



Annual Report 2007



It all starts with Farmers

This is our partners' story. USC Canada has been a force for change for more than 60 years, because we have partnered with skilled and hard working people, determined to build healthy and just communities together. With our modest support, they take charge of their lives in ways that can achieve lasting change.

The recent history of USC is the story of our work with those who feed the world: farmers. More and more, we have chosen to focus on strengthening livelihoods through sustainable agriculture and agro-biodiversity programs. That niche has yielded the greatest impact on the communities we work with. These are the results.

USC's Story

Our work is driven by a passion for human dignity – a passion instilled by Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova when she founded USC in 1945.

We share her conviction that every human being has the right to achieve their fullest potential and to chart a future using their own resources and creativity:



Lotta Hitschmanova in India, 1972
Photo: USC Canada

Face to Face with Lotta

We're proud to announce that our founder, Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova, is one of 27 Canadians featured in a new exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. By engaging Canadians in the lives of people in the global South, she became a symbol of how one person can make a difference in the lives of many.

She created USC more than 60 years ago, but the organization remains strong because it responds effectively to the key issues of our time. In 1945, the focus was on emergency relief for displaced peoples; today, it's social justice, sustaining livelihoods, using resources wisely, and responding to climate change.

But we need help to tackle those challenges. We receive financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other funding agencies, but we also need you. USC partnerships are only possible because of public support. If you would like to donate, please contact us.

Local Leadership

The key to building that potential is to work in ways that can be sustained by the people involved.

This is why we believe our partners must steer their own course. By taking an active role, communities develop an enthusiasm about the work, ensuring success continues long after our support ends.



Members of CIAL de Maye show USC and FIPAH staff their research
Photo: Alberto Miranda

Steering their own Course

Our partner, FIPAH – the Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers – helps farmers organize research teams called CIALs. CIAL members identify farming problems, work out solutions, and share results with the community.

Some of the CIAL work was slow to catch on in some communities. That didn't stop Don Rosalio, and his CIAL continued to experiment with soil conservation. After seeing the improved harvests, others quickly took notice. More than 90% of his neighbours have now adopted his techniques and the community has a grain surplus.

The CIALs no longer need to promote their work. Farmers now approach them for advice, or to help set up CIALs in other villages. FIPAH and the CIALs are even sought after by organizations from other countries to help launch similar programs to improve agricultural practices and community seed supplies.

Common Concern

Food sovereignty and agro-biodiversity programming have become USC's focus because they are so central to the lives of all the communities we work with.

Our partners have guided us to this niche based on nearly 20 years of success with our Seeds of Survival (SoS) program – a comprehensive approach that helps communities achieve food sovereignty.

Promoting Crop Diversity in Timor Leste



Timorese farmers watering their vegetable gardens
Photo: Xisto Martins

A few years ago, USC Timor Leste encouraged women to grow more vegetables. Women like Francisca da Cunha responded enthusiastically and brought new vegetables to the dinner table and the market. But few vegetables would grow in the dry season.

In Usu'un, Francisca's village, a new water system now provides access to water year round. The village farmers expanded their plots, increasing the diversity and quantity of crops planted. Francisca says, "I can water my vegetables every morning, and now farmers from neighbouring villages come to buy from us."

That growth in diversity means more security – both for feeding their families and for income. In 2004 there were 55 varieties of food crops being grown. As of 2007, diversity has climbed to 156 varieties – making Usu'un a center for vegetable production and distribution.

Food Sovereignty

What are we fighting for?

A world where all peoples, nations and states are able to determine their own food producing systems and policies that provide every one of us with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food.

– From NYELINI

– Global Conference on Food Sovereignty, Mali 2007



Ansha Saeed displays her sorghum fields
Photo: Faris Ahmed

Gathering Wisdom

USC and our partner, Ethio-Organic Seed Action (EOSA), held a gathering in Ethiopia in November 2006 for those involved in the Seeds of Survival (SoS) network. Previous workshops have led to farm-based seed saving programs in at least 30 countries, and this time more than 50 people from 16 countries took part, including farmers, farm movement leaders, and scientists. Participants sought ways to build an agricultural commons that is diverse, resilient, and just.

One participant, Ansha Saeed, was the secretary of a community gene bank in Harbu village. She welcomed visitors from as far as Nepal, Bolivia, and Mali to the bank run by Harbu's farmers. "We contribute crops and seeds to the bank, and share the benefits: having seeds and food available at all times, and being able to sell our crops together for a better price."

