

Towards a Brighter Future



Introduction

Since 2010, seven Funds have been established through the generosity of the Baker Estate, under four sectoral themes: Food Security, Livelihoods, Maternal and Child Health, and Justice. These Funds have energized World Renew's work by supporting creative experimentation, have allowed us to amplify our impact by taking proven solutions to more communities and regions, and have encouraged learning and the sharing of knowledge resulting in enriched programs.

While each of the Funds is managed slightly differently, World Renew has worked to ensure quality programming by having panels of experts—both internal and external to the organization—review project plans and provide feedback. This serves dual purposes: not only does it strengthen each project's design, particularly supporting some of our smallest and lowest capacity partners, it also leads to a cross-fertilization of knowledge in the organization and among our partners as we learn from each other through the review process. With application guidelines and rigorous processes of review and revision in place, the Baker Estate-funded projects have proven that it is possible to strategically invest small grants and achieve significant impact.

In 2022-2023, the Baker Estate funded initiatives in 17 of the 19 countries where World Renew collaborates with local development partners. 29 local partner organizations impacted the lives of 88,924 participants (58,044 female) in Asia, Africa, and Central America through the 44 funded projects, each tailored to the unique needs and resources of the communities served. The breadth and depth of the impact of this programming cannot be understated. As the recently completed evaluation of the 15-year Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Fund (2009-2024) states:

“We believe that it is no mistake that World Renew's strategic plan's areas of impact focus are directly representative of the Baker funding streams of Food Security, Health, and Economic Empowerment. The Baker Funds, as seen in the observations in this report, have allowed World Renew as an organization to significantly develop its capacity, knowledge, and programmatic toolkits in these areas.”

In this way, the Baker Estate's support has not only enabled us to expand our programming, but also to refine our approaches, to sharpen our focus, and to enhance our effectiveness. For example, our Maternal and Child Health (MNCH) methodology has been refined over time thanks to the Child Survival Program Expansion Fund, and those best practices have recently been written up in a user-friendly manual that non-health experts around the world are using to deliver strong MNCH programming for maximum impact. Similarly, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security funding has also allowed World Renew to establish and institutionalize a core set of agricultural activities that increase crop yields, improve soil fertility, increase crop diversity, and grow incomes—essentially allowing us as an organization to establish an agricultural strategy or 'toolbox'.

Successful programming has also allowed us to leverage Baker Estate funding for additional support, with the flexibility of the Estate's funding giving us the opportunity to hone our skills and prove the strength of our methods and results to gain the trust of institutional donors. For example, MNCH programming in West Africa* funded through the Baker Estate is now being replicated in Senegal with funding from a US-based family foundation. In Uganda, successful work supporting value addition of agricultural products resulted in a tripling of the budget through the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation, significantly expanding the project's impact. Programming funded through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Growing Hope Globally, the Vista Hermosa Foundation, and others all have their roots in projects that were initially funded through the Baker Estate, revealing the incredible overall scale of the impact of the Estate's funding.

While there's so much to celebrate, as we reflect upon the progress and challenges of 2022-2023, we find ourselves in a world grappling with persistent human conflict, severe inflation, climate-induced natural disasters and migration, and global hunger still far above pre-pandemic levels. The effects of this global crisis have been deeply felt by the communities World Renew and our partners serve, underscoring the urgent need for sustained support and innovative solutions.

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What continues to set World Renew apart as an organization and amplifies our impact in this harsh reality is our holistic approach, which addresses the needs and priorities of individuals, families, and entire communities. Our programs are locally-led—recognized as the most efficient and effective means of implementation—building on the existing assets and skills in communities and strengthening the capacity of local organizations, equipping them with the tools and knowledge needed to effect positive change.

It is with gratitude and delight that we present this summary report on the projects generously supported by the Baker Estate in 2022-2023. The following sections of the report focus on each of the four sectors supported by the Baker

Estate, revealing a diverse array of project outcomes and stories that illuminate the resilience and determination of both our program participants and dedicated staff, demonstrating the power of partnership and of collective action. From Cambodia to Guatemala, across Zambia and beyond, the impact of the Baker funding has been profound, resulting in communities that are more equitable and compassionate, where hope is renewed, lives are reconciled, and the harmony of creation is restored. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

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Child Survival Program Expansion Fund



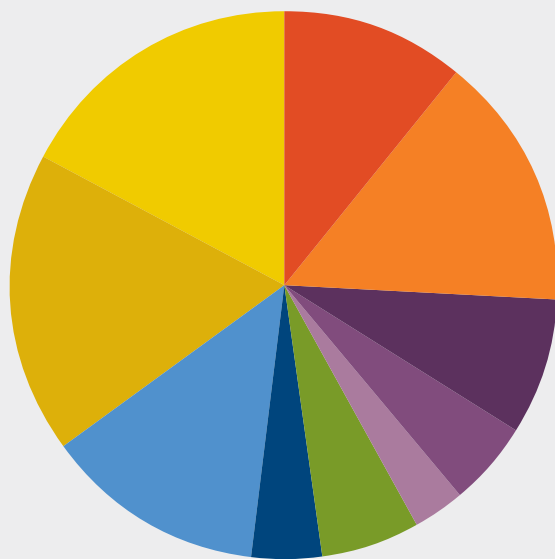
Nine years ago, the Baker Estate supported World Renew's establishment of a Fund "to maintain our strong maternal and child health program in Bangladesh . . . and to expand this programming to high-needs countries where we do little of this programming." We could never have imagined then where we would be with this work today. With the addition of a second 10-year Child Survival Program Expansion (CSPE) grant from the Estate in 2022, the programming has expanded to 11 countries and 18 World Renew partners, with our team in Laos planning to begin program implementation and the Bangladesh and West Africa* teams training additional partners in the programming in the year ahead.

The CSPE Fund has brought highly effective and low-cost interventions to 411 target communities by improving access to services and by addressing sociocultural norms and perceptions that keep families from adopting practices that ensure health and growth. The focus is on the first 1,000 days of life (from conception to a child's second birthday), which is the critical window of opportunity to improve the survival and nutrition of mothers and young children. Programming focuses on needs identified through initial surveys that uncover issues specific to the area and the reasons why mothers and families are not implementing good health practices. A targeted strategy related to the specific behavior changes desired is then laid out, focusing on care during pregnancy, safe delivery, postnatal care, child and family health, sanitation and hygiene, and family planning.

World Renew's local partners use participatory approaches to then mobilize communities to form groups of mothers, and train and support local community health volunteers (CHVs) to counsel these women and their families and to conduct group discussion sessions; since 2014, 2,641 CHVs have been trained and supported. Behavior change efforts also reach men, and community-wide health promotion aims to create a supportive environment. Staff also collaborate with local public health services to coordinate and ensure the delivery of services to the target communities. The approach also helps support the adoption of complementary project interventions which improve the health and nutrition of families, such as kitchen gardening, planting of fruit trees, and cooking lessons.

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Child Survival Program Expansion Fund — \$181,910



- SATHI (Bangladesh)
- EFICOR (India)
- ADS Pwani (Kenya)
- AICT Geita (Tanzania)
- PAG Karamoja (Uganda)
- AMI San Lucas (Guatemala)
- Nkhoma Public Health (Malawi)
- UCZ Mwandu (Zambia)
- SEL* (West Africa)*
- Beacon of Hope (Nigeria)

Overall, significant improvements in maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) practices have been observed in all 331 communities currently participating in the CSPE program, with evidence of spread into neighboring communities as well. This uptake outside of participating communities confirms that the program design is working and supports the case for further replication of this incredibly low-cost programming. As a result, World Renew received a \$15,000 grant from Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH)—a network of over 100 faith-based organizations working in international health worldwide—to develop a manual outlining our approach to MNCH programming. The manual was completed in June and since then, CCIH has granted World Renew \$20,000 in further funding to develop practical tools for staff to use in MNCH program implementation. The manual and tools will be shared widely across World Renew and the CCIH network, ensuring good practice for MNCH program continues to spread. With a woman dying during pregnancy or childbirth every two minutes, according to the United Nation’s *Trends in Maternal Mortality* (Feb 2023), we are grateful that CSPE programming has proved effective and scalable, and that we can share best practices beyond the target communities to impact the health sector as a whole.

In 2022-2023, 33 new communities were added to the CSPE program. CSPE project locations vary widely in both topography and social and demographic characteristics, resulting in variations in project focus:

In **Asia**, our work has supported SATHI’s programming in Atpara, **Bangladesh**. 100% of children in the 84 communities in the program area are now given colostrum within an hour of birth (up from 64% at baseline) and 95% of children under 2 now have the minimum dietary diversity (up from 44% at baseline). Work with men and with adolescents who have children at a young age has been highly impactful, and the establishment of kitchen gardens and latrines continues to be an integral part of this program; 1,666 kitchen gardens were established and 26 latrines were constructed in 2022-2023 alone. World Renew has secured funding to expand this program to 44 communities in an adjacent area, further spreading the program’s impact.

In 23 villages in northeastern **India**, women in the CSPE program testify to a significant shift in their confidence and empowerment, even voicing their concerns and issues to district officials. Through comprehensive outreach, our partner EFICOR has successfully trained 40 CHVs (40f) who counseled 128 pregnant women and lactating mothers over the last year, with home visits providing personalized counseling sessions to address questions and concerns around pregnancy, birth, nutrition, and immunizations. 400 families benefited from medicated mosquito nets and 186 families received laying hens to increase meat and egg consumption.

In **Southern Africa**, UCZ Mwandu trained 35 CHVs (26f) in **Zambia**, who formed 28 parent groups to promote health and nutrition practices, with each CHV receiving an

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Infant and Young Child Feeding Kit to support them as they train others. 10 cooking demonstrations were conducted, providing hands-on experiences in preparing nutritious meals, and vegetable seeds were distributed for home gardens to improve access to fresh produce. 4 Safe Motherhood Action Groups were established, with 7 lead parents (6f) trained and now functioning as gender advocates, promoting gender equality and inclusivity in their communities.

