Dear Friends,

We face challenging times together, so it is even more vital that we continue to work together to create the transition to farming and food systems that are healthier for people and the planet.

At Groundswell International, we are convinced that in order to address poverty, hunger, climate change, and political instability we must start with people, invest in family farmers, support them to work with and regenerate natural resources, and construct real and lasting change from the ground up.

Your support has made it possible for us to make great strides in 2016 by:

- Strengthening agroecological farming and sustainable local food systems;
- Facilitating action-learning platforms with partners in 10 countries to generate grounded strategies to overcome pressing challenges;
- Supporting families and communities to dramatically improve their lives, promoting farmer-to-farmer networks to spread positive change, and contributing to enabling policies and markets;
- Documenting and sharing the lessons we have been learning together in a new book, *Fertile Ground: Scaling Agroecology from the Ground Up* (released in spring 2017); and
- Using our resources efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for your support and commitment to this vital work.

Sincerely,

Steve Brescia
Executive Director
How Your Support Made a Difference

**In 2016 we:**

- Partnered with cutting-edge organizations in 10 countries.

- Facilitated action-learning between these organizations and allies to innovate together and to improve strategies for improving nutrition, strengthening women’s leadership, developing local markets and food systems, and more effectively amplifying and scaling agroecology.

- Directly supported over 33,000 family farmers to innovate to improve their agroecological farming and their lives.

- Strengthened farmer-to-farmer networks and movements in each country.

- Improved the lives of over 375,000 people in tangible ways (increased food production, income, savings, and soil fertility) and intangible ways (more hope, esteem, organizational strength, and citizen participation).

- Regenerated 44,975 acres of farmland through improved agroecologial production.

- Contributed to more enabling policies and local markets.

- Provided over $1.4 million in financial support to partners.
In 2012, Lankoande Francois’ land in eastern Burkina Faso was barren. Like many in the area, his family often could not produce enough food for the year. When Groundswell International began to work with farmers like Lankoande to improve their farms through Association Nourrir Sans Détruire (ANSD), our local partner in Burkina Faso, this began to change.

He and his family built rock contour barriers to stop heavy rains from washing topsoil away; learned improved composting techniques; and dug hundreds of small planting pits on their land. When the rains came, the barriers and pits held the water, compost, and seeds where it was needed, allowing their millet and sorghum crops to thrive. Lankoande then learned strategies to allow trees to regenerate on his farm, further fertilizing the soil through nitrogen fixing and leaf litter.

Lankaoande’s family started small. By 2016, they had used these agroecological techniques to restore six acres of land – literally re-creating farmland where it had been lost. “I can now produce as much on these six acres as other farmers need 22 acres to produce,” said Lankoande. “We have enough food for our family for the whole year, and will sell surplus for income.”

“When I started digging [planting pits] on my farm, a woman passed by and asked if I was digging for gold. When she saw there was no gold, she thought I was a madman. Now people see that our granaries are full, and they know I am not a madman. There is gold here, but it is not what they thought.”

Lankoande is a part of a farmer-to-farmer network that ANSD and Groundswell are supporting that is reaching over 10,000 families with impactful strategies like these.
**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:**
We support **farmer-centered strategies to scale agroecology** – starting from the ground up, creating a multiplier effect to spread to more farmers, and promoting enabling contexts.

**Vertical Scaling Examples:**
- Using local language radio to broadcast agroecological alternatives to over one million people in eastern Burkina Faso.
- Shifting government subsidies in Ghana from chemical fertilizers to organic compost produced by the national waste disposal company.
- Mobilizing 250,000 citizens in Ecuador to consume sustainably produced food from local farmers.

**Horizontal Scaling Examples:**
- Reaching 60 villages and 10,000 families in a farmer-to-farmer network in Burkina Faso.
- Supporting 15 locally-led farmer organizations in Haiti; creating a farmer-to-farmer network involving 20,000 farmers.
- Working in 65 communities in Honduras to generate solutions to drought and climate change.

**Depth Example:** In Haiti, Groundswell partners with PDL to enable people like Silmène Veillard to improve their lives and become local leaders. “Now my garden is beautiful! It is producing much more and I feel like I know how to work the land better… I am able to feed my children well every day… I became an Agriculture Volunteer, working with other community members to better prepare their farms with sustainable, productive practices as well… In 2014, I borrowed money to purchase a new goat, and I currently have seven goats, three cows, three pigs, and 10 chickens. Now I am able to send my three children to school. I feel like I have more value in the community.”
Fertile Ground provides us with a global testimony of key agroecological experiences from the Americas, systems. This volume represents a pivotal contribution to achieving this goal. Its potential to fully integrate science, practice and social movements to build more sustainable food systems from climate change to domestic violence. These stories aren’t just inspiration—they’re ammunition for a debate about the future of food and farming.

This book is filled with good examples that demonstrate the profound potential for agroecology to successfully move in that direction. Plants that fertilize the soil (what are often called “green manure/cover crops”) are capable of not only deepened, spread to an ever growing number of farmers, and integrated into social movements and policy.

To order the book, go to groundswellinternational.org and select “Fertile Ground Book Release” under the “About Us” section.

Thank you
We are deeply grateful for all of the individuals and foundations that continue to generously support the work of Groundswell International. You are transforming lives and creating healthy farming and food systems from the ground up!

How You Can Help
• Donate now.
• Invest in the power of farmers by becoming a sustaining, monthly donor.
• Host Groundswell staff and partners to allow others to learn about this work.
• Organize a presentation of Fertile Ground: Scaling Agroecology from the Ground Up.
• Join a learning visit to a program site.
• Make Groundswell a part of your legacy by including us in your will or gifting us stock.

For additional information, please contact info@groundswellinternational.org.
In 2016, Groundswell International invested over $1.8 million in strengthening rural communities in ten countries to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up.

Operating Expenditures 2016

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Unaudited Financials. FY 2016 is available on our website. Full financials available upon request.

www.groundswellinternational.org
Questions? Call at 202.832.9352 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.