



groundswell
international

ANNUAL REPORT **2020**



www.groundswellinternational.org



Letter from the **Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

It is perhaps not a coincidence that in 2020 we have confronted multiple crises at once: COVID-19; disrupted food supply chains; climate change; growing inequality; migration; and a painful reckoning with the legacies of racism, sexism and colonialism. This is true even in the midst of unprecedented levels of global wealth and technological innovation. The rules of the game aren't working for many people, exacerbating political divisions. But there may be hope in the growing recognition that these challenges are connected, and that we need to act boldly to create real and lasting solutions.

Groundswell International is working to support people and communities to create those real solutions from the ground up. In doing so, we rely on the first principles we have observed for many years about how communities organize for successful change in the face of profound challenges:

- **Common good:** Creating a shared vision to meet shared challenges;
- **Solidarity:** Building trust and collaboration.
- **Regeneration:** Living productively with nature instead of destroying it.
- **Local democracy:** Nurturing economies that are of, by and for the people.

Much like building healthy soil where it has been depleted, building real solutions based on these principles is patient work over multiple seasons grounded in local communities and places. Progress during one season begets life and progress in the next. West African farmers often start restoring desertified land by building rock barriers to stop their soil from washing away, then progressively try out other strategies: planting pits to capture rainwater; improved use of compost; regrowing trees on their farms to nourish the soil and provide valuable resources; selecting the best local seed varieties. As they regenerate their soils, communities also regenerate their wellbeing.

As we create the way forward in the face of so many challenges, it is more essential than ever to cultivate and scale real, ground-up solutions. Thank you for continuing to move ahead together with us and being a part of this work.

In gratitude,

Steve Brescia

MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER

RESPONDING TO CRISIS IN 2020

Groundswell International is a network of partner organizations working in ten countries with a shared mission:

strengthening communities to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up.

Our decentralized approach has always put local people at the center, strengthening their capacity to create positive change in the face of multiple challenges. In this report we highlight examples of local farmers' movements who are: building resilience to climate change in Haiti; regenerating degraded land to overcome food insecurity in West Africa; and reversing the dangerous erosion of seed biodiversity in Mexico.

Groundswell International

THEORY OF CHANGE

Create a virtuous cycle by strengthening the capacity of communities to sustainably improve their lives.



Because of these principles, when COVID-19 struck in March 2020, we were able to respond quickly with our partners to:

- Carry out rapid community needs assessments.
- Raise \$106,500 in emergency support for partners in eight countries.
- Promote public information campaigns to inform over 50,000 people about COVID-19, using local language radio, loudspeakers at local markets, posters, and flyers.
- Benefit over 20,000 people with locally produced masks and other PPE and hygiene like simple handwashing stations.
- Support community health promoters to spread the word to other communities.
- Respond to 500 highly food insecure families with emergency food from local sources.
- Support 127 families to create savings and credit groups, receive and pass on livestock to strengthen household assets, or establish seed banks.

We are deepening our work to spread long term solutions, strengthening agroecology and healthy local economies.



1

global network

collaborating in 10 countries

supporting

557 community based organizations

across 829 communities

**with over 96,145 farmers
applying agroecology**

**to regenerate over 322,000 acres
of degraded land**

and improve the lives of

542,000 people



HAITI

IMPACTS

- The program is working with five Peasant Associations with over 7,000 members.
- We are strengthening their capacity to receive small grants, set up community seed banks and tree nurseries to promote agroforestry, and promote farmer-to-farmer training to reach 3,000 more family farmers with climate resilient strategies.
- Community leaders are working to better engage and coordinate with local government and Agriculture Ministry officials.

Scaling Agroecology to Address Climate Change

In Haiti, Groundswell is working with *Partenariat pour le Développement Local* (PDL) to scale farmer-led agroecology to address climate change. This is a particular challenge in the context of Haiti's ongoing political crisis, in addition to the onset of COVID-19 which limited community meetings and learning exchanges. We are supporting farmers to spread effective agroecological strategies including highly diversified farm plots - with a wide range of trees, grains, beans, tubers, root crops, and vegetables - that are resistant to drought and produce food throughout the year.

In 2020 over 360 community leaders, nearly 40% women, were engaged in participatory workshops to better understand the causes of climate change, based on their own experience and analysis, and what farming families can do about it. They are spreading this knowledge to others.

"A light really went off in the participants eyes," commented PDL Director, Cantave Jean-Baptiste. "They gained a deeper understanding of why they are affected by droughts, changes in rainfall, as well as hurricanes and floods. They see that a common vision for collective action is necessary, and that alternatives exist. Young people in particular are both frustrated and motivated, knowing how their lives are impacted and that they need to convince their elders to make changes in their farming practices."

BURKINA FASO



IMPACTS

- Groundswell is collaborating with ANSD to work across 104 villages in three districts in eastern Burkina Faso, with more than 350 local farmers' groups of women and men.
- The village farmers' groups are organized in district-level networks to coordinate the spread and promotion of agroecology.
- Over 22,000 farmers are implementing agroecological innovations on more than 84,015 acres of land, improving the lives of over 110,000 people.
- They have reclaimed abandoned land for farming and obtained up to 130% yield increases of millet and sorghum, while regreening the landscape and adapting to climate change.

