



Shagar and her grandchildren

What “Ending Hunger” looks like after a Quarter Century of Learning and Growing

How you’ve helped us serve as a “Christian Response to Hunger” for 25 years

Children cluster around Shagar Bhakta. Some of them play boisterously at her feet and others peek shyly from behind her brightly-coloured sari. “Are these your grandchildren?” we ask. “Some of them are,” she responds through a translator, and then makes a sweeping gesture to include all of them, as though it didn’t matter which were blood and which weren’t.

Her son and daughter-in-law, the parents of some of these children, have gone to the river to catch fish to feed the family tonight. The small clay fire pit where Shagar prepares meals for the family sits cold and unused. They haven’t eaten today. They’re hoping for a successful catch.

Last year, when Shagar’s village was hit by a devastating flood, villagers were forced to live on boats along the river’s edge for 2 weeks. After the flood water subsided, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, through their member agency Mennonite Central Committee and their partner in India, Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action, provided rice and wheat as part of a food-for-work project to help them rebuild their communities.

Shagar and her family represent just a few of the millions of people who have benefited from the work of Canadian Foodgrains Bank since it was established in 1983. The project that supported her village was the recipient of the one millionth tonne of food distributed by the Foodgrains Bank.

In another part of India, another type of need is being met through the support of Canadian Foodgrains Bank. In the village of Budanar Musoni in the Bihar Region, Aghnia, a senior member of the community, tells us of her reality. “We are the Musahar people,” she says. “It means rat eaters. But we don’t really eat rats – people just think we do. We follow the rats to their nests and we take the grain that they have stored there. That’s how we survive.”

The Musahar people are members of the lowest caste of the Hindu caste system. They have no access to land, they are mostly illiterate, there are few jobs available to them other than occasional day labour in the fields that surround their homes, their government has overlooked them, and every year they have to abandon their homes and live on an embankment under tarps during two months of the monsoon season when their villages flood.

The government of India has programs which should help the Musahar people. Ration cards and job cards are supposed to be available to provide landless labourers with access to food and at least 100 days of work per year. In Aghnia’s village, however, only a handful of people have received either the ration card or job card. Those with the job card had only seen about 5 days of work out of the 100 they were “guaranteed”.

In Budanar Musoni, Canadian Foodgrains Bank member World Relief Canada is working through a local partner, Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief, to help the Musahar people advocate for their right to food. Villagers are learning to navigate the government bureaucracy and stand up for their rights against corruption and discrimination, ensuring that they not only have food today and tomorrow, but for many months and years to come.



Aghnia

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

is a partnership of 15 Canadian church-based agencies working to end hunger in developing countries by increasing and deepening the involvement of Canadians in efforts to end hunger; supporting partnerships and activities to reduce hunger on both an immediate and sustainable basis; and influencing changes in public policies necessary to end hunger.

Member Agencies

Adventist Development and Relief Agency Canada
www.adra.ca

Canadian Baptist Ministries
www.cbmin.org

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace
www.devp.org

Canadian Lutheran World Relief
www.clwr.org

Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada
www.cmacan.org

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
www.crwrc.org

Emergency Relief & Development Overseas
(Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada)
www.erdo.ca

Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
www.emcc.ca

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
www.mccc.org

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Canada
www.ncmc.ca

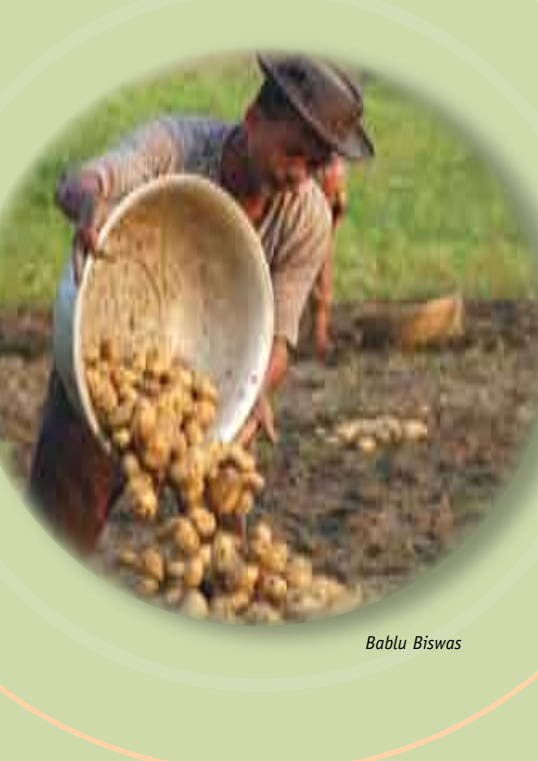
Presbyterian World Service & Development
www.presbyterian.ca

