



Annual Report 2009

In Women's Hands

There was a time not long ago in Canada when the word *farmer* would immediately conjure up the image of a man. Women were valued for supportive, albeit important roles, including cooking for family and farmhands, and managing the books. But the men were considered the food producers, and the hours women spent in the field were all but ignored.

Within the global South, women's key role in feeding their families, indeed our planet, continues to be neglected and undervalued. Because women farmers tend to focus on smaller crops – often called minor crops because they have less commercial value – women's farming largely remains invisible. When agricultural training comes to a village, often only men are invited.

But minor crops feed families, and a look at agricultural farming systems worldwide will quickly reveal that women are the primary custodians and protectors of our planet's crop diversity - our agricultural biodiversity. Since agriculture began, women have domesticated the first, precious link in the food chain. Most seeds are sown, selected, and conserved in women's hands. They observe and nurture their seeds like we read and reread the words of a cherished novel.

USC's 2009 Annual Report champions and thanks women farmers for their hard and skilful work. Enjoy their stories and, when you hear the word farmer, think of her critical contribution to the crop diversity that lets us cope with climate change and keeps our food system vibrant. A warm

thanks to you too, for supporting her move from behind the kitchen curtains to bow proudly over her fields of diversity.

Susan Walsh
Executive Director



Women produce 50 percent of the food grown worldwide.

THE WORLD HAS LOST 75% OF ITS PLANT GENETIC DIVERSITY AND IS LOSING THAT DIVERSITY



"Biodiversity is the very core of our existence within our communities. You cannot say how many dollars this is worth because it is our culture and our survival... Our environment is many things, a classroom, a pharmacy, a supermarket."

- Ruth Lilongula, Solomon Islands

Photo: Sheila Petzold, Timor Leste

CONSERVERS

Women have, since agriculture began, selected and saved the best seeds to plant. They have developed a specialized knowledge of thousands of crop varieties, paying careful attention to adaptive qualities and other important traits. Large-scale agriculture has ignored this knowledge, contributing to the rapid decline in plant genetic resources, eroding at about 2% per year. To keep biodiversity at the heart of our planet's resilience, we must embrace our women seed savers.

Bolivia

Natividad Colque proudly displays 17 varieties of native potatoes – *wayku papa*. Their many shapes and colours reflect meticulous selection based on characteristics that meet her family and community's needs.



Photo: Anne Delorme, Bolivia

Natividad Colque shows off a diverse harvest of native potato varieties.

She selects potatoes that have plenty of nutrients, that use less cooking fuel, that sell well in local markets, and that resist frost and hail.

Before working with USC's partner PRODIG, Natividad's fields had only the four commercial varieties introduced by government agents.

These modern types did well the first couple of years, but quickly deteriorated by year three. And they were filled with water – good for French fries but not for growing children. "My wayku papas," Natividad insists, "have a more consistent yield and need only the natural materials from my farm to flourish." Her fields of diversity also mean that at least some kinds will survive the unpredictable, ever-harsh weather of the highlands.

Senegal

Pressure from companies hoping to dominate urban food markets is converting small-scale farms into large fields of single-variety crops. With USC support, a women farmer's group in Niandane is encouraging communities to maintain the crop diversity of their traditional floodplain agriculture, enhancing the diversity of their maize, sorghum, and vegetable fields in the process. By continuing to skilfully use the nutrient-rich floodplains that extend 10 km on either side of the Senegal River, they are also safeguarding varieties that are specially adapted to this uniquely productive environment. The group established a gene bank for floodplain crop varieties – a first step in recovering lost diversity and encouraging farmers to value and enhance this unique production system.



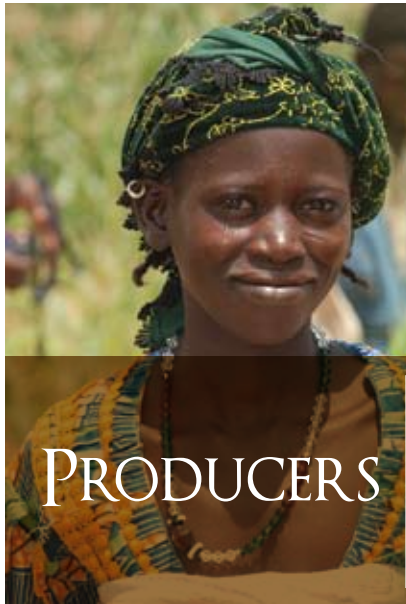
Photo: Genene Gezu, Ethiopia

In Ethiopia's northern Wollo Province, Aisha Saeed is a member of Kalu Community Seed Bank – a facility built by farmers with help from USC's partner, Ethio-Organic Seed Action (EOSA). The chickpeas she and her fellow farmers tested this year are not only nutritious and valuable at market, but able to adapt to unpredictable rainfall.