Overcoming Soil Fertility Collapse

A lesson of COVID-19 is that, investments must promote farming and food systems that are not only productive, but also sustainable, resilient, nutrition-sensitive, and not dependent on expensive external inputs and distant value chains. Nowhere is this more important than in the Sahel region of West Africa, where the farming and food system has long been in deep crisis. Nearly 30 million people are struggling to produce enough food in the wake of land degradation and climate change.

In Burkina Faso, we have been working with Association Nourrir sans Détruire (ANSD) to strengthen a territorial movement in the eastern part of the country for farmer-led innovation and spread of agroecological alternatives. This includes natural regeneration of trees and agroforestry, mixed cropping, rainwater harvesting, soil conservation and composting. Farmers are obtaining incredible results despite the water scarcity near the encroaching Sahara desert. Women are playing a leading role, organizing to produce vegetables in the dry season, and creating more nutritious household gardens that integrate drought resilient moringa and baobab. We are now piloting ways to strengthening local food systems by better connect agroecological farmers with local consumers.

SOLUTIONS *From The Ground Up* DURING CRISIS

COLLABORATION

In the Time of COVID-19

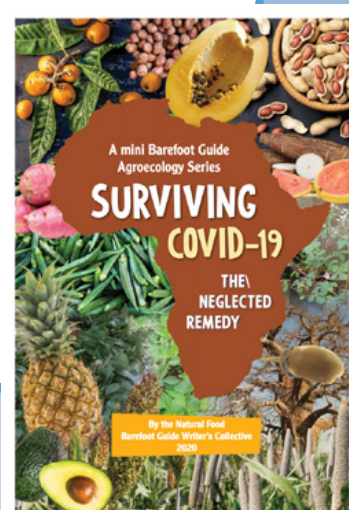
Spreading ground-up solutions requires local leadership and practical results at the level of farms, communities, local organizations and territories. But Groundswell recognizes that we must work in alliances to contribute to wider systems change. That is why we are committed to strengthening social movements and networks for lasting change. We are strong participants in the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), a network that works across most of the 55 countries in Africa on the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology.

In 2020 in response to COVID-19, we contribute to the AFSA publication *The Barefoot Guide to Surviving COVID-19*. Groundswell International's Peter Gubbels was a part of, the Natural Food Barefoot Guide Writer's Collective, which wrote the guidebook.

It documents how people across Africa can weather the COVID-19 pandemic, debunking many misconceptions from the food industry. The guide provides real, sustainable solutions to the health challenges families face, and guidance on producing and eating healthy local food.

This is the first book in a new agroecology series produced by (AFSA).

AFSA
ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA



MEXICO



IMPACTS

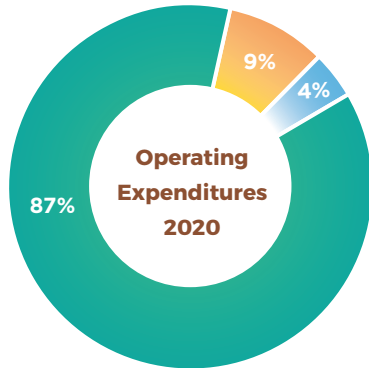
- Even during the COVID-19 crisis, partners have established 38 plots for participatory seed improvement.
- On 123 plots, farmers are producing and distributing 92 different native varieties of corn, beans, wheat and amaranth.
- They have produced enough seed to sow 133 acres of corn (2,160 lbs. of seed); 103 acres of wheat (7,385 lbs.); and 463 acres of beans (6,195 lbs.).

Reversing the loss of native seed varieties

In southern Mexico, the loss of native seed varieties is a crisis undermining indigenous communities and cultures. In response, Groundswell is facilitating a collaborative action-learning process with eight local NGOs to strengthen farmers's capacities to recover, improve, produce and distribute quality native seeds to farmers. We are prioritizing corn, beans, wheat and amaranth seed. Improving farmers' management of seed biodiversity contributes to increased food production and resilience to climate change. The program is strengthening local organizations working in the states of Campeche, Chiapas and Oaxaca, with 1,150 families spread across 53 communities. "In spite of pandemic restrictions, the organizations were also able to organize seed fairs, community events and seed exchanges," said program coordinator Edwin Escoto. "We saw the creative work of communities to ensure their own food production during the crisis, and native seeds are the foundation of this. Many young people have been motivated to return to communities to farm and engage in this work."

Since 2009, Groundswell International has invested over \$15 million in strengthening rural communities in 10 countries to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES 2020



Programs	Fundraising	Management & General
Programs	87%	\$ 2,331,466
Fundraising	9%	\$ 250,140
Management & General	4%	\$ 90,723
Total Expenditures		\$ 2,672,329

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash and Equivalents	\$ 1,579,212
Grants Receivable	21,933
Contributions Receivable	8,209
Prepaid Expenses	10,852
Deposits	1,725

Total Current Assets \$ 1,621,931

Long-Term Assets

Investments	-----
Endowment	26,885
Property and Equipment, Net	-----

Total Long-Term Assets \$ 26,885

Total Assets \$1,648,816

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 19,110
Partner Grants Payable	19,664
Accrued Vacation	7,149

Total Current Liabilities \$ 45,923

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 201,836
With Donor Restrictions	1,401,057

Total Net Assets \$1,602,893

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$1,648,816





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Groundswell thanks these generous donors and the many others who contributed in 2020, including some who wish to remain anonymous.