Primate’s World Relief & Development Fund
(Anglican Church of Canada)
www.pwrdf.org

The Salvation Army
www.salvationarmy.ca

The United Church of Canada
www.united-church.ca

World Relief Canada
www.wrcanada.org



Bablu Biswas

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Not far away, in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh, Bablu Biswas works happily in his small potato farm with his daughter and brother. This year's crop has doubled from previous years, and the growing mound of potatoes makes him smile. With the new farming techniques (including composting and using a better variety of potatoes) introduced through a project sponsored by the Foodgrains Bank (through their member agency World Relief Canada and their partner Koinonia), he has been able to increase his yield so that he has more potatoes to sell in the market and can provide for his family and send his children to school. His future looks brighter than it has in a long time.

Though these three projects are not very far apart geographically, they are all unique in their approaches to ending hunger. Through an intricate web of relationships with member agencies, partner agencies, donors, and project participants, Canadian Foodgrains Bank tries to respond in the most appropriate manner in each context. In twenty-five years, a lot has been learned about what it means to end hunger. Canadian Foodgrains Bank applies this learning not only to overseas programming but to engaging the Canadian public and working to influence national and international public policy.

Shagar, Aghnia, and Bablu will probably never personally meet the many Canadians who have offered their time, money, food and ideas to assist people around the world during times of hardship beyond their control. But there is a connection between them that bridges the distance. It is this connection that makes the continued work of Canadian Foodgrains as essential today as it was twenty-five years ago.

By Heather Plett, Director of Resources and Communication

(Note: If you want to learn more about the people in this story, watch for the upcoming video "We are all Connected" which will be released in June. To pre-order a copy, call 1-800-665-0377)

In its 25 year history, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has:

- programmed in 76 countries around the world
- delivered approximately \$500,000,000 worth of food aid, food security, nutrition and seed programs
- supplied 1,005,725 metric tonnes of food received \$134,394,819 in donations from generous Canadians (both cash and grain)
- seen increased funding from CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) up to \$25 million/year
- grown to represent 15 member agencies, which in turn represent almost all Christian denominations in Canada
- influenced public policy both nationally and internationally
- engaged and educated thousands of Canadians in hunger-related issues

Art DeFehr, who initiated the first ideas for creating the Foodgrains Bank while he was serving with MCC in Bangladesh during a time of widespread famine, is not surprised at these numbers.

"I always knew that it was an idea that could grow tremendously, as long as there was the will and the personal commitment by individuals to carry it forward," he said in a recent interview.

"Offering aid gives you credibility on the ground and with governments," continues deFehr.

"There is most certainly a need for it. But then you need to use your credibility to speak out against the imbalances that [at times] cause these insecurities. You work to change policies and systems and it's your expertise in many different countries that makes people listen."



Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations

Everyone is welcome to attend the following events:

Manitoba

Location: Hitch n' Post Ranch, 8.8 km. north of Winnipeg on Highway 6 (see map on our website)
Date: June 18, 2008 Time: 6:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$35.00 each (call 1-800-665-0377 for tickets)

Ontario

Location: Country Heritage Park, formerly the Ontario Agriculture Museum near Milton
Date: June 22, 2008 at 3:00pm
The day begins with people having access to approx 80 acres of buildings and exhibits.
3:00pm- People begin to gather in the Gambrel Barn
4:00pm- Program Begins
5:30pm- Supper is Served (BBQ Chicken and Ribs)

Alberta

Location: Red Deer, Date: November 4th
Details to follow at a later date.
(Contact John and Grace Karsten at (403) 345-5217 for information)

Influencing Public Policy *Adapting for the Changing Times*

With a quarter of a century behind it, the Foodgrains Bank founders should be proud of how their bold dreams in 1975 have turned out. Today, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has become established as an effective set of Canadian Christian 'hands, legs and voice' to meet the immediate and longer term food needs of hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters in developing countries. Patterned on the Biblical story of Joseph's storing of food from the good years to meet the needs of the lean years, the early supporters of the Foodgrains Bank saw their organization as a way for those who have much to share with those who don't have enough. The original vision right didn't stop there, however.