Being with farmers from other countries was a treat for Ansha, who drew many insights from her peers – on seed saving, marketing, and wider policy issues facing farmers today. But Ansha was also able to showcase how she and the Harbu farmers are growing diverse sorghum varieties without chemical fertilizers or pesticides, and using time-tested methods that work *with* nature, not against it.

Promoting Resilience

Focusing our work on agro-biodiversity is important in terms of helping us achieve our mission: to promote resilient family farms, vibrant rural communities, and healthy ecosystems.

Because of the skill and determination shown by our partners, together we are well positioned to be leaders in an area that has tremendous potential as a strategy to confront climate change.



Kep Chhiring on his hillside farmland
Photo: Courtney Clark

Growing Livelihoods in Nepal

Kep Chhiring farms the hillsides near the town of Dhunche in Nepal's Rasuwa District. The landscape is steep and rocky, but he's managed to make his vegetable garden flourish.

Five years ago no one was growing vegetables in his village. Kep was unemployed and was considering going abroad to find work, so when USC Nepal organized agricultural workshops in his community, he jumped at the opportunity.

The trainers encouraged older farmers to demonstrate the farming techniques they knew. Many of these time-honoured, low-cost practices were discarded after the introduction of industrial agricultural methods. Communities in Rasuwa are now reclaiming them, with much success.

The training helped Kep develop the skills to provide his family with nutritious food. He has built a small business and a steady income. "I have no intention of moving now," says Kep, who has saved enough from selling his produce to expand his fields. He's even bought a buffalo, and sells the milk to nearby villages. With similar training in villages across Rasuwa, young farmers like Kep are finding new ways to make a decent living.

Securing the Future

We promote seed conservation as a way to protect the resource base essential for sustaining biodiversity and a stable food supply. To sustain our partners' work, we also need to involve young people in our programs.

Like seeds, young people represent energy, promise, and hope. They are the seeds of the future.

Lifeskills for Rural Youth

Most of Bangladesh's 150 million citizens live in rural areas, relying on agriculture for their livelihoods. Most farms are tiny, providing only a meagre income, so it's primarily for these farmers' children that USC runs the Lifeskills and Education for Adolescent Development (LEAD) Program. At any moment, 18,000 teens are enrolled – more than two-thirds from rural areas

Through Adolescent Resource Centres (ARCs), young women have access to 15 months of basic education and lifeskills classes, and employment training. The benefit to farm families is clear.

With help from confident, informed young women - families can make a better life for themselves and stay in their communities, gain healthy and secure livelihoods, and avoid the risks of life in Dhaka's slums, where many would otherwise end up.



LEAD students coming from classes
Photo: Margot Stevens

The Big Picture

Decades of working with farmers has given us a base against which to analyze the global policies and structures that deny people opportunities, and keep them poor.

We offer a critique of industrial agriculture – the large-scale approach to farming generally undertaken for export rather than to meet community needs. We propose a proven alternative that promotes farmers' stewardship of seeds, land, and resources.

Spreading the Home-grown Revolution



Assétou Samaké, Melaku Worede, Ibrahim Ouédraogo, and Mamadou Goïta, in Ottawa to discuss commercial farming in Africa
Photo: Faris Ahmed

With support from African and Canadian partners, we organized a public forum in March 2007 to foster a dialogue with the Canadian public and policy makers about alternatives to industrial agriculture; often cited as the answer to Africa's problems. More than 550 people attended, to hear the potential impact of the commercial approach on African farms.

Malian farm movement leader Mamadou Goïta, one of the speakers, questioned the need to import solutions, saying, "There have been many solutions proposed for Africans, but we have a richness and diversity of solutions ourselves."

In the end, Canadians were asked to support a holistic approach to agriculture. Farmer-led programs are about more than just increasing yields. They are about raising productivity without losing biodiversity – the basis of our planet's food supply.

Fostering Active Citizenship

As global citizens, Canadians truly care about our future and how our lives and actions are connected to those across the globe.

With thoughtful engagement and action, we have the power and the ingenuity to build a fair and just world together.



Fiona, 8, is committed to action
Photo: Faris Ahmed

An Appetite for Change

It's easy to get passionate about good food. But when we see all that's wrong with today's food production system, the inclination is to move quickly from passion to action.

