



R I G H T S • R E S I L I E N C E • R E S P E C T

## Message from USC Canada

**As one of Canada's first international development organizations,** USC Canada has seen many birthdays. Each one is a time to celebrate, but also a time to reflect. As we turn 60, we look back to the end of World War II, and the beginnings of what we now know as "development"—post-war development thinking was all about "us" helping "them," about relief and reconstruction, and about models of large-scale economic growth and expansion.

Today, the world is different. The only people who think of the world as "us" and "them" are those who want to perpetuate difference, not build a common vision of humankind. There is poverty amidst plenty, and plenty amidst poverty. There are individuals and corporations with net worths greater than many countries, and there are also powerful peoples' movements for social change. Today, we recognize that the North may have more access to information, but knowledge takes many forms and is found in many places — including a small farmer's field in Ethiopia or Nepal.

Most importantly, we have learned that development is not about the North giving to the South. We are only now beginning to value the enormous contribution of developing countries to the world in tangible terms — immense natural resources and biodiversity, substantial human resources, intellectual property, and the financial benefits accruing to the North through unfair terms of trade and debt repayments.

Today, we at USC Canada firmly believe that to tackle poverty we have to challenge social injustice, and count on the experience and wisdom of communities to propose their own solutions to their problems. The focus of USC's programming today is on promoting social justice, working together with communities in the South, and putting people at the centre of their own development. In fact, it is this very vision of human dignity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness that prompted USC Canada founder Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova, to say these words many years ago:

*"You have come to help [them], and you want to help altruistically, not for reasons of personal gain. In listening there must be no preconceived ideas, no prejudices as to religion or colour or origin — for it must be your conviction that mankind is one, made up of many faces. You must love people, and have the sensitivity to be interested in their problems; to be able to settle down and listen, for hours if necessary, in order to learn all you can about their problems before you start offering advice and help."*

Lotta's vision continues to be a driving force at USC Canada, but we could not continue without the support of Canadians across the country. We wish to thank you for your generous support and solidarity in helping communities build a stronger and healthier future for themselves.

Douglas Cousins  
Chair, USC Canada Board of Directors

# Respecting Local Knowledge and Skill: Equality in Development



## GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

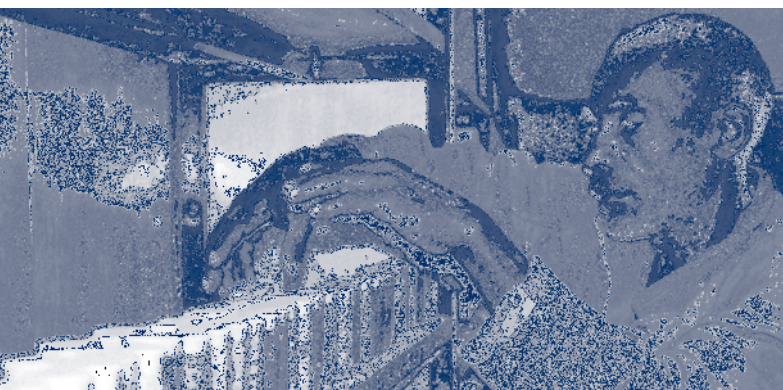
In 60 years, the field of international development has seen many paradigms – relief, charity, economic growth, mega projects, micro-enterprise, and many others. But the most enduring models are always those that put local communities and knowledge at the centre of the process.

USC Canada's thinking has evolved in much the same way, and come to the same conclusion. Our recent work has yielded rich insights into the nature of knowledge and innovation. Agricultural knowledge, for example, is not simply housed in libraries or laboratories, but can be found in farmers' fields, and in the memories of elders. It is being created every day through breeding, experimentation, and even chance occurrence. It leads to ideas, innovation, and change that can only be captured when one listens to the 'experts' – the farmers themselves.

At the same time, this knowledge cannot be put into a capsule – it needs to live, breathe, and grow. It belongs to everyone and no one; it should be recorded but not bought or sold. This community knowledge and wisdom is the foundation of change and development.

USC Canada's programs draw on the depth of experience that exists in agricultural communities, and recognize that community level solutions are more likely to result in sustainable success. That respect for local knowledge and tradition in managing development programs has been a key part of USC's work for decades, especially in our Seeds of Survival™ (SoS) program.