One of the founders, Art Defehr, wrote about the Foodgrains Bank also taking on a prophetic role in calling for changes to international policies that affect the ability of people to be able to feed themselves. The past decade has seen this vision come to life with the establishment of the Foodgrains Bank Public Policy Program which has gained a solid reputation both in Canada and internationally.

The past twenty-five years have also been a time of unprecedented agricultural surpluses. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it was widely recognized that there was enough food produced to feed everyone adequately. We just lacked the arrangements to make sure that all of God's children had access to enough to lead healthy productive lives. Food aid was seen as an effective and vital short term 'patch', but what was needed longer term were more secure and sustainable livelihoods, often in agriculture, to ensure that people could feed themselves. But western aid donors cut their support for agricultural development dramatically and

forced developing countries to open their local markets to imported, often highly subsidized, food. In most of the developing world, agriculture languished due to low prices and low levels of investment. The consequences of these policies is now seen in the emerging global food crisis.

The rapidly developing food crisis is the first major change affecting the Foodgrains Bank. In 2000, the world had over four months supply of food in storage; by this year, the global supply in storage has dropped to less than two months, the smallest stock since the last food crisis in 1973. The result of these short stocks has been wildly changing basic food staples prices. Relatively small changes in production or use – such as crop failures in Australia or the rapid development of biofuels – can result in doubling of prices in a short time. The current high prices may not stay as high as they are now. They will doubtless encourage production to increase as more land is brought (back) into production and higher levels of fertilizer are applied to the land. But it is unlikely that either of these responses will be sufficient or even sustainable. While there is still some additional land that can be farmed, the availability of water either from irrigation or rainfall has become a bigger constraint to increased production. The prices of petroleum-based fertilizer are increasing rapidly, meaning that fertilizer remains out of the reach of many farmers. The world is facing major challenges in increasing agriculture production to meet growing demands in a manner that ensures the livelihoods of millions of people dependent on agriculture and doesn't degrade the environment.

A second major change has been the rapid spread and integration of food markets around the world. The Foodgrains Bank has

responded to this new reality by advocating for and obtaining greater flexibility to purchase food aid closer to the need, often within the same country. As well as providing food faster and usually cheaper, this has meant that less money and fossil fuels have been spent transporting the food. As this idea has taken hold, however, there have also been pressures for aid agencies and government to take the next step and provide households directly with cash or redeemable vouchers to purchase the available food being supplied through the market. Rather than wait for a hunger emergency to develop, there is a call to design and develop more flexible 'safety nets' to help before hunger or starvation strike.

These profound changes will call for the Foodgrains Bank to further adapt its program. Some possible developments:

The Foodgrains Bank will increasingly provide direct cash transfers to hungry households to enable them to purchase the food they need and other urgently needed items.

The Foodgrains Bank may increase support for the construction and maintenance of local food security reserves in response to more variable growing seasons.

The Foodgrains Bank will give more attention to helping small farmers increase their production and cope with the impacts of climate change.

The Foodgrains Bank will increase its work to promote Canadian and international policies that help poor people to feed themselves.

By Stu Clark, Senior Policy Advisor

Women share supplies after cyclone in Myanmar



Response to Cyclone in Myanmar (Burma)

Cyclone Nargis has destroyed much of Myanmar's rice crop and ruined agriculture land. Early reports indicate that the entire rice crop was destroyed in the area just before it was to be harvested. Also, it is unlikely that the next rice crop will be planted on time due to the damage to agriculture land and lack of access to new seedlings.

Many of the people of Myanmar will be facing food shortages and hunger unless aid is provided to meet immediate food needs and support the reestablishment of agriculture production.

In response to this situation, several Canadian Foodgrains Bank member agencies are in conversation with their partners in and around Myanmar to try to determine the most appropriate course of action. Donations for Myanmar will be used by one of our member agencies programming in the region.