In Africa, women are the majority of small-holder farmers

AT A RATE OF 2% PER YEAR.

Women in the global South produce 60-



Research on 60 (women's) home gardens...revealed 230 different species, many of which had been rescued from a nearby forest before it was cleared.

- UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 1999

Photo: Susan Walsh, Burkina Faso

PRODUCERS

The global food crisis has increased the ranks of hungry people to more than 1 billion. Climate change today is responsible for 300,000 deaths a year. Both crises have hit rural women of the global South hardest. Yet it's women, skilled in conserving crop diversity and feeding rural communities, who can mitigate these problems. Plants in healthy soils sequester carbon as effectively as natural forests. By supporting women's role as skilled stewards of our plants and soils, we contribute to communities of resilience, able to weather increasingly harsh conditions.

India

In the tradition of their mothers and grandmothers, rural women in India have long saved their own local seeds, even during the Green Revolution of the '60s, which flooded India with introduced rice and wheat varieties. USC Canada's partner, GREEN Foundation (GF), has drawn on this practice to revive traditional varieties that are well adapted to local landscapes and might otherwise be lost."



Photo: Kate Green, India

Women in Thattekere Village, in India, prepare seeds for saving.

A few years ago, GF distributed indigenous finger millet varieties to farmers in Nelmaru village. One woman, Krishnamamma, found a variety that grew particularly well on her soils:

Kempu ragi. GF began arranging exchange visits to Krishnamamma's fields, encouraging the use of this highly nutritious staple. The effort paid off this past year when, despite the very late arrival of crucial rains, Kempu ragi grew well everywhere it was planted, yielding twice as much per hectare as any of the hybrid commercial varieties.

Mali

USC Mali has been working for more than two decades in Douentza, where droughts often result in devastating crop losses. It sometimes takes three plantings to yield one crop. And when the rains do come, they can come all at once. It's tough going, but the women of Kiru village have demonstrated amazing resolve, emerging as the best cowpea and bambara nut producers in the region. They've used profits to buy a plough, obtain legal status as a cooperative, and build an office and a store for their products. The group has learned to monitor their sparse rainfall with a simple pluviometer, helping them identify the best sowing times. Even the government meteorological service has noted the proficiency they have attained!



Photo: Sheila Petzold, Timor Leste

In the rugged, highland village of Kalohan in Timor Leste, farmers like Fidelia Alves have helped transform the village's once treeless slopes into terraced gardens of dark, rich earth. Villagers who were eating only once a day now have more than enough for three daily meals.

mers.

WORLDWIDE, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES OFTEN ASSUME THAT FARMERS AND RURAL WORKERS ARE MEN.

80% of food for family consumption and for market.



The International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) affirms "the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy making and implementation for biological diversity conservation."

Photo: Anne Delorme, Bolivia

LEADERS

Women's essential role in food security and biodiversity conservation worldwide means they must participate in decision-making at all levels. Yet, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, "the vital contribution of women to the management of [the planet's] biological resources... has been misunderstood, ignored, or underestimated." Only when women's knowledge and leadership is respected and supported will we be able to tackle food and climate chaos effectively.

Honduras

In Honduras, with the help of a university research institute, innovative farmer research teams, known as CIALs, have brought back into cultivation many local crop varieties previously thought extinct. Women currently lead 41% of these CIALs. Indigenous farmer Isidora García is president of her CIAL and head of the regional association. "Now women participate fully as citizens," Isidora proudly reports. "They feel listened to because they are women, where, in the past, it seemed just the opposite."

organize 1,000 farmers to march in protest against the introduction of GM maize – a major threat to native seed varieties that hold a special place in Maria Luisa's culture. Maria Luisa successfully raised public awareness about the farmers' concerns, attracting national media attention.