Nkohma Public Health's second CSPE program in **Malawi** began with baseline survey work, and will aim to serve 600 caregivers in an area that was not covered by its recently concluded CSPE project. Only 12% of children in the area currently have minimum levels of dietary diversity and only 40% of caregivers with children under 2 years seek appropriate treatment within 24 hours of their child falling sick. These and other survey findings will now inform the project's focus.

In one country in **West Africa***, CHVs trained by our partner, SEL, shared MNCH lessons with 6,681 participants (5,476f) through care groups and home visits. New this year, lessons were also shared on the radio twice a week in three different languages, reaching people well beyond target communities—including villages in two neighboring countries. The radio programs used participant testimonies, expert interviews, and skits to discuss key MNCH practices, including preventing and treating malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia.

Beacon of Hope's CSPE programming in **Nigeria**, which used Village Development Committees (VDCs) for community mobilization, facilitated immunizations for 628 children and supported the establishment of 441 kitchen gardens. Complementing hygiene trainings, 26 (26f) CHVs and VDC representatives were trained in 2022-2023 on soapmaking for home use and have since trained 52 others (52f), with some even starting small soapmaking businesses. 73 events raised awareness on topics such as hand washing and birth spacing, including dramas, skits, and street theater performed at community gatherings, market squares, worship centers, healthcare facilities, and schools to target husbands and mothers-in-law, among others. 91% of children in the 79 participating communities are now breastfed exclusively for the first six months, up from 61% at baseline.

In **East Africa**, AICT Geita's program in **Tanzania** completed its first year, with adjustments made to focus on 12 communities in one district to amplify program impact and effectiveness. 24 CHVs (12f) were identified and trained and are now conducting weekly follow up visits with pregnant and lactating mothers and running support groups for mothers at antenatal clinics. 187 participants (175f) were trained on kitchen gardening to improve health and nutrition, with 23 gardens already established.

“Having a garden was the best thing I ever did for my daily living. It reduced the cost of buying vegetables and has improved the health of my children and household. It has also created a profit and what I love the most is I'm surrounded by green!”

Dinchin Friday, participant, Beacon of Hope, Nigeria

In **Kenya** and **Uganda**, new CSPE programs completed baseline data collection. Building off of successful programming that concluded the previous year, ADS Pwani's program in Kenya will include a specific aim to focus on the needs of young mothers and to reduce teenage pregnancies, while the program in Uganda will target 450 households in a largely pastoral area in the northeast with PAG Karamoja, a World Renew partner that is new to CSPE programming.

Programming in **Guatemala, Central America**, also began in 2022-2023, with baseline survey work in the 7 target communities revealing the areas of MNCH programming that our partner AMI San Lucas will concentrate on in the years ahead. Among other focuses, the project will aim to improve rates of exclusive breastfeeding (currently at 16%), vitamin A supplementation (currently at 14%), and water, sanitation and hygiene practices to ensure improved maternal and child health.

In total, \$186,630 of CSPE funding was dispersed in 2022-2023. Grants totaling \$181,910 funded programming, while \$4,720 was spent on World Renew Bangladesh, Kenya, and Nigeria staff participation at CCIH's first in-person conference since 2019, held in Washington, DC, in June 2023. Nancy TenBroek spoke in a plenary on *“Lessons from Failure and Conflict”*, Ruth Kayima presented *“Motivating Community Health Volunteers: Exploring stipend-free models for sustainable community health programming in Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda”*, and Melissa Yakubu presented *“MNCH program implementation in Nigeria: Community partnerships with the local church and Village Development Committees.”* Over 175 global health practitioners attended the event from 29 countries, with the sessions also livestreamed and recordings posted online, bringing a spotlight to our Baker-supported CSPE programming.

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NURTURING HEALTH AND GROWTH: SANJHALI'S JOURNEY FROM ANEMIA TO WELLNESS

Sanjhali*, 29, lives in Sahibganj district*. To support themselves, Sanjhali and her husband, Kariya*, depend on the income they generate from day labor and agriculture. The couple feel blessed to have recently welcomed a healthy baby boy at the Government Hospital, especially since due to poor diet, neglected health, and lack of antenatal care (ANC) checkups in the first three months of pregnancy, Sanjhali's and her baby's health were at risk.

When Jivanlata*, a Community Health Volunteer (CHV) trained by World Renew's local partner, EFICOR, stepped in to assist the couple, she advised them to acquire a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) card and register at the local health center. Following Jivanlata's guidance, Sanjhali completed the process, underwent ANC checkups, and received necessary vaccinations, including tetanus. And at one of her checkups, Sanjhali learned she was anemic.

Through the Baker Estate-funded program, EFICOR also promoted and provided trainings on kitchen gardening in Sanjhali's community. In one training session, 20 participants learned about double-digging to increase drainage and aeration and implemented what they learned to organize their garden beds with rows of seeds. Sanjhali was one participant who benefited from the trainings and actively practiced what she learned, guided by EFICOR staff. Soon her vegetables, like those of the other participants, began to thrive. "I began to enjoy more vegetable-rich meals which led to improvements in my health, including an end to my struggle with anemia," Sanjhali said.

Sanjhali and Kariya extend heartfelt gratitude for being educated on health care, obtaining an MCH card, and establishing a flourishing kitchen garden. These interventions collectively bolstered their family's nutrition, overall health, and access to crucial support systems.

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WORLD RENEW'S CHILD SURVIVAL PROGRAMMING PROMOTES:

PREGNANCY

- MINIMUM FOUR ANTENATAL CARE VISITS
- FOLIC ACID SUPPLEMENTATION
- ANTIMALARIAL MEDICATION
- NUTRITIOUS DIET



DELIVERY

- FACILITY BIRTHS
- SKILLED BIRTH ATTENDANTS AT BIRTH



POSTNATAL

- TIMELY INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING / ENSURING NEWBORNS ARE GIVEN COLOSTRUM AT BIRTH
- EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING FOR 6 MONTHS



CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH

- IMMUNIZATIONS
- VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION
- USE OF ORAL REHYDRATION THERAPY AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP IN CASES OF DIARRHEA AND FEVER
- INFANT & YOUNG CHILD FEEDING PRACTICES / INCLUSION OF GROWTH NUTRIENTS IN DIET
- USE OF BED NETS



WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

- HAND WASHING WITH SOAP AT FIVE CRITICAL TIMES
- IMPROVED SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER
- IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES



FAMILY PLANNING

- BIRTH SPACING



LISTENING AND LEARNING TO IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Like many women in her community in West Africa*, Salamatou* continued to work in the fields and did not seek regular medical care when she became pregnant with her first child. She shared, “Not only did I not make regular prenatal visits, but I also didn’t rest. I continued to carry out activities such as gardening, working in the fields, pounding grain, going into the bush to gather wood, going to the well to draw water, carrying heavy loads, and I didn’t take the time to eat well...”

Salamatou’s delivery proved very difficult, and she could not understand why she suffered so much. She is grateful that one evening while listening to the radio, as she does every evening, she tuned into a program focused on teaching about proper pregnancy practices. “I learned that it’s really important to make prenatal visits. The narrator explained it well and beautifully, accompanied by testimonials and a skit,” Salamatou shared. “Through this program, the narrator clarified that these visits allow the pregnant woman to know if she’s in good health or not.”

Through the Baker Estate-funded radio program presented by World Renew’s local partner, SEL, Salamatou also learned about the importance of prenatal vitamins, eating nutrient-rich foods, and avoiding labor-intensive activities, and about signs of danger during pregnancy. “After hearing this, I appreciated it and decided to put everything I learned into practice,” she said.

Salamatou’s pregnancy with her second child has been considerably different. She explained, “Now I go for prenatal consultations, if I feel unwell, I’m taken to the health center to find out what the problem is, I don’t do hard work, I eat well and nutritiously too, and I rest well. This has enabled me to be in good health during my second pregnancy. Now I’m in my eighth month of pregnancy, I’m doing very well, and I expect to give birth in good condition.”

Salamatou says her husband also appreciates all the knowledge she gained listening to the radio program and is insisting she continues to practice all she learned and that she gives birth at a health center rather than at home. “He asks that I continue to make visits even for future pregnancies. And if I feel unwell or go into labor, he will take me to the health center,” Salamatou smiled. “I’m very happy and I’d like to thank SEL and its partner for the radio program.”



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Community-Based Justice Programs Fund

Impacts at a Glance

18,877 people involved in community-based justice programs

321 people assisted through process to receive identification documents

1,446 people benefited from trauma healing

5,810 people trained on land and property rights

12,244 people participated in gender dialogues

Poverty is inextricably linked to the presence of injustice and inequitable systems. We can be compelled by compassion to ease someone's suffering, but without responding to *why* someone is suffering from poverty and transforming the related systems, policies, norms, and practices, we may never impact lasting change. At World Renew, this understanding is etched into our very mission—being “compelled by God’s deep passion for justice and mercy”. We recognize that to ‘do justice’ we must bring about harmonious relationships between God, people, and creation—and thus mend or dismantle unhealthy, broken, and destroyed relationships, systems, and structures. Our development efforts risk becoming mere temporary fixes if we do not address the root causes that perpetuate poverty, making justice work one of the cornerstones upon which lasting change is built.

World Renew’s unique approach to justice programming supports and builds the capacity of local partners and communities so that *they* can advocate for and lead change, rather than leading the efforts ourselves. Awakened, organized, and mobilized communities have their own power to influence and change the behavior of individuals, families, and beyond. Communities that are well poised to advocate for themselves, involve others as needed, and work to create change are at the heart of our transformational development model and can significantly reduce the gap in access to justice.

2022-2023 represented the sixth year of the Community-Based Justice Programs Fund. While many of these thematic areas of justice programming intersect, areas of focus included:

Peacebuilding – Deep conflict exists between and within communities—often between ethnic or religious groups or between people with conflicting livelihoods—and is often worsened by poverty and resource scarcity. World Renew and our partners aim to create dialogue, space, and structures for peacebuilding to heal wounds and bring resolution to conflicts.