The evolution of the Foodgrains Bank's response **Twenty-five years of programming**

Deeply aware of the abundance they enjoyed in their own country, Canadians established the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as a means to reach out and alleviate the suffering of so many around the world who don't have enough to eat. This sentiment has not changed in the twenty-five years of our existence. Today, our goal still is: "End Hunger."

What has changed is the way in which we go about ending hunger. In the early years, much of our energy was directed to shipping boatloads of food (mainly wheat) from Canada and distributing it to those who were hungry. We still do this, today. We recently sent a shipment of Canadian wheat to South Africa, where we milled it into a special fortified porridge mix that is being distributed to malnourished children and people who suffer from HIV/AIDS in Malawi.

While Canadian grain was well received by many, there were other places where people were not used to eating wheat (what would you do with a 100 Lb sack of raw wheat?) This challenged the Foodgrains Bank to find ways to provide locally appropriate food. For example, we recently swapped a major shipment of Canadian wheat with a flour mill in Southern Africa for maize, grown in Zambia, which we are now distributing to hungry families in Zimbabwe.

We also lobbied the Government of Canada to allow us to use our funds to purchase more food directly from regional sources rather than having to send the food from Canada. Eventually, the government eased its restrictions, allowing us to purchase more food in developing countries. Aside from being able to provide more appropriate food, it also allows us to respond faster, eliminating the two to three-month period that it takes to ship food from Canada to Africa or Asia. After Cyclone Sidr devastated Bangladesh last November, we were able to get food to the people in record time because the food could be purchased and transported from unaffected parts of Bangladesh rather than shipped as ocean freight from Canada.

Some groups of people have suffered so much that they have become malnourished and need special care. In response to this, Canadian Foodgrains Bank developed special funding for projects that specifically aim to reduce malnutrition. Special therapeutic feeding programs for treating malnourished children in Darfur are examples of this.

Sometimes a disaster destroys peoples' ability to grow or access food. They may have depleted their savings, sold their farm equipment to purchase food, or have had to eat the seed that they saved up for the next planting season. In such cases, families may need assistance to stabilize their lives and get themselves back on their feet. For example, floods destroyed dams and farm plots of people in the Dogon region of Mali. The Foodgrains Bank is providing these families with food and tools while they repair their dams and rebuild their farm plots.

From the desk of the
Executive Director

Jim Cornelius

Still Relevant after 25 Years

Some of the initial ideas for the creation of the MCC Food Bank in 1975 and its successor the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 1983 emerged out of the world food crisis in the early 1970s. Famines in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, high food prices, and energy scarcity had caused a group of Canadians to think about how they could make a difference for hungry people around the world. As this newsletter documents, their efforts have resulted in over one million tonnes of food and seed being provided and over half a billion dollars spent to end hunger around the world by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This newsletter also documents how the Foodgrains Bank's program has evolved – more of the food we supply is purchased in developing countries, more funding is being directed to agriculture development and efforts to help families feed themselves, more effort is being made to educate and engage Canadians, and more focus is being given to changing public policies necessary to end hunger.

As I think about all this effort, I am left asking myself – has it made a difference? I am confident the answer is yes. We know that many lives have been saved through the support provided. We know that many livelihoods have been protected and strengthened. We know that many households are better able to feed their families. We know that government aid policies have been improved as a result of our work. We know that more Canadians are involved in our program. We have been making an important contribution to the work of ending hunger. This is something to celebrate.

The proportion of the world's population that is hungry has fallen from 37% in the early 1970s to less than 20% today. This is good news. However, there are still over 850 million people who are hungry, and we are facing another world food crisis in 2008 that may add many more millions to this number. Some are worried that the progress that has been made will be reversed. Things are still not right, and there are many threats and barriers to making further progress on ending hunger.

I remain convinced that our mission of ending hunger is as important as ever. The Foodgrains Bank has a well earned reputation as a significant and vital Canadian and church agency engaged in the work of ending hunger. Changes to our program have ensured that we remain relevant and effective. We are still being called to imagine a world without hunger - where food is shared with those in need, where communities and families have the ability to feed themselves, and where economic, social and political arrangements are fair, accountable, and respect the dignity of each human being.