*Ethiopian Farmer checking stock in a community seed bank*



## BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

For more than a decade, USC has worked in Douentza, in north-eastern **Mali**, to develop a West African Seeds of Survival™ program. The program supports community efforts to ensure a secure source of food, conserve vital plant resources, and rehabilitate the land.

This past year a major locust infestation affected parts of West Africa, including Douentza. Coupled with poor rains, the infestation led to widespread food shortages creating a food crisis that threatens countries throughout the region. But in the villages of Douentza where USC is working, like Petaka, the farmers tell a different story.

USC helped Petaka establish a community seed bank to conserve planting materials. Seed banking is practiced at the household level among farmers in many countries, helping ensure they have seed to plant without the expense of buying new seed every year. The community seed bank simply extends that practice to the village level.

In years of failed harvests like this, farmers often have little option but to eat the seed they saved in their homes. Community seed banks provide a backup to ensure that, even in bad years, farmers have access to seeds suited to local conditions.

The Petaka seed bank and others like it have made it possible for farmers to stay on their lands. USC's Regional Coordinator in West Africa, Mana Diakit , explains, "Once we have a seed bank set up in one village, it's not only that village alone that uses it. Many neighbouring villages come to use the seed bank year after year."

That in turn helps diversify the materials available for planting. Farmers restock the seed bank with a wider variety of seed. That diversity – of plant types and knowledge – is critical to livelihoods, providing options and reducing the risk that a crisis, like the locusts, would wipe out the food supply.

## VALUING INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE

USC's partner in **Nepal** is doing similar work to make sure diver-

## VALUING INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE

USC's partner in **Nepal** is doing similar work to make sure diversity is not lost. The majority of Nepalis rely on subsistence farming; however, the mountainous landscape means farmers face severe constraints: steep land, variable climate, transportation difficulties, lack of water. Over generations, farmers have adapted their agricultural practices to these conditions.

Specialized knowledge and adapted seeds are among their greatest resources – and are passed from generation to generation. Tragically, civil conflict in Nepal threatens people throughout the country. As young people leave the countryside to escape conflict, the link between generations is broken. Moreover, the promotion of modern agricultural practices with the promise of higher yields undermines the use of traditional practices, threatening indigenous resources.



*Thank you!*

To conserve that specialized knowledge and encourage farmers to practice it in their farming, USC Nepal has developed seed *literacy* materials – culturally sensitive adult education materials that highlight case studies of farmers who have adopted ecologically sound agricultural practices and are re-integrating traditional practices and knowledge into their work. Here too, com-

munity seed banks are established.

Participants also receive training in seed conservation and multiplication, and in the documentation of more than 2,500 species of plants. USC Nepal has also helped encourage the preservation of indigenous seeds, suited to their difficult landscapes. In these ways, USC Nepal is using the resources of the past to rebuild the rural economy for the future.

## RECOGNIZING THE RISKS

It is not just that community wisdom is more appropriate; too often new technologies simply carry serious costs – in terms of funds and environmental impact. Local alternatives are the better option. In **Indonesia** for example, USC's partner, USC-SATUNAMA, is helping farmers explore a community-driven solution to a global industry.

Small-scale farmers in Indonesia have had trouble getting a foothold in the lucrative vanilla industry because of costs. Companies with the rights to popular imported varieties of vanilla have cornered the seedling market and set prices high. Farmers faced the risk of costly loans if they wanted to get into vanilla production.

But farmers in the village of Samigaluh, near Yogyakarta, have found a solution in an indigenous variety of vanilla. With USC's help, they bought 2,500 seedlings to plant in a nursery and distribute to farmers. With only a little support from the North, the farmers have a new source of income from a now popular local variety.

## RESCUING FARMERS' SEED

USC's approach recognizes that local plant varieties grow best where they originated. Farmers know this, but after years of modern agriculture, many local varieties are close to extinct. In Timor Leste, farmers recalled a time when there were many local varieties, and they approached USC to help find what was lost.

This year in **Timor Leste**, four new demonstration plots were started in order to multiply local seeds that were near extinction. Farmers were successful in identifying and reviving a rare bean variety as well as a type of corn that was nearly extinct.

From just a small handful of popcorn seed, farmers have produced about three tonnes of seed for distribution. Popcorn, which has a shorter growing period than regular corn, can also be made into flour, where regular corn cannot.

