Impact report 2019

SeedChange
Formerly USC Canada



Growing resilience for everyone, with you.

Maria Benigna Aguilar, *Honduras*

IN 2019, YOU IMPROVED THE LIVES OF FARMERS AROUND THE WORLD.

Thanks to you, farming communities grew a little stronger. Women farmers participated in projects that made them feel bolder. Young farmers learned new business skills that made their futures brighter. And communities stocked their seed banks, making them safer.

Thanks to you, farmers are better positioned to ensure there is food, no matter what.

Did you ever wonder how, exactly, your donations create an impact? This year, we're taking you behind the scenes. Discover the 5 ways your gifts generate true, lasting change.

1

Facilitator



Firoza Begum

SUPPORTING CHANGEMAKERS

SeedChange is a facilitator. We connect changemakers and ensure the free flow of knowledge. It's not a starring role, but it has been central to our approach since 1945. The goal: support local leaders until they can run successful programs on their own.

In 2019, the time came to say goodbye to our partners in Bangladesh. Bringing a program to an end is never easy, but we know our colleagues will be able to carry on the work we began together. Take a look at what your donations, and the support of donors before you, made possible.



FIROZA BEGUM

As a young woman from a poor rural family, Firoza Begum had fewer opportunities than her brothers and faced more barriers. Her quick mind and natural leadership abilities might have gone unnoticed. But thanks to you, when Firoza was 19, she got the chance to learn how to grow vegetables and save their seeds at home.

Now in her mid 20s, Firoza grows 23 kinds of vegetables for herself, her husband and their children. She has her own seed bank at home, and she also sells natural pesticides and compost to neighbouring

“Some social change happens quite rapidly and it’s amazing when it does. But getting to watch the long term effects of change, like I have, is really rewarding.”
—Kate Green



Kate Green and Firoza Begum during a field visit in 2014.
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Kate Green and Nasima Khatun in Bangladesh, 1995.

farmers, generating extra income. She doesn’t stop there: Firoza also acts as a role model for other young women and gives back to her community as president of her local young farmers’ group.

Now a confident young mother, Firoza doesn’t have to worry about how she’ll provide for her family. Her small, diverse farm teems with life, a living demonstration of what a woman can do with just a little land.

She can care for her loved ones, and model new possibilities for her daughters. Thanks to you.



KATE GREEN

Kate Green is the kind of person who commits wholeheartedly to a cause. She wouldn’t claim credit for it, but for the last 25 years, Kate’s commitment to stewarding your impact in Bangladesh changed the lives of thousands of young women.

“I feel really lucky,” she says of her years managing our Bangladesh program. “Some social change happens quite rapidly and it’s amazing when it does. But getting to watch the long term effects of change, like I have, is really rewarding.”

SeedChange (then USC Canada) started working in Bangladesh in 1971, shortly after the country emerged from a devastating war for independence. Sensing the need, our founder Lotta Hitschmanova was on one of the first trains into the new country. She immediately began mobilizing Canadians to fund orphanages and sponsor children. In the following decades, needs changed, and our support shifted to health care and skills training.

Kate fell in love with the country and its people when she first travelled to Bangladesh as an intern for SeedChange in 1990. In 1993, she became our Bangladesh program manager.

Over the years, Kate got to know many young women like Firoza. She’s seen many become expert seed savers and gardeners, sharing their knowledge with others and making a tangible difference for their families.

“When we invest in the skills of women, and when women are given equal access to resources, they can yield just as much income as men,” she says.

“In many cases, even more.”

Bangladesh program highlights

48 years of generous support from Canadians like you

100,000+ young women received life-changing training faciliated by SeedChange

2

Funder



Your generosity helped Tomas Pinto rise from adversity. Thanks to you, he learned how to transform his small parcel of eroded land into a forested farm where fruits, vegetables, herbs and cash crops grow.

© KATIE BREEN/SEEDCHANGE

MULTIPLYING YOUR FINANCIAL IMPACT

Your gifts to SeedChange travel to partner organizations around the world to help them meet the urgent needs of family farmers. That's how you helped farmers like Tomas Pinto, in Timor-Leste, make their farms more productive and more resilient.