Much of the human suffering from a disaster is the result of people's vulnerability. People who experience recurrent droughts or who farm on marginal land often don't have sufficient resources to buy insurance or protect themselves from the effects of adversity. These families are the first to face hunger when problems arrive. The Foodgrains Bank works with vulnerable families to reduce their risk to potential food shortages. For example, many people who are returning to their homes in Liberia have lived so long in refugee camps that they have lost their farming skills. The Foodgrains Bank supports projects that provide tools, seeds and farming training to returning refugees so that they can learn to work their fields and become productive farmers again.

The world has changed during the past twenty-five years that the Foodgrains Bank has been in existence. The causes of hunger are also changing, as the current concern about global warming, or the increasing food prices demonstrate. The way in which the Foodgrains Bank's responds to hunger has changed and diversified as well over time, in



Registration card for food aid in Uganda



keeping with the changing world context. One thing remains the same, however - our commitment to End Hunger.

By Ary Vreeken, former Director of International Programming

Food Study Tours

Do you want to know whether a Food Study Tour is worthwhile? Just ask someone who's been there. "The tour has affected my life and continues to affect my life in ways that I cannot even comprehend," Josina Vink's says of her experience in Nicaragua in 2005. Her response is echoed by scores of others who have participated in a Canadian Foodgrains Bank Study Tour.



Josina makes a new friend in Nicaragua

For more than 20 years, over 300 people have participated in Foodgrains Bank tours to various regions where food relief and food security projects have been organized as a response to hunger. Bert Loewen, executive director in the early years of the organization, remembers the grassroots energy and commitment of the first groups who visited projects to make sure food was getting to hungry people: "These were very exciting times. It was the farmers' ideas – they made it go. We would have some representatives and they would give reports on how (the shipment) was going. We were very, very careful to make the food appropriate, where the money went, how the conversion was taking place...if I couldn't go myself, I would send someone else."

Kay Loewen, remembers accompanying her husband on some of these trips, traveling thousands of miles on makeshift roads, and experiencing the importance of being flexible with sudden changes in travel plans, like the time they were forced to stay overnight in a camp in Ethiopia. "We had a wonderful time -- it was all drama. We witnessed impromptu surgeries in a makeshift infirmary and slept in a small round hut on a mattress filled with bulrushes."

Since the 1980s, study tours have developed into more than just making sure donated food or money was reaching its destination. Recently, more attention is paid to enhancing intercultural learning by having pre-trip seminars by trained facilitators, often occurring in the country being visited. "We are hoping that when people go on the tours they really see themselves as goodwill ambassadors," writes Dan Wiens, who has led numerous tours over the years. Not everyone can have that kind of experience, and those who go on tours have always been encouraged to share their experience upon returning home.

The Food Study Tour has become a carefully organized educational experience focused on learning about the many factors which contribute to global hunger, including climate change, conflict, HIV-Aids, sustainable agriculture, and global trade inequity. Vink attests to this: "It shifted my thinking about my role in the bigger political, social, environmental and economic systems of the world. I realized that I did not want to be responsible for contributing to the further impoverishment of these nations. I was able to gain more understanding as I caught wind of new ideas and movements happening locally and globally." With learning outcomes like that, Food Study Tours will continue to be relevant tools for education and ongoing awareness of hunger issues.

By James Kornelsen, Public Engagement Coordinator

Global Food Crisis

The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, recently announced that the Government of Canada will provide \$5 million in additional funding for Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help address the rising cost of food. This is in addition to Canada's annual \$20 million contribution to the Foodgrains Bank, which CIDA provides on a 4 to 1 matching basis. In addition, it was announced that CIDA would untie food aid purchases, allowing us greater flexibility to purchase food closer to the region of need, thereby increasing the speed of delivery and access to appropriate commodity, and reducing the negative impact that bringing food into a region might have on the local market.



Jim Cornelius signs a \$25 million/year agreement with Victor Carvell of CIDA

New Faces

During this past year we have said good-bye to old faces and welcomed new faces to the Foodgrains Bank team.

In October we welcomed **Sharon Houle** back to the Program Services Group as Program Assistant after a time away from the Foodgrains Bank to pursue other career interests. **James Alty**, Logistics Manager, and **Ary Vreeken**, Program Director, announced their resignations earlier this year. James will be taking on a country representative position with Mennonite Central Committee, responsible for programming in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. Ary Vreeken will be relocating to Calgary to take a position with Samaritan's Purse as head of the Household Water Filter Program.