- In one country in **West Africa***, violent conflict exists between farmers and pastoralists over access to and control of land. PEN held a forum for 70 local leaders and government representatives (Of) of 5 ethnicities on peacebuilding between farmers and pastoralists during

“Women were not allowed to participate in certain community activities or to hold certain positions of influence. They were seen as outsiders since they married into the communities. After the dialogue sessions, it was so evident that people’s perceptions of women began to change. They were allowed to participate in community activities from which they were previously excluded.”

Robin Katsulukuta, Project Officer, Nkhoma CCAP Relief and Development, Malawi

which main corridors for pastoralists were identified, perimeters around waterholes were outlined, and dates of passage were set, with forum participants mobilized to then raise awareness in the communities across the region. This programming has led to a significant decrease in conflicts and loss of life, from 19 conflicts two years ago to none this year.

- ECJP developed inclusive ‘peace committees’ in 12 communities in one country in **West Africa***. These committees represent and promote common interest through community projects and engage community members in promoting peace, justice, gender equality, and the rights of people living with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. New Alternative Dispute Resolution structures were set up and religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence, civic and voter registration, and women’s rights—including land and inheritance rights and the right to live free of violence—were promoted through awareness raising with and the mobilization of 670 participants (438f).

Trauma Healing – Trauma is the psychological and emotional effects of disruptive events like war, sexual abuse, human trafficking, violence, poverty, and natural disasters. As a result of these events, traumatized people can struggle with disrupted sleep, health issues, emotional and relationship problems, and a sense of hopelessness. World Renew and our partners equip church leaders and communities with practical, biblical, and mental health resources to facilitate trauma healing group sessions, which help people process events and develop coping strategies, reducing the impact of trauma in their lives.

- In **Mali**, trauma healing programming was broadcast in 3 languages on 6 radio stations across 54 municipalities, many of which are in conflict zones and as a result inaccessible; 2 of

the radio stations were not part of the project plan but began broadcasting the trauma healing lessons without project support. 980 listeners (294f) called into the program and shared testimonies of healing and reconciliation. Listeners have also been obtaining their own audio copies of lessons to play in their homes and communities. In addition, 50 internally displaced persons (IDPs) (27f) were led through a trauma healing refresher training so they can continue to lead trauma healing trainings in IDP camps. Because of the success of this work, a Dutch funder—Verre Naasten—is now funding its expansion.

- In one country in **West Africa***, where conflict, kidnapping, banditry, and gender-based violence (GBV) are ongoing issues, PEN trained and supported 30 facilitators (22f) from 10 communities participating in its Child Survival program to lead trauma healing sessions, with a focus on helping women of childbearing age develop effective skills in handling and healing from challenging situations. Since then, the facilitators have organized healing circles with 360 participants (264f).
- 26 people (15f) were trained in trauma healing in anticipation of setting up a locally-led trauma healing network in **Zambia**. UCZ also formulated and ratified its child safeguarding policy and created awareness on child safeguarding in 5 of its schools, including local police and health personnel in these trainings in addition to school staff. Anti-abuse clubs have since been started in all 5 schools to further solidify the learning, and advocacy committees were established in 11 congregations with a focus on gender justice and child safeguarding.

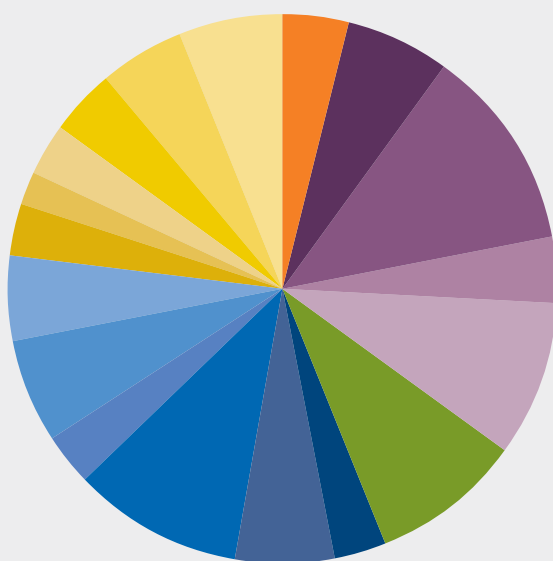
Gender Justice – World Renew and our partners’ work in gender justice helps girls and women complete their education, remain unmarried throughout their childhood, remain free from sexual or domestic violence, and become leaders in their communities. To see this change, projects focus on shifts in areas such as women’s and men’s consciousness and women’s access to and control over resources.

- Diaconia Nacional’s gender justice work in **Honduras** complemented its MNCH programming in 12 communities, addressing gender inequality, GBV, and patriarchal beliefs that affect the nutrition of children and mothers, especially adolescent mothers. 65 men were trained in small groups on harmful gender norms, positive fatherhood, and child health. Dialogue groups were held specifically for 211 adolescents (118f) on sexual health, marriage laws and rights, and sexual abuse prevention, and 64 teenage moms were trained and mentored through mother-to-mother support groups. Public forums were held with 73 community leaders (54f) to sensitize on GBV, harmful gender norms, and the negative consequences of early marriage and childbearing.

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- Complementing a large conservation agriculture program funded by USAID in **Kenya**, ADS Central Rift conducted a gender assessment focused on the division of labor, decision-making, access to and control over productive resources, and GBV. Based on the findings, 6 program staff (4f) and 9 gender champions (4f) were trained, with the champions now cascading the training in the 9 participating communities with groups of 30 people.
- Nkhoma CCAP conducted gender dialogues with 1,875 participants (1,190f) in 3 communities in **Malawi** to encourage individuals, families, and communities to take an active role in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, GBV and injustices, with group discussions challenging harmful gender attitudes, norms, and behaviors. Community Protection Systems were strengthened to equip communities to intervene and provide support when vulnerable populations, especially women and children, face potential abuse or are abused.
- Eagles Relief and Development established 7 Community Action Committees in **Malawi**, with community leaders, trained gender champions, and child protection volunteers on each committee. 33 community dialogue groups were revitalized and are meeting once a month to discuss gender and social inclusion issues, and GBV protection and response mechanisms were strengthened through capacity building that included chiefs, child protection workers, and the police. Eagles also established and trained youth groups in 6 communities who are using drama and art to sensitize broadly on GBV and drug and alcohol abuse across their communities and supported the creation of several youth-run group enterprises to help engage youth in positive behaviors.
- 12 Anglican Diocese of Niassa staff (7f) were trained by World Renew in **Mozambique** on gender justice and social inclusion who were able to in turn train 1,092 members (639f) of 27 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and 6 community justice volunteers (6f). Community surveys were conducted which provided the foundation for the training, and participants created action plans based on their learning and contexts.
- AICT Geita and AICT MUD promoted gender equality in 42 communities in **Tanzania** through a series of dialogues led by 45 trained community-based gender champions (22f). 2,813 VSLA members (1,459f) participated in the dialogues, which focused on gender norms and roles, the division of labor, power and decision making, access to and control of resources, and GBV. The dialogues culminated in community action planning and the selection of role model couples who visit households to share their life experience. One community also used sports games as an opportunity to raise broad levels of awareness on gender justice.
- In **Zambia**, CCAP trained 45 church leaders (22f) to lead gender justice dialogues, with the demand for and number of dialogue groups continuing to increase; in total, 36 series of 10 community dialogue sessions have occurred, allowing men and women, in separate groups, to identify gender inequalities, discuss power and justice issues, and come together to share learnings and plan actions. 6 chiefs were trained on gender justice to ensure

Community-Based Justice Programs Fund — \$133,550



- KADRA (Cambodia)
- ADS Central Rift (Kenya)
- AICT MUD (Tanzania)
- AICT Geita (Tanzania)
- PAG West Teso (Uganda)
- Diaconia Nacional (Honduras)
- Eagles Relief and Development (Malawi)
- Nkhoma CCAP (Malawi)
- Diocese of Niassa (Mozambique)
- CCAP (Zambia)
- RCZ (Zambia)
- UCZ (Zambia)
- AMAFEP (Mali)
- PEN* (West Africa)*
- ECJP (Nigeria)
- Beacon of Hope (Nigeria)
- SLDS (Senegal)
- CES (Sierra Leone)

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their support of the project's goals, and 90 men were led through discussions on positive masculinity, gender justice, and being a good husband. 22 participants (11f) were trained in advocacy to help address cases of GBV, with the cases of violence in the 15 participating communities now declining.

- In **Zambia**, RCZ trained 60 community facilitators (34f) across 26 congregations on gender justice. 25 of these facilitators (10f) were also trained to lead community dialogues and have begun rolling out these dialogue sessions in their congregations, with 20 dialogues taking place so far with groups averaging 20 people. RCZ staff participated in a learning visit to CCAP's work to learn from their experience in gender justice and advocacy programming.

Human Trafficking – In all regions of the world, and particularly in those with poor living conditions, people are traded and exploited for profit. Traffickers use violence, fraudulent employment agencies, and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick, coerce, and deceive their victims. World Renew and our partners work to educate people who are vulnerable, in desperate need of employment, or may simply be seeking a better life, focusing particularly on those who may seek to migrate undocumented.

- In **Cambodia**, KADRA formed youth clubs in 3 high schools to combat human trafficking and unsafe migration in their communities, with 176 youth (120f) applying to be part of the clubs. 42 of these youth (23f) have now received interactive training on topics of safe migration, human trafficking, and social inclusion and will educate their peers and lead community research on the existing mechanisms and tools to address migration issues. Relationships with school staff, district education staff, and local government were built to ensure program success.