Working this way gives our partner organizations the chance to build a solid track record of their own. Eventually, this helps them attract other funders. Our Timor-Leste partner, RAEBIA, provided a phenomenal example of this multiplication effect in 2019: it leveraged $50,000 from SeedChange to raise 10 times more from larger funders. That's right: thanks to the financial seeds you planted, RAEBIA can now help many more communities suffering from food insecurity. That means more farmers restoring degraded land, more communities training in agroforestry, and more communities benefiting from seed banks this year. It also means RAEBIA can do more as an advocate for farmers at a national level, contributing to a more vibrant democracy and better agricultural policies.

Your impact in 2019

12 international partner organizations channeled your support to farmers

13 Canadian partner organizations delivered programs for farmers

48 more organizations learned from our programs

3

Trainer



Thanks to your support, Fanta Traoré's community in Mali was able to do a seed security assessment. It galvanized the community's efforts to protect rare seeds, including one forgotten sorghum variety saved by Fanta.

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SHARING METHODS FOR CHANGE

Every farming community is unique. Still, many of them face challenges that can be tackled with similar approaches. Thanks to you, we deliver direct training to community leaders around the world on problem-solving methods that work.

One of the most powerful tools in our toolbox is SeedChange's Seed Security Assessment methodology. It was developed in 2014 by our seed systems specialist based in Nepal, Dr. Pratap Shrestha, in collaboration with our Cuban partners. It's a unique step-by-step process that farming communities can use to map out their local seed systems, identify gaps, and make plans to fill them.

We've helped SeedChange partners from seven countries learn how to use this to support local farmers. In 2019, two other international organizations, Groundswell International and Norway's Development Fund, hired us to deliver this training to their own partners in Mexico and Somaliland, respectively. Delivering these trainings allows us to generate more revenue for our programs. It also means we can spread the solutions you helped us develop more broadly.

Your impact in 2019

6,629 international farmers were trained to select, save or breed seeds

1,842 Canadian farmers were trained to select, save or breed seeds

4

Influencer



Yessica Victoria Mancia Osorio is from Honduras, where farmer groups formally registered 6 new varieties of farmer-bred maize and beans so far, thanks to your support.

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KEEPING SEEDS IN FARMERS' HANDS

Thanks to you, we can help farmers defend their rights. While governments around the world continue to put in place policies that favour large seed corporations, you help farmers propose better solutions.

In Honduras, your donations allow our partner FIPAH to support a large coalition of local farmer organizations. Together, they convinced the Honduran government to support four "local seed certification committees" as pilot projects. If successful, this new model will make it easier for local seed producers to sell their new seed varieties. This means farmers can access more locally-adapted seeds, which helps with climate resilience.

In Canada, seed registration is also expensive and difficult. That's why our Canadian program, The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, works with seed producers here to draw lessons from Honduras' success and propose an alternative registration system for Canada. We're also closely monitoring the ongoing review of the Plant Breeders' Rights Act to make sure farmers don't lose the right to save the seeds of protected varieties for their own use.

Your impact in 2019

You helped farmers release:

142 new seed varieties among their networks

22 new seed varieties through formal registration systems

5

Incubator



Gillian Flies from Ontario is a founding member of Farmers for Climate Solutions. "When it comes to climate change, people feel like farmers are part of the problem", she says. Your support is helping Gillian change that.

COURTESY OF GILLIAN FLIES

HELPING NEW SOLUTIONS EMERGE

Add your voice! Sign up at **weseedchange.org/advocate** to help us defend farmers' rights to save seeds in Canada!

Your generous support for SeedChange means we can play a unique role as incubator of new projects and new ideas. In 2019, you helped us create a powerful new Canadian coalition: Farmers for Climate Solutions.