Partnering with local organic producers, film and agriculture festivals, education and advocacy organizations, USC engages thousands on food and agriculture issues across Canada. Seedy Saturdays, Ban Terminator campaigns, and the Reel Food Film Festival were a few of the year's highlights in Canadian programs.

The Seed Map

Canadians are concerned about damage to our environment, but not always aware of the factors causing it. The Seed Map is a multi-media education tool that shows the state of global biodiversity. The map identifies key threats to the world's seed and biodiversity systems, and highlights regions where people and communities are fighting to protect the planet's genetic wealth. Order your copy at www.usc-canada.org.

Climate Change Work on the Frontlines

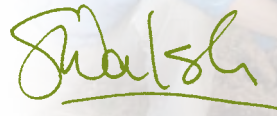
In January 2006, I went for a skate on the world's longest skating rink, the Rideau Canal. One year later, I took a bicycle ride beside the Canal and then along the fast moving waters of the Ottawa River. What's wrong with this true story? Climate change and global warming, of course!

We all remember a few unusually warm Christmases growing up, but by January we were always able to strap on our skates for some winter fun. Experts agree that our planet desperately needs new stewardship. An average temperature increase of just 3°C could contribute to a loss of half our planet's varieties. There's cause for worry.

Farmers in the global South have long understood the importance of urgent, decisive action to confront climate extremes. Our partners in Douentza, Mali, for example, have seen rainfall in one afternoon that matched the usual total for the entire rainy season. But Douentza's farmers, like those in all USC-supported communities, are proving stubborn champions

of a healthier global commons. They're reversing biodiversity erosion and ensuring the survival of the food crops they need to feed their families and stay on their lands. One Ethiopian farmer we work with increased the number of sorghum varieties in his fields from 4 to 43, guaranteeing the survival of at least some of those varieties.

Appreciating farmers' incredible capacities to build eco-friendly, sustainable livelihoods, we have decided to make our multi-faceted Seeds of Survival Program our primary niche. Conserving the first link in the food chain is a critical first step in our struggle to confront or adapt to increasingly dramatic weather. In reading this report, please reflect on the importance and urgency of the support you provide to frontline climate change workers. Our heartfelt thanks, as well, for your contribution to their healthier livelihoods and to the survival of our ever-fragile planet.



Susan Walsh
Executive Director

They need your support. Here's how you can help.



Our overseas partners are working tirelessly to enrich their communities and build a better life for their families – and they need your support. This year, we need to raise close to \$1 million from individual Canadians. These contributions ensure farmers in developing countries can grow their own food, and move beyond survival towards a sustainable future. As global citizens, we can act together to build a better world. Join us by donating today.

You can support our work by cheque, money order, VISA, or MasterCard, or through convenient, automatic monthly withdrawals from your bank account or credit card. Every gift you make to USC is matched dollar for dollar by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

To make a secure on-line gift today, or to become a USC Canada monthly donor, please go to www.usc-canada.org.

For information on our fundraising, including different ways to support USC such as bequests, gifts of stock, life-insurance donations, and annuities, please contact our Donor Services Representative at 1-800-565-6872, ext. 233

Financial Highlights For The Year Ended April 30, 2007

USC CANADA Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	567,901
Advances to overseas partners and projects	786,224
Investments	64,760
Capital assets	122,067
	1,540,952
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	216,290
Deferred contributions	1,036,233
	1,252,523
Net Assets	288,429

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

CIDA	4,438,320
Support from general public	909,582
USC Foundation	747,000
R. Howard Webster Foundation	237,500
Other (including investment income)	100,172
Total revenue	6,432,574
Program expenses	5,368,049
Non-program expenses	1,066,576
Total expenses	6,434,625
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(2,051)

USC FOUNDATION Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	86,035
Investments	7,340,196
Charitable remainder trust	59,734
	7,485,965
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	59,306
Net assets	7,426,659