Legal Rights – Many justice issues stem from people being unaware of or unable to enforce their rights, leaving them vulnerable to land takeover, domestic violence, or citizenship issues, which keeps families in poverty. World Renew and our partners facilitate training events, workshops, and mobile legal clinics to help individuals understand and uphold their legal rights and help individuals get identification documents to access these rights.

- In **Sierra Leone**, CES provided trainings on inheritance laws in 18 communities in church and village settings, integrating training on GBV as well. While the law stipulates the ability of a widow to maintain control of her family's assets upon the death of her husband, tradition in these communities states that all assets, including the widow and her children, must go to one of his brothers. Awareness was raised with regional and

religious leaders, local Village Development Committees, and in the broader communities, with women now asserting their rights and CES providing support in collaboration with government ministries.

- Our partner SLDS's program implemented in the outskirts of Dakar, **Senegal**, concluded with 280 children (150f) who lacked birth certificates—either because their parents did not seek certificates at birth or were discriminated against—receiving their certificates, which will allow them to register for school exams and government services, among other things. An additional 41 files are in process, with parents with more complicated situations referred to the 'House of Justice'—a government institution helping people access government services with whom SLDS established a strong relationship. Because of SLDS's broad awareness raising, midwives, local government officials, and religious leaders have begun promoting birth registration. The outcomes of this programming are noteworthy, highlighted in the illustration found on page 15. Based on the success of this work, another World Renew partner in Senegal recently started similar programming in a rural region.
- Customary land tenure systems in **Uganda** restrict property ownership and inheritance for women, widows, orphans, and people with disabilities (PWDs). PAG West Teso increased awareness of land and property rights with 4,473 people (2,758f), including 207 PWDs (123f), through 226 education and dialogue meetings; 89% of community members in the 20 participating communities are now aware of land rights, up from 40% at baseline. 6 mobile legal clinics provided 283 people (97f) with access to legal advice and support in resolving land/property issues. 662 church, Cluster Level Association (CLA), government, and local leaders (406f) attended advocacy workshops, which led to agreement on fair prices for land demarcation, clan heads agreeing to stop allocating land without proper documentation, and these leaders successfully mediating land-related conflicts, among other wins. Thanks to this project, 176 property disputes were resolved, 170 households had land boundaries demarcated, and 127 households have customary land title certificates.

Injustices are often deeply entrenched, and progress can be elusive and sometimes difficult to measure, making funding for this crucial programmatic area even more difficult to obtain. We are profoundly grateful to the Baker Estate, whose financial support has been instrumental in driving our justice programming forward. In 2022-2023, \$133,550 of Community-Based Justice Programs funding supported the above programming, with the Baker Estate funding \$103,550 and World Renew contributing the remaining \$30,000 as per our agreement with the Estate.



YOUTH CLUBS COUNTER HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The COVID-19 pandemic put additional financial strains on Cambodian families already struggling with poverty. In households in rural communities especially, youth and teenagers dropped out of school to find jobs to help support their families. But with few income-earning opportunities, many migrated to urban centers or to other countries in search of work, often without proper documentation and knowledge of the risks involved, including human trafficking, abuse, and exploitation.

World Renew's local partner in Cambodia, KADRA, is facilitating the Baker Estate-funded Youth Countering People Trafficking (YCPT) program that is focused on educating young people in rural communities about the dangers of human trafficking, safe migration, and more.

Sreymom Tith, a 12th grade student at Por Thom High School in Svay Rieng province, has been an active participant in the YCPT program. Sreymom says, "When my teacher introduced me to the program, I thought to myself that there must be something worth learning, especially at the mentioning of community research activities."

Though at first Sreymom was a little skeptical that participation in the youth club would help her become

a more valuable contributor in her community, she says, "Through continuous training sessions, I gradually realized the significance of my participation in learning and becoming aware of safe migration, the reality of human trafficking, social inclusion, and teamwork. The highlight for me would be learning to work together with other youth participants on community research activities." Sreymom was soon selected to be one of the leaders and was assigned to be a secretary of her youth club.

In addition to the skills Sreymom developed through the training sessions, she has also gained confidence in conducting presentations and sharing ideas with her peers and community as she understands the value of youth engagement in community. She shared, "I would like to encourage other young people to make every opportunity count. It is also rewarding to be able to contribute something to your community whether it means to educate yourself on social issues, raise awareness about certain topics, and striving to create a healthy interaction with people from all walks of life."

Sreymom is grateful to the Baker Estate, KADRA, and World Renew for establishing youth clubs in her school and for helping to empower youth through training and facilitative activities, so they can work together to counter the very real risks of human trafficking and abuse in their communities.



A WIDOW'S JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

Traditionally, in Sierra Leone, a widow was required to marry one of the brothers of her late husband and hand over ownership of all property and assets, while relinquishing control of her children. Today, the law states widows have the right to raise their children and retain control over their land and any family assets, but in rural communities, people still hold on to the old tradition. World Renew's local partner, Christian Extension Services (CES), is working to educate women about their legal rights.

Kadiatu Bangura, a farmer and mother of 5, lives in the rural community of Konkoya. She lost her husband a few years ago, and as dictated by tradition, Kadiatu, her children, and the family's property were given to her late husband's family.

While Kadiatu and the children were allowed to live on the land, she was still responsible for providing for her children. She worked hard to grow rice, but due to low yields she could not meet their basic needs. Even if she generated enough income, she lived with the fear that her in-laws would demand she turn over her earnings.

Then, with Baker Estate funding, CES began working in Konkoya. CES worked with the leaders of Konkoya to bring practical, tangible solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice in the community. Kadiatu had the opportunity to join a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) and she learned the discipline of saving a little every month. She learned a new farming technique which helped to double her harvest, using less seed than she used before. But not owning the land she farmed still troubled Kadiatu, until she attended a CES training session and learned she was the rightful owner.

Kadiatu says, "As a result of the property rights training by CES, I am now aware of my rights, and have regained control of my late husband's property. I am now working to have a new position focused on women's rights at the district council."

PIKINE,
SENEGAL

ENABLING ADOLESCENT CIVIC PARTICIPATION

2021
2023

THE CHALLENGE



- LOW BIRTH REGISTRATION RATES IN PLACES WHERE FAMILIES STRUGGLE WITH POVERTY
- LOST IDENTIFICATION PAPERS DUE TO FLOODS THAT PRIMARILY OCCUR IN VULNERABLE NEIGHBORHOODS
- WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT BOTH PARENTS NEED TO BE PRESENT TO REGISTER A BIRTH



TARGET POPULATION

- SINGLE MOTHERS
- WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS TRAVEL FREQUENTLY
- PARENTS WHO THEMSELVES DO NOT HAVE IDENTIFICATION PAPERS

THE OUTCOMES

280 CHILDREN HAVE BIRTH CERTIFICATES

41 ADDITIONAL FILES ARE IN PROCESS

MIDWIVES, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE PROMOTING REGISTRATION AT BIRTH AND DURING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS EVENTS

321 PARTICIPANTS
6 COMMUNITIES

27 COMMUNITY EVENTS, WITH MIDWIVES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS INVITED



THE PROCESS

- 162 HOME VISITS
- VISITS TO 9 SCHOOLS TO RAISE AWARENESS WITH TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS



REPORTING ON 3 TELEVISION STATIONS

NEWS REPORT



SUPPORT PARENTS BORN IN THE AREA WITH PAPERWORK AND SUBMISSIONS TO THE TRIBUNAL, WITH GROUPS OF 20 JOINING TRIBUNAL SESSIONS

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH AND REFER THOSE WITH MORE COMPLICATED SITUATIONS TO THE 'HOUSE OF JUSTICE', AN INSTITUTION HELPING PEOPLE ACCESS GOVERNMENT SERVICES

"I DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL IN 1ST GRADE BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE PAPERS. IT HURT ME A LOT BECAUSE, WHILE I DO HOUSEWORK, MY FRIENDS ARE STUDYING AND MANY OF THEM ARE IN THEIR FINAL YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. I REGRET IT VERY MUCH AND I DON'T WANT MY CHILD TO GO THROUGH THE SAME.

I LOST OPPORTUNITIES AND GOOD JOBS BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE AN ID. DURING COVID LOCKDOWNS I WANTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE THROUGH THE MUNICIPALITY, BUT I COULDN'T GET THEM WITHOUT AN ID.

IT TOOK A LOT OF PAPERWORK, BUT EVENTUALLY I GOT MY ID CARD AND WAS ALSO ABLE TO REGISTER MY SON. I DIDN'T THINK THAT ONE DAY I WOULD GET THIS PAPER! I DIDN'T FEEL REALLY SENEGALESE BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE AN IDENTITY. I AM THRILLED!"

MME BADIANE, 21 YEARS OLD

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Fund

Impacts at a Glance

24,569 people
involved in SAFS programs

5,943 farmers gained access
to saplings or improved seed

16,524 farmers trained in
sustainable agriculture practices

4,968 farmers
participated in exchange visits

1,494 farmers trained in Farmer
Managed Natural Regeneration

Over the last fourteen years, the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security (SAFS) Fund has invested over \$1.07 million¹ in 56 new innovative projects implemented in partnership with 46 local organizations, reaching tens of thousands of participants in all 19 countries in which World Renew collaborates with long-term development partners. With SAFS funding coming to an end in June 2024, World Renew carried out a cluster evaluation of the Fund which revealed the overwhelming impact this funding has had on food security at many levels, including food production and access, enhanced nutrition, and reduction of food loss. The SAFS Fund has filled funding gaps, complemented existing projects, prepared the groundwork for the development of larger proposals for further funding, and helped partners and communities test new ideas. The impact of the programming has been impressive.

A significant effect of the SAFS Fund has been in helping our partners establish strong program concepts, build credibility in managing funds, and demonstrate program results, which has led to significant additional funding. Of the 46 SAFS projects that have ended (10 are ongoing as of the writing of this report), over half have gone on to receive further funding through institutional donors including Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Growing Hope Globally, USAID, and Global Affairs Canada, and many more were integrated into programming funded by World Renew. Overwhelming positive feedback was received from World Renew and partner staff evaluation survey respondents about how SAFS funding has strengthened our partners' program design and management capacity, with the flexibility of Baker funding delivering that ability for "muscle building" in this area.

