with the information you need.

Visit and learn first hand. Visit Burkina Faso, Ecuador or Haiti to learn from the leaders who are creating healthy farming and food systems from the ground up. Dates are flexible for groups of 8 or more.

Become a volunteer ambassador. Spread the word about Groundswell in your community, collaborating closely with our staff.

Help raise funds for a specific project or program.
Priority needs in 2015 include:

• Supporting rural communities in Nepal to recover and rebuild from the earthquakes.
• Helping low-income families in North Carolina to grow healthy food where they live.
• Strengthening our partners in Latin American and Haiti to improve local seed saving, spread agroecological farming, and feed local populations.
• Spreading effective farming strategies to overcome the hunger crisis in West Africa.
• Supporting Haitian farmers to create businesses to earn income and sell food locally.

Questions? Call at 828.333.4719 or contact us at info@groundswellinternational.org.

Groundswell is a 501c3 nonprofit and a member of the Guidestar Exchange.
Donations are tax deductible and secure.

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“I support Groundswell International for one simple reason: it is one of the only organizations I have found that enables communities around the world to determine for themselves what their needs are and helps them to develop programs to meet those needs in ways that make sense for the people involved.”

– Angela Smith, Groundswell supporter, organic vegetable farmer and sustainable food activist
In 2014, Groundswell International invested nearly $1.3 million in strengthening rural communities in nine countries to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up. This work benefitted 418,079 people in all.

![Bar chart showing operating expenditures 2014](chart.png)

**Operating Expenditures 2014**
- Program Services: $1,296,175
- Fundraising: $121,521
- Management & General: $73,411
- Total Expenditures: $1,491,107

**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**
- Cash and Equivalents: $470,454
- Grants Receivable: $248,771
- Other Assets: $11,841
- Total Current Assets: $731,066

**Long-Term Assets**
- Endowment with Community Foundation: $23,017
- Property and Equipment, Net: $5,222
- Investments: $500
- Total Long-Term Assets: $28,739
- **Total Assets**: $759,805

**LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**

**Current Liabilities**
- Accounts Payable: $9,276
- Partner Disbursements Payable: $37,653
- Accrued Vacation: $5,884
- Total Current Liabilities: $52,813

**Net Assets**
- Unrestricted-Undesignated: $301,990
- Board Designated Endowment: $22,667
- Total Unrestricted: $324,657
- Temporarily Restricted: $381,985
- Permanently Restricted: $350
- Total Restricted: $382,335
- **Total Net Assets**: $706,992
- **Total Liabilities and Net Assets**: $759,805
YOU MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE – THANK YOU!

Groundswell is deeply grateful for the generous support of many individuals and organizations that partner with us to make our work transforming rural communities possible. We do not have space to list all donors, but we would like to extend a special thanks to the institutions and individuals listed below, many of whom have supported us since our founding.

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North Carolina
Haiti
Guatemala
Honduras
Mali
Nepal
Nepal

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