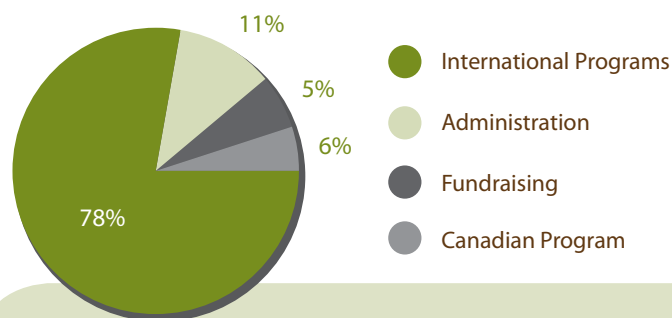
Net assets comprised of

Unrestricted	45,939
Internally restricted	6,966,008
Stewart Moore Endowment	60,312
Manson & Mary Toynbee Endowment	201,245
Kurt & Evelyn (Russell) Haas Endowment	55,200
Ten-year gifts	97,955
	7,426,659

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Bequests	1,119,426
Investments	640,129
Other	1,450
Total revenue	1,761,005
Administrative & Fundraising expenses	39,889
Contribution to USC Canada	747,000
Total expenses	786,889
Excess of revenue over expenses	974,116

Expense Allocation



Thank you for sustaining our work.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have the backing of thousands of individuals across Canada that choose to share their good fortune with our partners – the hard-working men, women, and children in the countries where USC carries out activities. We thank you for caring. USC Canada also acknowledges the generous support of the Canadian International Development Agency.

We remain extremely grateful to all our donors – individuals, government agencies, foundations, corporations and their employees' funds, and all the USC workgroups and volunteers. USC is pleased to recognize the following organizations that offered continued assistance for our work in 2006-2007.

Bruce D. Cockburn Enterprises Limited
 Carmen & Frances D'Intino Charitable Trust
 Centennial High School
 The community of Clarendville, Newfoundland
 Community Foundation of Ottawa
 École secondaire publique De La Salle
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 Elkays (Kunelius) Fund - Calgary Foundation
 EnCana Cares Foundation
 Fondation Edward Assh
 Howick Foundation
 International Development Research Centre
 Justin & Elisabeth Lang Foundation
 Lola Strand Charitable Fund
 Link Charity Canada Inc.
 Manitoba Council for International Cooperation
 Manulife Financial
 The Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Foundation
 Morrison Foundation
 Ontario Power Generation Employees' Fund
 Pirie Foundation
 R. Howard Webster Foundation
 Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation
 Southworth Charitable Foundation
 Unitarian Congregations across Canada
 United Way Chapters
 Virginia Middelberg Fund - Calgary Foundation

USC CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2006/2007

Pauline Port (Chair) is vice president of corporate services and Chief Financial Officer for Canadian Blood Services. She has also served as Financial Director of CARE Canada.

Mark Austin (Director) is a wild blueberry farmer in Cumberland County, NS. His career has included university teaching; work in the film industry; and consultancy work on social policy.

Allison Barrett (Director) is the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton.

Dominique Caouette (Director) is Assistant Professor at the Université de Montréal where he teaches International Relations and Southeast Asian politics. He has also worked for the NGO InterPares.

Julie Delahanty (Director) is Deputy Director for Gender Equality at Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), and has worked as a Senior Policy Advisor at CIDA.

Richard Fast (Director) is the director of communications and fundraising co-ordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, an international relief and development organization.

Marnie Girvan (Director) has served as Executive Director of MATCH International Centre, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Canadian Bureau of International Education.

Dale Huntingford (Treasurer) is the Director of Upstream Terminal Development at Enbridge Pipelines in Calgary.

Anil Naidoo (Director) is the Director of the Blue Planet Project of the Council of Canadians – a global initiative aimed at achieving water justice.

Patrick Steiner (Director) is an organic farmer in BC who operates Stellar Seeds, a seed company growing and selling rare and hard to find varieties of crops.

MISSION STATEMENT

USC Canada promotes vibrant family farms, strong rural communities, and healthy ecosystems around the world. With engaged Canadians and partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we support programs, training, and policies that strengthen biodiversity, food sovereignty, and the rights of those at the heart of resilient food systems -- women, indigenous peoples, and small-scale farmers.

HONORARY PATRON

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada



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Charity Registration No. 11927-6129-RR-0001

USC Canada was founded in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada

La version française de ce rapport annuel sera disponible sur notre site web (www.usc-canada.org). Veuillez communiquer avec USC Canada si vous préférez recevoir la version française sur support papier. Téléphonez sans frais au 1.800.565.6872 ou adressez-nous un courriel à l'adresse suivante: info@usc-canada.org.

To receive periodic photographic updates on our work please go to www.usc-canada.org and sign up for our E-newsletter.