SAFS funding has also allowed World Renew to establish and institutionalize a core set of agricultural activities that have proven to increase crop yields, improve soil fertility, enhance crop diversity, and grow incomes—essentially allowing us as an organization to establish an agricultural strategy or 'toolbox'. In terms of technical skills, World Renew and partner staff have shown high levels of learning in the areas of seeds (selection, multiplication, storage), soil fertility (green manure cover crops, conservation agriculture), trees (agroforestry, fruit production, Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration [FMNR]), marketing (including of livestock), and water (small scale irrigation, water harvesting).

¹ \$750,000 donated by the Baker Estate plus interest earned through investments at the Barnabas Foundation; an additional \$750,000 made up the total gift from the Estate of \$1.5 million and was used to fund agricultural work in progress with World Renew's partners.

There is also clear evidence that the agricultural techniques promoted through the SAFS projects have spread beyond the program participants and the partners implementing the projects. As World Renew's Bangladesh/India Senior Country Director*, said in her survey response, "When the SAFS project started in 2014, it was a big help for us to refocus on agriculture. We learned a lot of new things like fruit tree grafting, the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), composting, organic farming, etc. That was the biggest benefit—the refocus on agriculture and learning new things and then spreading the learning to all of our partners." Ramesh Babu, Executive Director of our partner EFICOR in India, corroborated how the learning spread, far beyond World Renew's partners even, stating, "With FMNR and SRI, we have... trained 220 people on these things from other organizations in the country, outside of our own staff."

With SAFS funding, staff learned not just 'what' to program, but also mastered techniques in agricultural experimentation and perfected ways to organize and train farmer participants. This has had significant long-term impacts on programming, while helping partners and their staff gain visibility and credibility. One of World Renew's country directors in West Africa* describes an interaction with Etienne*, one of our partner PAX's* program facilitators, at a partner learning event:

"... one of the project staff shared about how he had experimented last year with putting ash in his field, and it had significantly increased his yields. Everyone eagerly listened as he described in detail how he did it, making plans to try it themselves. Although at first glance this had nothing to do with World Renew, as we had not given him the idea, I was later talking with him and he helped me realize how this had everything to do with World Renew. Our goal is building the capacity of local partners and local communities. Ten years ago, when he was still fairly new in his community and role, PAX had received SAFS funding to do some agriculture experimentation. They experimented with different spacing between crops, and various ways of intercropping to see what would produce the highest yield. The capacity building that he received during the SAFS project equipped him with lots of knowledge and experience in agriculture, but also taught him how to and the importance of experimentation, which he carries with him to this day. Now he regularly tries new things in his field to test how it might improve his crop yields, and then shows it to others in the communities he works in and shares learnings with the other World Renew partners. He was so grateful for the SAFS project from ten years ago. Not only did it equip him, but 'it made our program popular.' Now communities want to work with him, and even the government technical agents know who he is and appreciate working with him."

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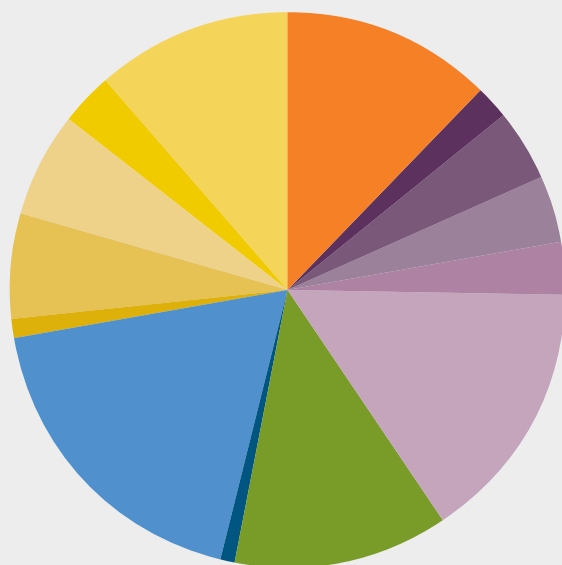
"A significant impact of the SAFS Fund which might not be immediately obvious is its influence on Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a funder of strategic importance to World Renew and 14 other Canadian Christian church-based agencies. SAFS funding significantly impacted the trajectory of the Foodgrains Bank's programming, with the evaluator who led the 2009 SAFS evaluation then hired by the Foodgrains Bank to write a book on soil restoration in which he acknowledges the significant contributions of the evaluation and of World Renew staff. That book, widely distributed by the Foodgrains Bank and its members, had a noteworthy impact on the Foodgrains Bank's agriculture and livelihoods programming across the world and impacted Foodgrains Bank's decision to sponsor a Conservation Agriculture Capacity Development Program and to hire four Agriculture and Livelihood Technical Advisors. This was a major 'knock-on' impact of the Baker funding—the effect on the Foodgrains Bank toward having its own strategic focus on green manure cover crops and conservation agriculture. This impact on the Foodgrains Bank's approach to dryland Africa is certainly a noteworthy bonus effect of the Baker SAFS grant!"

Tom Post, former Asia Regional Director, World Renew

SAFS programming continued this year, with innovative programs working with smallholder farmers in eight countries:

- ADS Central Rift in **Kenya** helped farmers learn and apply conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, composting, and other good agronomic practices by training 51 (26f) farmers to become Farmer Field School (FFS) facilitators. These facilitators then passed on their knowledge to an additional 346 participants (246f), creating effective agricultural extension services as farmers learned from their peers.
- In **Mozambique**, Anglican Diocese of Niassa improved food production, using a revolving seed fund to distribute 4,000 pounds of seed and 19 demonstration plots to spread good practices including intercropping,

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Fund — \$248,720



- EFICOR (India)
- ADS Central Rift (Kenya)
- AICT MUD (Tanzania)
- AICT Geita (Tanzania)
- PAG North Teso (Uganda)
- PAG West Teso (Uganda)
- ACJ (Honduras)
- Diocese of Niassa (Mozambique)
- RCZ (Zambia)
- PAX* (West Africa)*
- ECJP (Nigeria)
- ELS (Senegal)
- CES (Sierra Leone)
- SEL* (West Africa)*

crop spacing, and crop rotation, focusing on a local bean variety, soya, groundnuts, and rice.

- PAX* coordinator took an online course with the world's leading expert in FMNR—a low-cost land restoration technique used to increase food and timber production by regrowing and caring for trees and shrubs sprouting from tree stumps, root systems, or seeds—and then trained 17 others (0f) who are now bringing their knowledge back to their home communities in one country in **West Africa**.*
- In **Nigeria**, ECJP helped farmers plant improved varieties of cassava in lowlands during dry season and formed 9 VSLAs that will be developed into cooperatives, with the purchase of 3 processors that grind cassava into flour. 18 community extension volunteers (6f) were trained on good agronomic and post-harvest practices and have since taught what they learned to an additional 250 farmers (140f).
- 4 market gardening groups were formed by ELS in **Senegal** to improve access to nutritious foods and increase family incomes, with trainings on fruit tree planting and good agricultural practices for 194 group members (134f) and 24 individual farmers (11f) in the communities, and well drilling and rehabilitation ensuring access to water for irrigation.
- In 5 communities in **Sierra Leone**, CES formed farmers groups that gather during the rice growing season for training, demonstration plot preparation, seed distribution, planting, and harvesting, with grain drying floors constructed in each community using local inputs and labor.

- In an area of **Tanzania** with extremely low dietary diversity, AICT MUD and AICT Geita increased consumption of a variety of fruits, vegetables, and protein among 2,908 participants (1,097f) through cooking demonstrations and trainings on kitchen gardening and animal husbandry. Even youth became interested in vegetable gardening, forming gardening groups, and 3 schools established kitchen gardens on site to improve their school feeding programs. 56 community paravets (11f) were trained to ensure disease control in the poultry population.
- PAG North Teso in **Uganda** trained members of 6 Cluster Level Associations (CLAs)—groups of VSLAs that join together to advocate for services—on how to add value to and market fruit and staple crops, including cassava, and connected the CLAs to international and local players in the value chain, including seed suppliers and buyers. 3 cassava graters and chippers and 3 solar driers were sourced, and 920 farmers (701f) were trained on good agronomic practices and quality assurance so that they meet food safety standards during production, harvest, and processing, and 187 (89f) were trained on marketing and value addition.

Having seen firsthand that often the best learning happens at the peer level, World Renew and our partners have invested heavily in helping farmers share their successes through exchange visits and FFSs, among other methods. Giving farmers, often viewed as being at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, the opportunity to serve as teachers and leaders in their field can be incredibly transformative. This is particularly true for female farmers, who often face even greater institutional and cultural barriers than men, and

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FOOD SECURITY IN LAKE KYOGA

2020
2023

THE GOAL

- IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY
- INCREASED INCOMES
- IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS, JOINT DECISION-MAKING, AND ROLE SHARING BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

THE FOCUS

1. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES, INCLUDING THE USE OF GREEN MANURE COVER CROPS AND CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE (CA)
2. NUTRITION, INCLUDING KITCHEN GARDENING AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT
3. FARMING AS A FAMILY BUSINESS

"I DISCUSSED WITH MY FAMILY AFTER THE TRAININGS. WE DECIDED TO PURSUE VEGETABLE GROWING AS OUR FAMILY BUSINESS. WE PLANTED A NEW VARIETY OF TOMATOES - IT COST ME 150,000 SHILLINGS FOR A TIN - ON HALF AN ACRE AND USED THE GOOD PRACTICES WE LEARNED LIKE MULCHING."