Pak Jon and his wife are two of the farmers working with USC in the demonstration plot project. Their small piece of land now contains two varieties of corn, including the popcorn, as well as sweet potatoes, beans, and dry land rice. "We never imagined we could grow our own rice," says Pak Jon.



*Pak Jon and his wife in their rice field*



*Farmer in Honduras with multiple varieties of bean*

## SHARING EXPERIENCE, ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE

Relying on traditional plant varieties is important, but it's also crucial that farmers tap into local knowledge to ensure success. Sharing planting materials and experience is one way farmers can ensure those resources are never lost. In **Honduras**, USC's partner FIPAH, the Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers, organizes seed fairs to encourage sharing.

One of this year's fairs focused on beans. Those who attended took the opportunity to exchange planting materials, broadening their own supplies and the stocks of village seed banks.

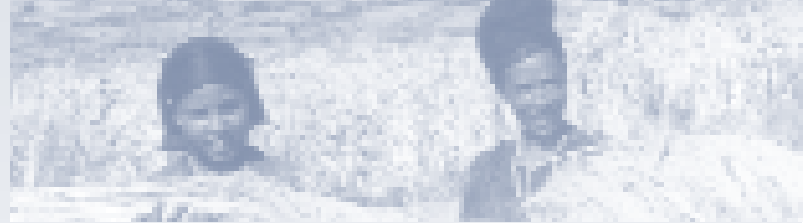
At the fair, the local mayor recognized the need for young people to learn about biodiversity and conservation. The farmers working with FIPAH have organized into research groups to find local solutions to their own agricultural problems. Many of these groups are rescuing planting materials that had been almost lost, and young people are getting to know these varieties for the first time.

Having youth involved helps ensure knowledge is passed on. FIPAH places an emphasis on youth participation and, prior to the event, gave talks on biodiversity to 386 students at local schools.

## ENCOURAGING FARMER EXCHANGES

Exchanges are popular in many other USC-supported countries. In **Ethiopia**, our partner EOSA, Ethio-Organic Seed Action, established a farmers' network to help farmers travel to different parts of the country to exchange skills and knowledge.

This year, farmers from central Ethiopia visited the southeast, training farmers there on a variety of agricultural practices, including compost preparation. The learning process goes both ways though, and the visitors learned techniques for producing and using bio-gas – which can help provide energy and reduce demand for firewood. This type of exchange has a ripple effect as farmers return home and demonstrate what they learned.



## ENSURING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR YOUTH

USC relies on local organizations to implement its non-formal education program in **Bangladesh**, the Adolescent Development Program. There are currently 40 centres around the country providing life skills and literacy training to nearly 900 adolescents. That's in addition to the more than 33,000 adolescents that have graduated from ADP since the program was launched, thanks to assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency.

Through ADP, USC seeks to contribute to adolescents' self-confidence, security, and helps them play active and productive roles in their families and communities. Local organizations are well placed to address the specific needs of adolescents in the context of Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, USC also works with two local organizations to help stop a growing global problem: trafficking of women and children. Traffickers take advantage of poverty, promising parents to take care of their daughters and find them well-paid jobs in other countries. They then sell the girls into virtual slavery as prostitutes, factory workers, or domestic servants.

USC's partners address trafficking at every level – from household to government – starting with the creation of anti-trafficking committees in 65 villages. The committees, made up of parents and community members, raise awareness about trafficking, and pressure government and police to take action. The committees also inform the public about the risks and how to protect themselves.

Our partners also work with those who have escaped traffickers, to ease their transition back into their communities – whether that means offering support to overcome their trauma, helping with legal action, or counselling on reintegration into the community.



## ACTING TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD

USC Canada believes that the lives and destinies of people are connected across borders, and as global citizens, we are stronger when we act together to create a better world. We carry out policy, advocacy, and communications work in Canada and internationally to link and promote social justice issues North and South.

Policy decisions taken at multilateral levels such as the World Trade Organization, or corporate practices such as patenting agricultural technologies, have far reaching consequences for farming communities everywhere. USC Canada participates in the Canadian Food Security Policy Group, a coalition of non-governmental organizations that promote policies to protect and enhance food security in developing countries.

