

Appendix II PWRDF Stories

Colombia – Strengthening Women, Protecting the Land

In the Páramo de Pisba highlands in the Department of Boyaca, Colombia, most people work in either agriculture, animal husbandry or traditional mining. But as mining activities continue to expand into agricultural land, more and more people are being forced to move higher in the mountains to cultivate the protected land in the páramos (alpine tundra).

When mining is the main industry, the environment is destroyed and traditional farming – usually the domain of women – disappears, leaving women without employment opportunities. Women are then dependent on men’s income perpetuating what is locally known as “machista” social patterns. “The women face economic exclusion and discrimination, condemning them to poverty, unemployment and stripping them of their gender and political rights,” says Jeannethe Lara, PWRDF’s program coordinator for the ILSA project.

PWRDF’s new partner ILSA (Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un derecho Alternativos – Latin American Institute for an Alternative Society and Rights) works with local women to address these needs. The program will train women in nine municipalities of Páramo de Pisba and empower them with the skills and necessary funds to create agricultural microenterprises, protect their environment and strengthen their leadership potential in the public sphere.

The project has identified 75 women and 400 family members who will take part in training and discussions on everything from women’s rights, leadership, agriculture, public policy and environmental protection. The women will use their new skills to establish a native plant nursery that will help reforest the land damaged by mining. They will also receive seeds and livestock for their family farms including hens, chickens and sheep. The latter can be used to obtain wool and can be bred for additional income.

The identified women will also receive training and coaching on entrepreneurship including financial, administrative and technical information. Together they will establish a “revolving fund” where everyone contributes and has access to a shared pot of money. These funds will allow the women to design and establish collective income generation enterprises in order to provide the women with the income they need.

“ILSA is creating an eco-feminist response to climate change in the region of Pisba,” says Lara.

Uganda – It Takes a Family

Since 1997, St. Jude Family Projects in Masaka, Uganda, has trained, closely monitored and transformed the lives of 186,000 farmers. Founded by Josephine and John Kizza Aliddeki, and with all six of their children working in some capacity today, St. Jude is truly a “family project” because, as Josephine says, “when families work together, they can change minds.”

Today St. Jude targets three main populations: women, children and youth. “Uganda is an agricultural country, and the people who do most of the farming are women,” Josephine says. “And they suffer, especially around here where the neighbouring district was very affected by HIV and AIDS. We are training them to grow food in their gardens using simple methods that they can teach their children.”

Josephine notes that poorer children go to the government schools and often come without any lunch. “We have set up demonstration gardens in the school and now they are able to eat at school and learn the farming techniques that will set them up later in life. The children are proud to teach their parents.”

And she notes, “We teach the youth in the community here that there’s something they can do. They are powerful and energetic and they can use this energy for good, to work and protect the environment. They are ambassadors to train fellow youth. I’m very proud of them.”

Since its beginnings in the 1990s, St Jude has experienced incredible growth and become a centre of excellence. In 2014, offices were built, alongside a school that focuses on practical training over theoretical knowledge. People come from Africa and other parts of the world to learn about organic farming, food security, income generation, environmental management, tree planting, water harvesting and soil fertilization. The holistic approach emphasizes that all of these things are connected to healthy living in an integrated manner.

In 2019, St. Jude touched the lives of 6,000 farmers. PWRDF was able to support 210 families by improving food security (three meals a day instead of one and a half), increasing income through farm entrepreneurship and teaching agricultural conservation techniques to cope with climate change.

“I tell my story because I know many women who have similar problems, who started with nothing,” says Josephine. “I am an example that women working together with their families can transform themselves to greatness.”

The Caribbean – Training Pastors for Disasters

In 2019 Anglicans from throughout the Caribbean took part in a “Pastors and Disasters” workshop in Grenada. The workshop was organized and hosted by the Church of the Province of the West Indies with the global Anglican Alliance, the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, and the US-based Episcopal Relief & Development. It was organized following a number of natural disasters and climate change-related events to hit the island nations.