"OUR HARVEST GREATLY SHOCKED MY FAMILY! WHEN WE SOLD IT, IT FETCHED 6,000,000 SHILLINGS! WE WERE OVERJOYED. WE IMMEDIATELY BOUGHT A PAIR OF OXEN AND TWO HEIFERS FOR MILKING, BORROWING SOME MONEY FROM OUR SAVING GROUP AS WELL. WE HAVE NOT LOOKED BACK! WE PLAN TO INCREASE THE ACREAGE WE HAVE UNDER PRODUCTION AND TO BUY A WATER PUMP."

MR. BONNY OKELLO
MEMBER OF THE OKONYO KWOWA ("IT HAS HELPED US") SHG

THE OUTCOMES



THE PROCESS

- USE EXISTING COMMUNITY STRUCTURES - 7 CLUSTER LEVEL ASSOCIATIONS WHICH ARE GROUPINGS OF 62 SELF-HELP GROUPS (SHGS) - TO ACCELERATE THE ADOPTION OF GOOD AGRONOMIC PRACTICES AND TO ADVOCATE FOR RESOURCES FROM OTHER DEVELOPMENT ACTORS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT
- SUPPORT 424 FARMERS' PARTICIPATION IN FARMER-TO-FARMER LEARNING EXCHANGES TO ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOR CHANGE
- TRAIN 22 COMMUNITY GENDER CHAMPIONS TO LEAD GENDER DIALOGUES IN 62 SHGS AND TO IDENTIFY AND REFER CASES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
- PROVIDE EACH COMMUNITY WITH 2 IMPROVED ROOSTERS AND 1 IMPROVED GOAT TO BREED WITH LOCAL CHICKENS AND DOES

2,080 PARTICIPANTS
10 COMMUNITIES

who in 2022-2023 made up 67% of the participants directly involved in the SAFS programming. As farmers share their success with neighboring farmers, more and more people are adopting the techniques being promoted. Over 24,700 people were indirectly impacted through the eight SAFS programs mentioned above, and this impressive number will continue to grow as successful ideas and skills are passed on.

With the inception of the SAFS Expansion Fund in 2019, high-impact SAFS programs have been selected to scale over a three-year period, with a rigorous application process and project implementation requirements that include the use of mobile data collection. The five SAFS Expansion programs currently in progress (selected out of a total of nine proposals submitted to the proposal review panel) are showing strong results:

- (2020-2023) PAG West Teso completed the final year of its program in northeastern **Uganda** which used a three-faceted approach to improve food security and nutrition. 2,234 (1,352f) people were trained on sustainable agriculture practices, with 635 households now consistently practicing conservation agriculture, and 1,207 farmers (755f) were trained on land use, planning, and management which included the distribution and use of green manure cover crops and 10 community-managed rippers. In the nutrition component of the program, 1,400 people (897f) were trained on nutrition and 665 kitchen gardens were established. Ten communities received 2 improved Kroiler roosters and 1 improved male goat to breed with local chickens and does, and 1,425 participants (926f) were trained on modern livestock rearing and management. Finally, 2,083 farmers (1,317f) were trained on farming as a family business. The outcomes of this programming are noteworthy, highlighted in the illustration found on page 19.
- (2021-2024) In **India**, over 658 Malto and Santhal families in 20 communities started practicing kitchen gardening and 1,471 participants (841f) were trained on FMNR, with 222 acres of land now being managed using FMNR techniques. EFICOR's SAFS Expansion program also promotes beekeeping and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), holistically meeting a variety of needs in the communities. 4,621 mango, litchi, and banana saplings were planted in the second year of the program, which also continues to promote 2G and 3G cutting, SRI, and composting. Because of the success of this programming, the US-based Vista Hermosa Foundation has funded the expansion of the program to 23 neighboring communities.
- (2021-2024) ACJ in **Nicaragua** completed its second year of programming, with 133 (74f) FFS participants exchanging their experiences and sharing their new knowledge and skills with an additional 266 farmers (149f). The program focuses on young farmers and provides business training, in addition to improving participants' skills in crop diversification and post-

harvest management; 85 new businesses have successfully been established as a result. The 14 VSLAs established provided 234 loans to their 482 members (296f) in the last year alone. ACJ actively works to increase women and youth's confidence and has seen an increase in their participation and leadership in community structures.

- (2022-2025) SELs* scale-up programming began in one country in **West Africa***, with initial trainings of 24 staff and facilitators (5f) who then trained 394 community volunteers (306f) on zai holes, half moons, stone bunds, composting, liquid fertilizer, and crop rotation and association. These trainings are now being rolled out at the community level, with 111 communities participating in the program and broad level sharing meetings ensuring high levels of uptake. Wells were dug in 11 villages, pumps were set up in 2 communities, 11 community gardens were fenced, and 18 villages were supported with smaller equipment such as sprayers, with communities contributing to related costs.
- (2022-2025) During the first year of RCZ's programming in **Zambia**, 25 facilitators (10f) were trained in conservation agriculture and have since trained more than 5,000 community members, with strong signs that households are beginning to implement what they have learned. 22 demonstration plots and one central training center are being used to model good practices, and 661 farmers (336f) were provided high-quality soya, sunflower, and groundnut seed through a revolving seed fund.

World Renew recognizes that getting sustainable solutions into the hands of small-scale farmers is critical to meet the challenges the world is facing. Protracted conflict, climate change, and high rates of inflation are threatening progress to improve food security and nutrition, with the Food and Agriculture Organization's *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (2023) reporting that, since 2019, over 122 million more people are facing hunger globally. Ironically, those who grow food are disproportionately represented in that number; for example, nearly 40% of small-scale farmers in sub-Saharan Africa experience hunger regularly, compared to 20% of the overall population. From conservation agriculture to zai holes, the promotion of low-cost, climate-smart solutions that recognize the multidimensional nature of food insecurity are key to enhancing dietary diversity, improving yields, and reducing food loss. The success of Baker-supported SAFS programming is a testament to the tireless efforts of farming families implementing sustainable agricultural solutions, proving that ending hunger in today's world is still possible.

In 2022-2023, a total of \$248,720 of funding was dispersed for SAFS and SAFS Expansion programming. As the SAFS Fund enters the last year of its 15-year lifespan, World Renew and our partners are deeply grateful to the Baker Estate for this funding; the impact of it on World Renew, our partners, the communities and people we serve, and even our institutional funders has been profound.

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RICE PRODUCTION IS MADE EASIER IN YORIA

In Sierra Leone it is not uncommon to see a small patch, about 3 square feet, on the edge of the road covered in a thin layer of unhusked rice. The rice is put out in the sun to dry. Drying the rice is one step in an arduous process that includes: harvesting the crop by hand, separating the grain from the stalk (threshing), then partially drying and storing it in the husk. When the time comes to eat the rice, it must be put out in the sun to dry, and the husk must be removed through pounding and winnowing it to finally get to the dry rice, which is then ready to be cooked.

Women often stand over their patch of unhusked rice guarding it from being scattered or contaminated. While they can protect the grain from animals or children running by, they cannot truly protect it from contaminants blowing in the wind.

Having a place to dry the grain where it is safe can be challenging; having a grain drying floor is ideal. This is simply a cement floor, about the size of half a basketball court, surrounded by a gated fence, with adequate space for up to ten families to safely dry their grain at a time. World Renew's local partner Christian Extension Services (CES), as part of a SAFS project that included enabling increased production of rice in vulnerable communities in Sierra

Leone, recently built a grain drying floor in the community of Yoria. The residents of Yoria came together to collect sand, water, and stones and provided the local labor, and CES, through World Renew and with Baker Estate funding, provided the cement, skilled labor, and fencing materials.

Borbeh Sesay, the chairperson of the village agricultural committee, is grateful for the impact the grain drying floor has had on her community. She says, "Before this time we, the women, used to dry our grains on cloth or on the ground where it usually mixed with stones and contaminants. We used to have to carefully watch over our grain until it became dried. But with this new drying floor that is not the case any longer. The food is safe and secure."



FMNR TECHNIQUE HELPS IN FOREST CONSERVATION

As extreme and unpredictable weather continues to take a harsh toll on farming families around the world, it is becoming increasingly urgent to protect forests and to steward the Earth's resources more wisely. In vulnerable communities in India, World Renew's local partner EFICOR facilitated Baker Estate-funded Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) training sessions in which participants learned how to take proper care of forests and how to prune the plants and trees. Participants were sensitised on how the air could be cleaner and monsoons more predictable if people took proper care of the forests.

Sundra*, 45, lives in Sahibganj district with his wife, Mangli*, 40, and their two teen children. The family owns a small piece of land, including a forested plot. Sundra, a farmer and day laborer, shared that despite complaining to the village head, he had an ongoing problem with people trespassing on his forested land to cut trees to sell as firewood in the local market.

During one of the FMNR training sessions that Sundra attended, participants helped him prune the plant life in his forest, then they tied the upper tree branches with red ribbons. Over time, thanks to proper maintenance, Sundra's forested land became much greener and because the red ribbons made it difficult for people to cut the tree branches, he no longer had a problem with trespassers. "I never knew the FMNR technique," Sundra said. "Thanks to EFICOR for

teaching this important technique of pruning and taking care of the plants and trees. The plants that I have taken care of in the forest are growing well and grew fast, within a short span of time."

Ruben Malto attended FMNR trainings held in Chapri village. Ruben and his wife, Chandi, have two children, Vijay and Sabina. Ruben, a farmer, owns both farmed and forested land. In June 2023, Ruben participated in FMNR regeneration work and found the FMNR technique, particularly the tree pruning and upward cutting methods, very interesting. After learning about the benefits of FMNR, he no longer allows outsiders or villagers to cut down trees on his land. Previously, he practiced slash and burn cultivation, but after the training he began pruning trees and allowing the forest to regenerate. Ruben shared, "This FMNR has been a blessing to my family and our forest is growing again."