Theresa Rempel joined the Foodgrains Bank as a Program Officer in February after spending 5 years in China working with Mennonite Central Committee and Mercy Corp. **Joan Barkman** assumed the role of Program Director in mid-May. **Aad Driessen** has been appointed as Logistics Manager and will be fulfilling that role from Harare, Zimbabwe.

Public Engagement Coordinator, **Dan Wiens** moved over to Mennonite Central Committee in November and was replaced by **James Kornelsen** on a part time basis in January. James is currently working on his Masters in Natural Resource Management and will be working in a full time capacity in September.

Paul Hagerman joined the Public Policy Group as a Policy Advisor in October after finishing a term in Jamaica as the Coordinator of Agriculture Development Program.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Voluntary Provincial Coordinators in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador.

Former Board member, **Clarence Tuin** and his wife **Jenny** have accepted the role in British Columbia. They have been the driving force behind the annual Make a Difference Auction in Abbotsford.

In Nova Scotia, The **Rev. Dr. Randy Crozsmann**, has been appointed. Randy serves as minister of St Paul & St Stephen United Church in Kentville. **Kent Myers** of New Perth will be serving on Prince Edward Island. Kent has been involved with several growing projects and traveled with Randy Crozsmann on a Food Study Tour in 2007 to Zimbabwe and Malawi. In Newfoundland, **Pernell and Debra Oram** of Glovertown have agreed to represent the Foodgrains Bank in their region. We look forward to the enthusiasm of our new volunteers for working to end hunger.

Food and Seed Supplied

from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008

Country	Tonnes	Commodities
Afghanistan	87	Rice, Oil, Wheat Flour, Pulses
Bangladesh	1,487	Rice, Oil, Pulses, Food Baskets, Seed
Burkina Faso	347	Maize, Oil, Pulses
Chad	1,601	Maize, Oil, Pulses
Ethiopia	1,310	Wheat, Oil, Pulses, Seed, Unimix
India	4,932	Wheat, Rice, Oil, Pulses
Kenya	3,138	Maize, Pulses
Laos	80	Rice
Liberia	311	Rice, Oil, Pulses, Seed
Malawi	179	Oil, Seed, Wheat Soy Blend
Mali	691	Maize, Oil, Seed
Mongolia	65	Rice, Oil, Wheat Flour, Seed
Mozambique	50	Oil, Pulses, Corn Meal
Nicaragua	597	Rich, Oil, Wheat Flour, Pulses, Seed
Pakistan	681	Riche Oil, Wheat Flour, Pulses
Sierra Leone	51	Seed
Somalia	81	Maize, Oil, Pulses
Sri Lanka	261	Rice, Oil, Wheat Flour, Pulses
Sudan	141	Wheat, Sorghum, Oil, Pulses, Seed
Uganda	4,973	Oil, Amaranth, Corn Flour, Pulses, Seed
Zambia	70	Unimix, Seed
Zimbabwe	10,211	Maize, Oil, Pulses, Corn Soy Blend, Seed
Total	31,344	

Food Security and Nutrition Projects

from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008

Country	\$ Total	Program
Afghanistan	301,700	Food Security
Bangladesh	461,400	Food Security
Ethiopia	1,256,500	Food Security
India	242,300	Food Security
Kenya	720,400	Food Security & Nutrition
Laos	71,400	Food Security
Liberia	466,200	Food Security
Malawi	162,700	Food Security & Nutrition
Mali	80,800	Food Security
Mongolia	94,500	Food Security
Mozambique	272,000	Food Security
Nicaragua	68,700	Nutrition
Pakistan	145,900	Food Security
Sierra Leone	70,500	Food Security
Sudan	1,320,700	Food Security & Nutrition
Tanzania	162,700	Food Security
Uganda	156,000	Food Security
Zambia	31,400	Food Security
Zimbabwe	210,200	Food Security
Total	\$6,296,000	

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Donations to the Foodgrains Bank can be made online at www.foodgrainsbank.ca, or by calling 1-800-665-0337. Resources such as brochures, bulletin covers or inserts, posters and videos are available through head office or your regional coordinator.