Across the country, farmers are working to find their own climate solutions. Some use cover crops to help their soil retain more carbon. Others breed new seed varieties that cope better with climate variations. Others still work to reduce their use of fossil fuels and fertilizers to cut back on greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2019, you helped bring to life an unprecedented coalition of farmers coming together to share their ideas and shape policies to make agriculture part of the solution. The campaign's official launch, in February 2020, got coast-to-coast-to-coast media coverage, which bodes well for the coalitions' future success. With your continued support, we'll continue bringing farmers together to advocate for policies that are good for farming, people and the planet. Stay tuned!

Your impact in 2019

You helped our partners contribute to:

56 events to influence policy

515 events to share farmer-led solutions

Your reaction to our new name

We can't report on 2019 without mentioning the momentous step we took last October: officially changing our name from USC Canada to SeedChange. We received many notes, calls and emails following our big news. Here's a sample of what donors like you had to say!



Bravo SeedChange for stating your beliefs so clearly! I love to be part of a movement that embraces change.

–Victoria McTaggart is a longtime SeedChange donor.

I strongly believe in making the world a "better, kinder place for all." I think Dr. Lotta would be proud of your new name and your continued work to improve life for so many.

–G.K., Toronto, Ont.

It makes a lot of sense to me as it reflects the work that the organisation is doing. Perfect!

–C.G., Edmonton, Alta.

SeedChange defines the purpose and work that you do. Congratulations for 75 years. Wishing you continued success in the future!

–C.P.H., Vancouver, B.C.

Good idea! USC was always a mystery to me. As a farmer and keen gardener I am very much in favour of your efforts.

–E.B., Conn, Ont.

Will have to get used to it! Just keep doing the good work!

–C.W., Victoria, B.C.

I love the new name. It speaks directly to the global regenerative movement. Seeds are amazing.

–B.L., Saskatoon, Sask.

I have long donated to USC in memory of my mother who so admired Dr. Lotta and my grandfather who began our connection to Unitarianism, so there is a lot of nostalgia linked to the old name. But as long as the work goes on unchanged, I can live with the new name.

–J.C., Halifax, N.S.

Congratulations on finding both a descriptive and evocative name targeting the field work of former USC.

–M-J.M, Gatineau, Que.

I will still call it Lotta's charity. But I am ok with the name change. The young ones have to carry on for us seniors.

–M.S., North York, Ont.

The new name is perfect! It concisely describes what the core of USC was and is now.

–J.K., Williamston, Ont.

Binta Kané, *Mali*



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"I have enormous empathy for what being a farmer means: a feeder of humanity."

Giving back, through the decades

Bruce McKean joined our donor community one year ago. It's a connection that feels like it was years in the making, given the number of parallels between his life and the evolution of SeedChange.

Bruce's support for international cooperation stretches back to his days on campus in Victoria, B.C. He sold UNICEF Christmas cards and shopped for presents from World University Service of Canada's "Treasure Van." He organized Victoria's Miles for Millions, a 64 kilometre walkathon. One year, 30,000 people came out.

"The 1960s were a very idealistic time. There was a strong feeling of community."

He didn't realize it then, but he was likely walking shoulder to shoulder with SeedChange (then USC Canada) volunteers. Indeed, Victoria was home to one of our most active volunteer chapters at the time. But of course, he remembers our founder, Lotta Hitschmanova's voice on the radio and television.

"She struck me as a character!"

In the following decades, Bruce's career took him to government, business and nonprofits. Human rights and international cooperation were the common thread. Though he has retired several times, he remains busy with a small company in Cote d'Ivoire that works with cashew farmers. The drought tolerant cashew tree was introduced there in the 1960s to slow down desertification. But often, local farmers don't feel confident in the practices they use to grow it, Bruce explains.

"Cashews are firmly rooted into the soil of Africa, but not into its culture," he says. "When I met with the farmer co-op last year, one of the first things they raised was the quality of the seeds they use to plant new trees. They're wondering if they're farming these trees to their full potential." So the SeedChange program in Mali, where we support farmers researching similar questions, makes sense to him.

Our focus on climate solutions also makes sense to him. He sees how much his three young grandchildren love the natural world and how preoccupied their parents are with the climate crisis. And he gets it.