Indonesia

Ten years ago, Gabriella Uran – nicknamed Ibu Ella – launched YAKINES, USC's partner on Indonesia's Flores Island. In those early days, she quickly noticed a problem. "If there were 50 people at a meeting, you might see 5 or 6 women, and those who did come huddled quietly at the back." Ella began finding ways to strengthen women's involvement, an especially tough job given the social and cultural barriers to participation for Flores women.

Through gender equality and leadership training, and by selling rice and dried fruit, women gained the confidence to claim their rightful role in community decision-making. As Ella put it, "Women are more confident when they have their own income, and men tend to be more respectful." She further notes that "meetings are more democratic now, and women participate actively, sitting at the front of the room as leaders."



Photo: Courtney Clark, Bangladesh

A pilot project initiated in northern Bangladesh in 2008 introduced ecological agricultural training into the Lifeskills and Education for Adolescent Development (LEAD) program. Young women in Thakurgaon are now recognized as farmers and leaders in the promotion of ecological agriculture in their communities.



María Luisa Gómez talks to a reporter during a protest against GMOs.

Isidora's daughter, María Luisa Gómez, hosts a farm radio program, building on her mother's leadership example. Last year, she helped

Connecting Our World

We're all citizens of the world, connected across borders. Through the many choices we make every day – like considering where our food comes from and the people who produce it – we can influence changes taking place at home and around the world.

" Women have always played an important role in Canadian agriculture, but with the emergence of ecologically-focused farming movements, women are leading the way toward revaluing local food systems. I think of our organic movement as the feminization of agriculture. It's about valuing local knowledge rather than the advice of experts from elsewhere. It's about saving local seeds over hybrids that require costly chemicals. It's about selling to families instead of wholesalers – building community around food to prevent a generic culture of processed foods from taking over."

- Robin Tunnicliffe, Saanich Organics

Photo: Andrew Sturdy

USC Board Member, Robin Tunnicliffe, operates a small farm near Victoria and, with two other farmers, runs Saanich Organics – a cooperative aimed at distributing local, organic produce to nearby restaurants. Robin is completing her MA in food policy on the value of small-holder farmers.

ENGAGING CANADIANS

The work we do with our overseas partners has tangible, lasting impacts on people's lives. One of our goals is to make those experiences real for Canadians – through our partners' stories, images, and voices. In the last year we doubled the number of Canadians we've met personally through community events, workshops, speaking engagements, and film nights.

- We participated in 52 Seedy Saturdays across the country – popular events for exchanging seeds and learning about eco-friendly agriculture and biodiversity. We gave away thousands of Seed Maps.
- We nurtured our unique and important relationship with Unitarians, participating in 34 events with Unitarian groups.
- Two documentaries we've supported, *Hijacked Future* and *Return to Nepal*, were broadcast nationally on TV and screened in dozens of venues across Canada.

INFLUENCING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The world food crisis, changing climates, and the planet's rapidly shrinking biodiversity continue to critically affect farmers and rural communities. Because our decisions and actions have powerful implications for our global family, it's more important than ever to stay informed and vigilant, sharing our concerns with Canadians, as well as policymakers here and worldwide.

At home we continued to monitor food, agriculture, and international development policies:

- We conducted a nation-wide campaign with the Working Group on Canadian Science and Technology, raising awareness about the environmental and human rights implications of commercial agrofuels – the push to grow crops to feed cars instead of people.
- With the Canadian Food Security Policy Group, we continued to urge Canada to give greater priority to aid and agriculture policies that support small-holder farmers and resilient food systems in the South.
- With the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, we continued to monitor new technologies, GMOs, and the ongoing issue of terminator seeds – genetically engineered to be sterile after first harvest.

On the global stage, the food and climate crises guided our role at key UN gatherings:

- We connected farmers' fields to the global policy table by bringing Luis Alonso Meza – head of a Honduran farmers' association – to a meeting of the International Convention on Biodiversity.
- We joined farmers and food producers at the World Food Summit to propose ways to fix our global food system and urge world leaders to focus on small-holder farmers, who are essential to revitalizing our food system.

Stay informed and find out how you can help build a better food system!

- Visit www.usc-canada.org.
- Make a secure online gift to our Seeds of Survival Program.
- Call us at 1.800.565.6872.