“Churches and communities around the Anglican Communion are increasingly facing the devastating impacts of climate change”, a spokesperson for the Anglican Alliance said. “Exposed island communities are particularly vulnerable and extreme weather events such as hurricanes, cyclones, sea surges and flooding, as well as rising sea levels, are becoming the ‘new normal’. Churches are frequently at the forefront of responding to disasters and can also play a key role in building resilience to them.”

The workshop participants came from the West Indies’ dioceses of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands, Guyana, and North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba; as well as the Episcopal Church’s Diocese of the Virgin Islands. They shared their own experiences of disaster preparedness and resilience, learned best practices using the Pastors and Disasters Toolkit, and adapted it to the Caribbean context.

The Pastors and Disasters toolkit is a resource for community-based disaster risk reduction and management created by Episcopal Relief & Development in collaboration with other Anglican agencies. It distils knowledge and experience gathered from across the Anglican Communion and provides tried and tested practical tools for churches to respond effectively.

“I have enjoyed that the workshop has been so practical”, Tina Beazer, the Long Term Recovery Director of the Virgin Islands Diocese, said. “I love that it is a process and you can follow the process. I have gained knowledge and confidence from using the Pastors and Disasters tools. When I go back, I plan to discuss with [the] Archdeacon and start putting it into practice. In fact, I plan to give a copy to the Governor of the Virgin Islands, who I know personally.”

The Anglican Alliance’s Disaster Response and Resilience Manager, Dr. Janice Proud, said, “It is exciting to have such an enthusiastic group from across the Caribbean coming together to learn how to plan and prepare for disasters. In all parts of the Anglican Communion, the Anglican Alliance and partners are shifting the focus to support building resilience at all levels – diocesan, parish and individual. In this way the churches, communities and individuals can look to decrease their vulnerabilities and increase their capacity using their assets.”

Bangladesh – Mangrove regeneration, more than a finger in the dyke

Bangladesh has become increasingly vulnerable because of climate change. Together with long-time Bangladeshi partner, UBINIG, PWRDF has been working in climate vulnerable areas that have suffered the effects of natural disasters, targeting 22,000 Bangladeshi farmers in 10 villages threatened by drought, floods and cyclones.

In 2018, the first year of the project, great progress was made thanks to PWRDF and its donors, including the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC). Two villages were prepared for mangrove regeneration in order to help protect the shorelines against erosion, flooding and high winds. The communities were trained on how to protect these plants to ensure their survival and growth.

As The Nature Conservancy's program, Mapping Ocean Wealth, indicates on its website, "Mangroves are multi-taskers in the world of ocean wealth. In addition to providing habitat for both artisanal and commercially-fished species, sequestering carbon, and bolstering tourism, mangroves are essential for protecting coastal communities from the effects of climate change in many parts of the world. The aerial roots of mangroves retain sediments and prevent erosion, while the roots, trunks and canopy reduce the force of oncoming waves and storm surge and thus reduce flooding."

Bamboo bindings were set up to redirect water and prevent river erosion and flooding of valuable farm land. Four of these bindings, locally known as chatkas, were built. With the support of MCIC, PWRDF looks forward to assisting the local partner and communities in building more of these bindings, protecting more communities from flooding and river erosion.

UBINIG also established farmers field schools in six villages in climate vulnerable areas. These schools are sharing knowledge about farming in drought and flood prone areas as well as discussing the challenges that climate change is presenting.

The project has a focus on increasing knowledge, as well as the capacity to adapt to climate change in the local communities. Men and women in disaster prone areas have gathered to discuss common concerns. Women have taken up the cause of seed preservation as a way to address the losses associated with natural disasters and extreme weather. These discussions help to share knowledge and identify the gaps, as well as to develop plans for taking action to protect their communities and make them more aware of the effects of the changing climate.