GET INVOLVED

Thank you for joining Groundswell International in empowering family farmers to create real and lasting solutions from the ground up.

There are many ways you can get involved.



Spread the Word

Wish more people knew about Groundswell? Share the latest updates with your friends on social media.



Cultivate the Movement

Interested in hosting an event to benefit Groundswell? Contact us to receive tools for a successful fundraiser.



Grow Real Solutions

We are grateful for all donations! Become a monthly donor to sustain and grow Groundswell's impact.



Leave Your Legacy

Want to make a legacy gift that will continue to bear fruit for years to come? Please reach out to learn more.

Call 202-952-2322 or contact us at support@groundswellinternational.org.

Stay up to date with the latest from Groundswell International.
Sign up for our e-newsletter at www.groundswellinternational.org/enews.

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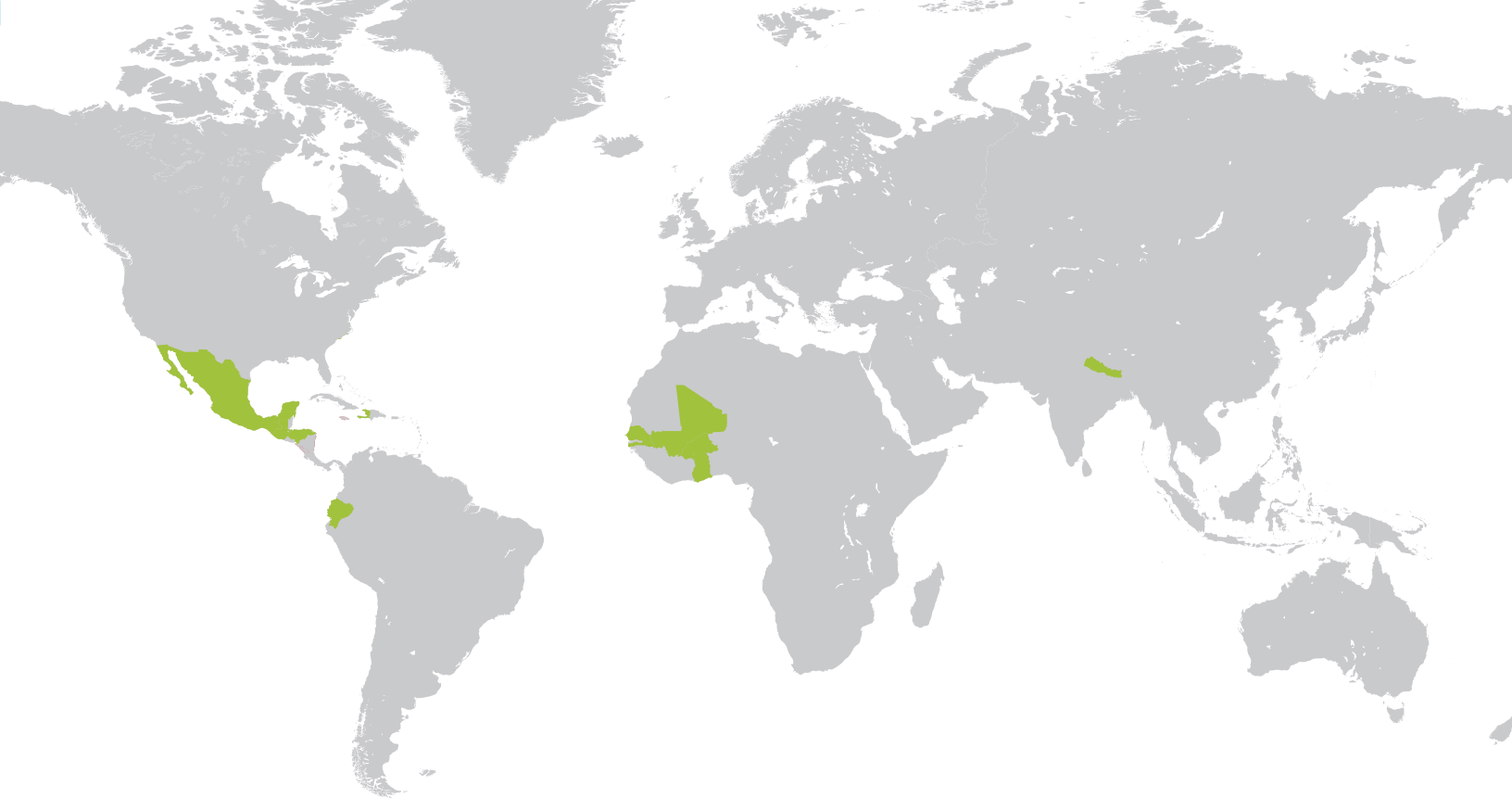
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