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

USC CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008/2009

- **Dominique Caouette** (*Chair/Canada*), an assistant Professor in the Political Science department of the Université de Montréal, teaches International Relations and Southeast Asian politics.
- **Pauline Port** (*Past Chair/Canada*), a chartered accountant, is vice president of corporate services and Chief Financial Officer for Canadian Blood Services (CBS).
- **Mark Austin** (*Director/Canada*), a wild blueberry farmer, is the Sustainability Coordinator for the city of Truro, Nova Scotia.
- **Doris Pilar Balvin Diaz** (*Director/Peru*), an environmental lawyer now working on mining issues with CIDA, is president of Benala – a Peruvian NGO focusing on socio-environmental conflicts.
- **Allison Barrett** (*Director/Canada*), a Unitarian minister, is a long-time advocate on social justice matters in Canada.
- **Joan Baxter** (*Director/Canada*), a writer and journalist, splits her time between Nova Scotia and West Africa. Her latest book looks at the impact of Western policies on West Africans.
- **Julie Delahanty** (*Director/Canada*), a gender equality specialist, is currently working as an independent consultant. She has worked for CIDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and NGOs including ETC Group and the North-South Institute.
- **Richard Fast** (*Director/Canada*), a journalist, is the Director of Communications and Fundraising Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, an international relief and development organization.
- **Mamby Fofana** (*Director/Mali*), an agro-forestry expert and former head of USC West Africa, works with the Swedish Development Agency on desertification and climate change programming.
- **Dale Huntingford** (*Treasurer/Canada*), an economist, is the Director of Upstream Terminal Development at Enbridge Pipelines in Calgary.
- **Anil Naidoo** (*Director/Canada*), a water specialist, is the Director of the Blue Planet Project of the Council of Canadians – a global initiative aimed at achieving water justice.
- **Wilhelmina Pelegrina** (*Director/Philippines*), an agronomist, is Executive Director of SEARICE, a Philippines-based network of organizations working for social justice and sustainable natural resource management.
- **Gopal Siwakoti** (*Director/Nepal*), an environmental and human rights lawyer, is the Coordinator of Water and Energy Users' Federation Nepal (WAFED).
- **Patrick Steiner** (*Director/Canada*), an organic farmer, operates Stellar Seeds, a vegetable seed company specializing in open-pollinated and heritage seed varieties.
- **Robin Tunncliffe** (*Director/Canada*), a farmer, owns Feisty Field Organic Farm in Victoria, BC, and co-owns Saanich Organics, a cooperative marketing business for certified organic produce.



The South Takes the Lead!

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Charity Registration No. 11927-6129-RR-0001
USC Canada was founded in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.

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

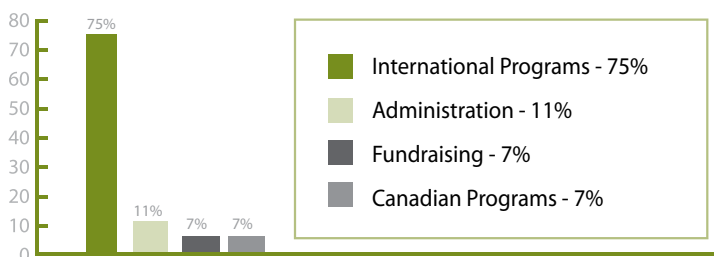
Financial Highlights for the Year Ended April 30, 2009

USC CANADA Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	625,545
Advances to overseas projects	635,815
Short-term Investments	119,767
Capital assets	70,714
	1,451,841
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	224,594
Deferred contributions	911,760
	1,136,354
Net assets	315,487

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

CIDA	4,569,573
Support from general public	940,093
USC Foundation	740,000
R. Howard Webster Foundation	250,000
Other (including investment income)	70,441
Total revenue	6,570,107
Program expenses	5,398,112
Non-program expenses	1,148,587
Total expenses	6,546,699
Excess of revenue over expenses	23,408



USC FOUNDATION Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	203,168
Investments (at market value)	7,352,902
	7,556,070
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	114,236
Net assets	7,441,834

Net assets comprised of

Unrestricted	134,800
Lotta Hirschmanova Legacy Fund	7,544,764
Stewart Moore Endowment	70,312
Manson & Mary Toynbee Endowment	201,245
Kurt & Evelyn (Russell) Haas Endowment	57,500
Accumulated Unrealized Losses on Investments	(566,787)
	7,441,834

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Bequests	780,603
Investments	372,801
Donations	4,000
Total revenue	1,157,404
Administrative & fundraising expenses	76,033
Contribution to USC Canada	740,000
Total expenses	816,033
Excess of revenue over expenses	341,371

Thank you for sustaining our work.