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Village Savings and Loan Fund



Since 2013, the Village Savings and Loan (VSL) Fund has helped unbanked individuals in 17 countries gain access to basic financial support and services by establishing savings groups, connected those savings groups into associations to advocate for resources, and supported people in establishing small businesses and income-generating activities (IGAs). In an era marked by persistent inflation and soaring costs of living, savings groups help people struggling with income instability to access solutions for managing their money. While the COVID pandemic significantly boosted the adoption of digital financial services, according to the World Bank 1.4 billion people worldwide still do not have access to an account with a formal financial institution, with the rural poor, people with disabilities, women, and other marginalized populations particularly impacted (2022). Often credit mechanisms that do exist for these populations are usurious and predatory, trapping people in cycles of debt.

Over the last ten years, the VSL Fund has allowed World Renew to establish and advance VSL and livelihoods work with 38 of our local partners, establishing VSL programming as foundational to our development approach worldwide. World Renew and our partners continue to reach more and more people with this programming globally, with 19,710 people (13,641f) involved in 16 VSL Fund programs in 11 countries in 2022-2023 alone. We continue to emphasize decision-making at the local level and focus on building on the resources, initiatives, and accountability mechanisms already present in communities, which ensures both effectiveness and sustainability.

Foundational to our work is **getting more and more of World Renew's local partners proficient at VSL programming and, related, the establishment of new Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)**. 5 of our local partners accessed funding through the VSL Fund for the first time this year. Training local partner staff in the VSLA methodology so they can begin to establish groups is foundational to this work, with cross-partner and regional exchanges supporting this. One of World Renew's program advisors* in one country in West Africa* who has significant

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“The success of all the women in small business has allowed us to raise a considerable amount. I contributed 1,500 CFA francs (\$2.40 USD) weekly and received 60,000 CFA francs (\$98 USD) at the end. All the women were satisfied and recognized the usefulness of the VSLA project. They have agreed to participate in the second round, which we are about to start. I am very satisfied with the project because all women are progressing. The women of our village are united and live in harmony, we cooperate with each other. Donors have done a lot for us and we are very grateful. The three months of rain are a particularly difficult time for us, but the VSLA helped us a lot through this period.”

Fatou Faye, participant, ELS, Senegal

knowledge of and experience with the VSLA methodology, for example, went to Senegal to train 9 staff from two of our partners there. Trained staff such as these—and often, eventually, trained community volunteers—can then begin establishing groups, which requires significant support for the first 1-2 years as the groups build leadership skills, trust, and group cohesion, and an understanding of bookkeeping, meeting processes, and the management of savings and credit, among others.

VSL programming often naturally complements existing health, food security, and justice programming, with each contributing to the success of the other. Building on the foundations of VSLAs by layering interventions, such as gender dialogues or kitchen garden trainings, helps to ensure that the savings in the box are invested in the economic, social, and personal growth of the VSLA members, their families, and their communities. For example, VSLAs can create a safe place to store income from harvest, with credit provided at key times in the agricultural calendar so that farmers have the cash needed for inputs and have smoother flows of income. VSLA programming, in this way, is rarely stand alone, but

ASIA

SATHI’s programming in **Bangladesh** focused on job creation for women and youth living in a slum area in Gazipur, with participants also receiving training on GBV, child marriage, and addiction, resulting in a reduction in child marriages and harassment levels. 164 youth (115f) and 88 women started successful businesses or found employment based on business and skills training they received in areas such as sewing, hairdressing, computer science and repairs, and driving, with the local People’s Institutions setting up and managing a training center. 30 VSLAs made up entirely of 1,007 youth (597f) received business and leadership training and are regularly saving and a women’s business forum continues to grow, supporting women who face many social barriers in this area of the world where female-led businesses are not conventional.

In **India**, EFICOR’s work strengthening 25 VSLAs has led to members becoming eligible for microcredit loans from the bank. VSL meetings have also created a vital forum for sharing critical health and nutrition messages, including training on kitchen gardening, with all 262 members (262f) of the VSLAs now engaged in kitchen gardening, marking a substantial improvement in the lives of the participating Malto and Santhal communities.

LATIN AMERICA

World Renew’s partner, The Nehemiah Center, began VSLA programming in collaboration with 10 local churches in an urban area of **Nicaragua** by establishing 4 savings groups. Initial trainings have led to the establishment of group procedures and policies, including protocols for the use of emergency social funds. While VSLAs traditionally have had lower levels of success in urban areas than in rural areas because of the relative lack of social bonds, The Nehemiah Center is seeking to capitalize on the close-knit bonds that exist between church members and on its existing work with these churches in conflict resolution, violence prevention, creation care, and budgeting.

rather integrated with other key programming sectors, with group meetings providing an excellent venue for additional training. As Freddy Urembo, World Renew's Country Director in Tanzania, reports, "VSLAs have been an entry point for attracting more and more community members to become engaged in other project components, including nutrition trainings and gender dialogues. VSLAs become a medium for communicating knowledge and skills."

The impact of VSLA participation, in this way, also goes well beyond economics. With access to savings, people can improve many areas of their lives—educating their children, improving their access to healthcare, being able to respond to disasters, and so much more. The savings box is just the beginning of a journey towards greater empowerment and resilience, for women in particular. VSLAs are linked to increased decision making of women, improved gender equality, and reduced gender-based violence (GBV), and serve as a platform to build women's leadership in communities. In fact, women who are members of VSLAs are 15% more likely to be in local leadership roles, according to Care International (2023). 69% of VSL Fund program participants in 2022-2023 were women, with participation being a major confidence builder and group solidarity having a significant impact on women's self-confidence and ability to thrive.

Often, to complement and further the impact of VSL programming, World Renew and our partners provide group members with **training on how to run successful businesses and on income-generating activities**.

This can range from trainings that focus on business principles, to skills training in areas such as hairdressing or computer science and repairs, to support with value-add activities like soap making or pickling. The businesses founded can be run by individual group members, by the associations, and at times by cooperatives that rise out of successful VSLA programming.

World Renew and our partners also understand that **helping successful VSLAs obtain legal status and grouping them or linking them to existing financial institutions** can greatly increase the benefits to members while improving the financial stability and sustainability of the associations themselves. A manual detailing our approach to grouping VSLAs into Cluster Level Associations (CLAs) to increase members' access to capital and to create avenues for advocating for community needs is now complete, is being field tested, and will be shared widely with other partners and organizations eager to replicate this impactful work originally funded by the Baker Estate. CLAs offer members

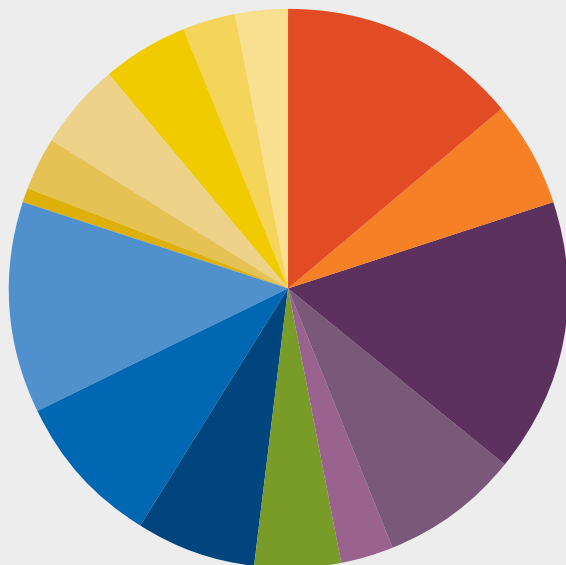
SOUTHERN AFRICA

In order to ensure the sustainability of its programming, Eagles Relief and Development in **Malawi** trained members of 15 VSLAs to establish and support additional groups, with 2 additional VSLAs already established through this process despite severe flooding in the area, and 33 additional VSLAs anticipated. These groups have given women in particular a learning forum for many things, including cooking lessons, gender justice, and Bible studies.

Nkhoma CCAP in **Malawi** is building VSL programming into its existing gender-justice related work, with VSLAs increasing women's incomes, self-reliance, and social networks and decreasing their vulnerability to violence. 72 community volunteers (37f) were trained who formed 66 VSLAs—targeting women and young men—with complementary business and entrepreneurial activities having a significant impact on women's capacity to participate in the economy and increasing their confidence and leadership skills.

Complementing agriculture and gender justice programming in eastern **Zambia**, RCZ established 78 new VSLAs in 2022-2023, bringing the total to 204 VSLAs with 5,492 members (4,184f). VSLA members receive gender justice training in addition to training on savings and credit practices. A recent gender analysis revealed that VSLAs have helped create safe and mutually supportive spaces to share problems, exercise leadership, and build self-confidence. A local board oversees the programming and has started IGAs including raising poultry and pressing sunflower oil, with the sunflower cake by-product from the oil presser used to feed the chickens.

Village Savings and Loan Fund — \$98,987



- SATHI (Bangladesh)
- EFICOR (India)
- AICT MUD (Tanzania)
- AICT Geita (Tanzania)
- CoU Nebbi (Uganda)
- Nehemiah Center (Nicaragua)
- Eagles Relief and Development (Malawi)
- Nkhoma CCAP (Malawi)
- RCZ (Zambia)
- PAX* (West Africa)*
- PEN* (West Africa)*
- ECJP (Nigeria)
- ELS (Senegal)
- SLDS (Senegal)
- CES (Sierra Leone)

EAST AFRICA

AICT MUD and AICT Geita in **Tanzania** are having success digitizing VSLAs, which offers greater accuracy, transparency, and time efficiency for members, and can enable access to a range of financial services; members continue to meet in person, which helps to counter challenges such as low literacy levels and low network bandwidths. The 78 established VSLAs have provided a platform for trainings on good agronomic practices, for linking participants to agro-dealers, and for gender dialogues.

In **Uganda**, 32 people (21f) were trained by CoU Nebbi who then trained and supported members of 5 existing CLAs—groupings of 42 self-help groups (SHGs)—on lobbying for resources, advocacy, networking, financial literacy, and business management. As a result of this, each CLA has an action plan, with successful advocacy already resulting in a new borehole drilled, roads repaired, and latrines being constructed at a community school. In addition, 3 of the CLAs have started business ventures, including beekeeping and grinding mills for local grain and cassava, to help fund future community projects.

training, lobby for resources, assist with product marketing, and link members to relevant institutions, in effect creating a community-based organization that serves as a vehicle for broad socio-economic transformation.