"Climate change is coming fast, it's coming hard. A focus on development doesn't make sense if we don't manage climate change." It's a humbling task, he says, and he knows farmers have an important role to play.

"Preserving crops' genetic diversity, that's where climate-tolerant strains can be developed. I believe genetic inheritance from nature has to be preserved, appreciated and treated with respect."

This reverence for seeds, and the genetic diversity they carry, took root with the childhood he spent by his mother's side in the family garden. An avid and knowledgeable gardener, she instilled in her children a deep appreciation for good food and the work that goes into growing it.

"I have enormous empathy for what being a farmer means: a feeder of humanity." And this, at last, is the thread that brought him to SeedChange.

Thank you Bruce, and welcome to our community!

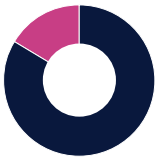
Summary

Revenue: $5,952,568



- Support from general public: **27.6%** (including through USC Foundation)
- Global Affairs Canada: **49%**
- Other (including investment income): **23.4%**

Expenses



- Program: **$4,985,862 (83.8%)**
- Non-program: **$966,573 (16.2%)**



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SeedChange Board members as of October 2019
Ama Amponsah, Abra Brynne, Nicole Côté, Kim Delaney, Karen Farmer, Mamadou Goïta, Robert C Kamp, Natalia Landivar Garcia, Nicole McDonald, Boaventura Eugenio Monjane, Bernard Ndour, Padmapani L. Perez, Karim Salabi, Priscilla Settee, Joachim Voss

SeedChange Foundation members as of October 2019
Mark Austin, Bruce Lourie, Joanne Dobson, Robert C Kamp, Kenton Lobe, Troy Mitchell, Bernard Ndour, Catherine Rowe, Julia Palmer

2018–2019 staff
Jane Rabinowicz and Martin Settle (Executive Directors), Faris Ahmed, Lauren Brander, Katie Breen, Kath Clark, Aabir Dey, Marie Dulude, Teresa Garavito, Aimée González Ferriol, Kate Green, Genevieve Grossenbacher, Stephanie Hughes, Helen Jensen, Jeff de Jong, Christopher Kelly-Bisson, Julia Laforge, Lise-Anne Léveillé, Marie-Eve Levert, Elodie Mantha, Hugo Martorell, Brian McFarlane, Marta Monaghan, Beatriz Oliver, Denise Paradis, Norbey Perez, Élodie Rousselle, Pratap Shrestha, Daphne Wellman

SeedChange statement of financial position

Net assets	**245,054**
Statement of Revenue and Expenses	
Global Affairs Canada	2,915,831
Support from general public	733,247
USC Foundation	910,000
RH Webster Foundation	240,000
Other (including investment income)	1,153,490
Total revenue	5,952,568
Program expenses	4,985,862
Non-program expenses	966,573
Total expenses	5,952,435
Net revenue over expenses	**133**

SeedChange Foundation statement of financial position

Net assets	**6,225,825**
Net Assets Comprised of	
Lotta Hitschmanova Legacy Fund	5,565,392
Stewart Moore Endowment	320,892
Manson & Mary Toynbee Endowment	201,245
Kurt & Evelyn (Russell) Haas Endowment	103,683
Rick McTaggart Memorial Fund	27,763
Statement of Revenue and Expenses	
Bequests	594,822
Investments	354,078
Donations	1,200
Total revenue	950,100
Administrative & Fundraising Expenses	148,390
Contribution to USC Canada	910,000
Total expenses	1,058,390
Net expense for the year	**(108,290)**

*For audited financial statements, please visit our website at **weseedchange.org/accountability** or contact us.*

Donate today

You make this life-changing work happen.

Donate online. It's easy, fast, safe and secure.
weseedchange.org/donate

Call our toll-free number: **1.800.565.6872** and **press 1**

Please mail your cheque to SeedChange
56 Sparks Street, Suite 600, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5B1

SeedChange

We are a registered Canadian charity: 11927-6129-RR-0001

SeedChange was founded by Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (USC Canada).

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