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

We are grateful to all our donors – individuals, government agencies, foundations, corporations and their employee funds, volunteers, and the farms that support our seed saviour program: Greta's Organic Gardens, Hope Seeds, Salt Spring Seeds, Stellar Seeds, and Two Wings Farm. USC also thanks the following organizations for their important assistance in 2008-09.

Asterisk Productions
Campbell Webster Foundation
Carmen & Frances D'Intino Charitable Trust
Dorothy and Oscar Rogers Foundation
Dusty's Bar and Grill
Eaglecom Foundation
Elkays (Kunelius) Fund - Calgary Foundation
Employee Funds and United Way Chapters
EnCana Cares Foundation
Fondation Edward Assh
Gill Ratcliffe Foundation
Howick Foundation

Justin & Elisabeth Lang Foundation
Kenoli Foundation
Lee Tak Wai Foundation
Manitoba Council for International Cooperation
Manulife Financial
Pirie Foundation
Planet in Focus
Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation
Schools, Universities, and Churches across Canada
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
Southworth Charitable Foundation
Strategic Charitable Giving Foundation

The Community Foundation of Ottawa
The Derick Brenninkmeyer Charity Foundation
The Guelph Community Foundation
The Harbinger Foundation
The Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Foundation
The Morrison Foundation
The Peterborough K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation
The Sisters of St Joseph
Two Villages/Rice Day
Unitarian congregations across Canada
USC Workgroups and Volunteers
VanCity Community Foundation



LOTTA'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY: STILL IN WOMEN'S HANDS

Photos: B. Day (left), John Buss (centre, right)

If you close your eyes and listen carefully, you can probably still hear her distinctive voice:

"This is Lotta Hitschmanova. Development often starts with a woman. Support leadership programs for women through the USC, 56 Sparks Street, Ottawa 4."

Dr. Lotta was, without doubt, one of the most prominent Canadian women of her generation. But more than this, she pushed hard for women's development, long before the UN began to adopt this approach in the '70s.

As a World War II refugee to Canada, she understood the helplessness that refugees experience, and she mobilized a whole generation of Canadians to take action.

She was a great champion of women's rights, at the forefront of ensuring they were offered meaningful educational and leadership opportunities.

In this hundredth year of her birth, there is a growing number of women farmers threatened by creeping deserts, chemically ruined soils, and environmental devastation. They need our support. On November 28, USC Canada is encouraging people across the globe to join us in celebrating this amazing woman's legacy by helping these farmers to stay on their lands.

We've launched a website – www.DrLotta.ca – where you can learn about Lotta's life and 100th anniversary events, leave a legacy gift in her honour, or make a 100th donation to women farmers around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT
DAVID RAIN BY PHONE
(1-800-565-6872, EXT 231)
OR BY EMAIL
(RAIN@USC-CANADA.ORG).

**Be a part of
Dr. Lotta's legacy too!**

- www.DrLotta.ca -

REMEMBERING LOTTA



"It seems very appropriate that in this year of honouring Dr. Lotta, I'm forwarding this cheque as a bequest from the estate of [my late husband] Morrey to the Lotta Hitschmanova Legacy Fund. A rather fitting remembrance of them both, I feel."

"In the early 1950s, [we] were living in Dalhousie, NB and were invited to hear someone speaking on the plight of post war refugees. When she began to speak, in her distinctive accent, the impact she made was overwhelming. We became staunch supporters of her and the USC on the spot. Lotta was a wonderful and unique person and it was a privilege to have known her."

- Shirley Cross, Ottawa



"When I was a child, maybe ten years old ... I first met Lotta Hitschmanova. She came to my classroom and told us about refugee children. She wore an old uniform, like an army nurse, and she radiated love and concern."

"When I was 25, I received my first significant amount of money I'd earned in my life – royalties from radio play of my first album. It felt like such a godsend that it seemed appropriate to share it with those less lucky... and so I became a donor."

- Bruce Cockburn, USC Canada Spokesperson