In total, \$98,987 was dispersed in 2022-2023 through the VSL Fund, impacting the financial security and wellbeing of 19,710 participants (13,641f) and their families. In addition, \$3,450 was used to complete a study in one country in West Africa* to assess gaps in the VSL training programs for partner staff and community volunteers in order to increase program sustainability and decrease dependence on paid staff for follow up with groups; a plan is now being implemented to strengthen the training program which includes mentorship and refresher trainings.

Savings groups represent a powerful economic and social development platform—with access to capital, households are able to invest in assets, livelihoods, health, education, and nutrition. Helping to empower individuals, particularly women and the most vulnerable, with the means to manage their finances is a pivotal step toward building economic resilience. World Renew and our partners will continue to expand the scale, inclusiveness, and impact of VSLAs in the years to come, in great part thanks to the generous new \$1.5 million gift from the Baker Estate allowing us to build on this work—with scale-up programs in Mali and Bangladesh just beginning.

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WEST AFRICA

In one country in **West Africa***, PEN*, UEEPN trained 16 community health volunteers (16f) and 14 VSL village agents (14f) who provide encouragement and support to the 160 Shining Mamas and 52 VSLAs in the 8 participating communities. In addition to home visits, the Shining Mamas attend VSLA meetings to educate on topics related to maternal and child health and nutrition, complementing the village agents' work in strengthening VSLA group processes, building leadership skills, and encouraging accountability and savings. Child and women's mortality have been greatly reduced, proving that an integrated, contextualized community-based approach cannot be understated.

PAX's* program in another country in **West Africa*** continues to garner much interest, with 2,028 people (1,837f) actively involved in 76 VSLAs, an increase from 56 the previous year. 13 village agents (7f) were trained and are now supporting project staff with follow-up with groups, a necessary step as the program continues to expand. 58 participants (50f) were trained in IGAs in 2022-2023, with 31 participants (30f) receiving training in soap and lotion making. In total, 518 women have already initiated IGAs with loans from their VSLAs, while 307 have seen growth in their existing IGAs. The project has boosted women's confidence as well as incomes; even women initially hesitant due to cultural or religious influences have embraced participation.

ECJP established 58 VSLAs in an area of **Nigeria** that suffers from ethnic and religious strife, training group members in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in addition to financial literacy and business management. 18 of the VSLAs have already been supported through the process of becoming legally registered, a first step in linking them to the formal banking system for access to larger loans and government services.

In **Senegal**, 9 savings groups were formed with 265 women who are involved in ELS's market gardening programming. The reinforcement of that agricultural programming with the establishment of VSLAs has promoted social cohesion and helped to empower participants to manage the money they earn and to prioritize expenses. The result has been significant improvements in living conditions, with each sectoral aspect of the program critical to the success of the other.

SLDS began VSLA programming by establishing 3 groups with 144 participants (142f) who were already in health and nutrition or gardening groups, noting in particular how weekly meetings have led to increased unity among participants in addition to financial empowerment. SLDS plans to expand this programming to 4 additional communities in **Senegal** in the coming year as there has been much interest expressed by neighboring communities, with an understanding that building support among village chiefs, religious leaders, and mayors has been critical to ensuring program success.

In **Sierra Leone**, 5 new VSLAs were started with the 175 participants (150f). Thanks to these groups, there has been significant growth in female leadership and empowerment. CES also continued work supporting 18 VSLAs previously established, ensuring the groups have mastered areas such as bookkeeping and meeting processes before they graduate from the program.

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A VSLA MEMBER'S JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO INSPIRATION

Deepali* and her husband, Titus, live in the village of Chapri, India. The income Titus earned as a daily wage laborer was irregular and insufficient to meet his family's basic needs. Deepali realized she needed to do something to help support their family. She joined a Village Savings and Loan (VSL) group in her community facilitated by World Renew's local partner, EFICOR.

Before joining the VSL group, Deepali could not see a way to generate income, but with support and guidance from EFICOR, Deepali was able to start a petty shop (small convenience shop) that is now generating the extra income that Deepali dreamed of earning.

As a member of the VSL group, Deepali learned the discipline of regularly setting aside a little of her family's income and in time was able to access a low-interest loan, which she used to start the petty shop. Deepali stocked the shop with essential items such as pulses, cooking oil, spices, and other essentials that were in demand in her village. Initially, Deepali faced some challenges, including limited capital, competition from nearby shops, and difficulty attracting customers. However, with determination and the continuous support of the other VSL members and EFICOR, she overcame these obstacles.

Thanks to Baker Estate funding, EFICOR provided Deepali with the training and skills she needed to grow her business. They helped her develop a business plan, improve her bookkeeping skills, and market her shop effectively. Gradually, because of the reasonable prices, quality products, and personalized customer service, Deepali's shop gained popularity among the people in her community. Word of mouth spread, and more villagers started buying their groceries from her shop. With her increased income, Deepali's family's financial situation improved significantly. They could afford better healthcare and meet more domestic needs.

Deepali not only realized her dream of helping to generate more income for her family, she has also become a role model for other women in her village, inspiring them to join VSLAs, start their own entrepreneurial ventures, and pursue their own dreams. "I am so proud to say that with the motivation of the project staff and support I received I was able to establish a petty shop. I want to be a support to other VSL members so that they too can be better off," Deepali shared.

A COMMUNITY WORKS TOGETHER TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

One of the cornerstones of World Renew's approach to community development work is that it is asset-based, recognizing that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but

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sometimes unrecognized, local assets. Supporting community members focused on their own goals with training, tools, and resources encourages empowerment as well as sustainability and resilience, rather than a reliance on handouts.

One asset-based approach is to help like-minded community members form Self Help Groups (SHGs)—similar to VSLAs but with longer periods of loan repayment and a greater accumulation of savings because they don't distribute the savings to members at the end of each cycle—and provide training in money management, income-generating activities, and more. As each SHG grows and members become more aware of and confident in their skills, often a next step is for 7-10 SHGs to come together to form a larger group or a Cluster Level Association (CLA) through which members can then work to bring about change in their wider community—relying on the skills and new knowledge they also gain through training.

Alex Okethwengu, a member of the Yesueneyo CLA trained by World Renew's partner CoU Nebbi in Uganda, explains, "We can effectively use the resources in our community

to achieve what we want rather than just waiting for other people such as donors to help us financially." But in order for progress to happen, collaboration and agreement on goals is essential. "Effective resource mobilization also needs proper planning before you start. It also requires proper documentation for reference," says Alex.

With funding from the Baker Estate, the Yesueneyo CLA members had the opportunity to participate in training focused on networking, advocacy for rights, lobbying for resources, financial and business literacy, and effective planning. Neosita, another member of the Yesueneyo CLA, shares, "Prior to the training we used to do work without considering what we want to see changed in the community or what gains we desired. Armed with the skills and knowledge from the training, we had to find out what the community needs are, prioritize, and plan our actions based on the greatest community need."

Neosita goes on to explain how the CLA members used their new-found knowledge to bring about change in their community of Alala Lower Village. "We had a community



school that was on the verge of collapse,” she states. “As a CLA, we prioritized in our plan to revive and make the school stable again.” They met with parents, local leaders, and other community members to share their goal to revitalize the school. “The meeting was successful; community members in attendance that day contributed Ugx 320,000 (\$87 USD) for the school administrative and operational costs,” Neosita says. “The community school is now operational under our care as a CLA.” But this hard-working CLA did not stop there. Neosita explains, “We also set up beehives as part of resource mobilization to help fund school activities that require finance for sustainability.”

And the CLA continues to meet to find new ways to bring about more improvements in the community. “We are glad we came for the CLA training and can look back to the progress we have so far achieved,” says Neosita. “The critical issue we are now taking up is to encourage group members to embrace tree planting in our community. We will continue with other lobby and advocacy work . . . and strengthen the existing SHGs in our community. The skills and knowledge on how to do our work better has improved our capacity to be the voice of the community and be a champion in ensuring development is realized in our community.”

BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Arely Aracely Andino Blanco, a mother of two girls, lives in the Eugenio Pérez neighborhood in the city of León, Nicaragua. Arely, 32, who completed advanced learning courses in pharmaceutical studies and English, is currently an active member of a Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC)—a VSLA that operates using ledgers for bookkeeping rather than passbooks. Thanks to Baker Estate funding, World Renew’s local partner, The Nehemiah Center, is able to provide training and support to the SILC members.

Arely is grateful for the impact the SILC has had not only on her life but also on her community. “I had never participated in a SILC, nor did I have the habit of saving, I thank God and my pastors who motivated me to participate in this group. I love the self-saving strategy, it is a way to interact, socialize, undertake and cultivate the habit of saving,” she said. “In our community we never save and now the families that are participating are highly motivated, saving the maximum stipulated amount, thus showing confidence, responsibility, and compromise.” The dedication of the SILC members to their saving goals is paying off; the group’s savings pool has grown enough that members are now taking out low-interest loans to invest in improving their lives.



Arely explained that not only do the members of the SILC meet regularly to save, and, with support from The Nehemiah Center, learn new skills to help them generate more income and become more self-reliant, they are also working to improve their community. She shared, “In the last month the SILC was able to contribute to a humanitarian cause in the community by helping a member of the group whose son was hospitalized.” She explained that they were able to help this member “thanks to the social fund that we have in the SILC group.” As members pay off the interest on their loans, the group sets aside some of the money for the social fund, which Arely said “is a win-win for everyone.”

SILCs are a seed of Christ’s hope planted in the hearts of people, so that they can be self-sufficient and empathetic to the needs of the community. Smiling, Arely said, “The SILC promotes values and contributes to improving the quality of life in all areas of our lives.”



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