USC seeks to engage a wider range of Canadians in a dialogue about social change, by working with others on campaigns such as *Make Poverty History* and *More and Better Aid*, and through our media and communications programs. We know that many Canadians share our values and the common cause of social

justice, and we support their efforts to challenge the structures that lead to global poverty. Our public activities this year included speaking engagements, presentations, and displays at events relevant to our work. We worked hand in hand with organic farmers, youth and seniors' groups, and our long-time partners – Unitarians across Canada – to mobilize support and resources for equitable development around the world.



These select examples only represent a portion of the work we do and are intended to provide a sense of USC's philosophy and how we are working together to make a difference. Please contact us if you would like more detailed information about any of our programs.

## Revitalizing Seeds of Survival™

In March 2005, USC brought together the original designers of SoS – Dr. Melaku Worede, Pat Mooney, and John Martin – to review the program with staff from Canada, Mali, Honduras, Ethiopia, and Lesotho. From a modest launch in Ethiopia in 1989, SoS has found a home in more than a dozen countries, influencing indigenous participatory seed saving practices in at least 50 others. USC needed to take a look at successes and lessons learned, but more particularly, we needed to see how SoS fit with our conceptual framework – Rights, Resilience, and Respect. The meeting left USC convinced of the need to expand SoS, given its impact on the resilience of farm communities and on food sovereignty – a community's right to grow their own food. USC also resolved to strengthen policy work around food security and food sovereignty.



*YAPPIKA staff preparing emergency relief supplies for tsunami survivors*

## Tsunami Report: Relief gives way to Development

When the tsunami struck Indonesia last December, the wave left nearly 127,000 dead, almost 94,500 missing, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced and without livelihoods. In the aftermath, USC linked with one of our Indonesian partners, YAPPIKA, to provide food, clothing, and medicine to those in need in the province of Aceh. With immediate needs met, focus has turned to longer-term projects. With USC-SATUNAMA and its local Acehese partner Yayasan Rumpun Bambu Indonesia, USC Canada is now supporting a mobile library program for children in Aceh. The project – based on a similar USC-SATUNAMA project in Yogyakarta – is helping meet the educational needs of about 400 children. The need is great given that numerous schools and about 80 per cent of Aceh's library books were lost to the tsunami. While some books are general entertainment storybooks, the majority are educational books about peace, tolerance, health, and environmental issues.

# Message from the Executive Director

## Reviewing our Strategy: A Message from USC Canada's Executive Director

When Lotta Hitschmanova founded the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada in 1945 she was a determined but self-described idealist. Having survived a bitter and heartless war, she was convinced our world would then and forever turn its energies to peace building and restoration. We had learned our lessons the hard way. Enough was enough. Post-WWII citizens could not help but stretch hands and hearts out to those who had experienced unspeakable, needless tragedy.

Lotta's early journeys at the helm of USC quickly silenced any naive ideas about how long it would take to defeat poverty and injustice. She quickly recognized that the thirst for power and greed that had fuelled WWII were like stubborn insects that burrow deep into the skin. They were widespread, extending beyond European borders. It also wasn't just about lending a helping hand for a short while. The battle for social justice was far more complex. People deserved development with dignity- the opportunity to steer their own course. They needed both food and rights!

USC Canada recognizes its 60th birthday not as a time to celebrate our existence for, in a perfect world, we would be out of business. Rather, this is a time to review our strategies and renew our commitment to Lotta's vision of social justice and

development with dignity. Through country program assessments and gatherings with old and new program developers, we have looked hard at where we have been and where we want to go. We know we have our work cut out for us.

Our contributions, as these pages suggest, are modest. But like our founder, we have been around long enough to recognize that the people whose causes we champion are really at the forefront of the struggle for a more balanced world community. They are resilient, skilled, and as determined as the wilful refugee who launched USC.

You too are part of that movement. We are so very thankful for your support. Lotta would be deeply saddened at the thought of the increasing gap between those at the centre and those on the margins of power and privilege. But she would be heartened to know that the movement towards a healthier and more just world is strong, vibrant and, with your continued support, growing.



Susan Walsh  
Executive Director

## Support and Solidarity:

### A DONOR'S STORY

Throughout our 60 year history, USC Canada has benefited from the deep regard our donors have for the work we do and for the people we work with. We see the role that our donors play as an expression of shared values, a sense of shared destiny, and an act of support and solidarity with communities in the South.

Anne Gledhill is a long-time USC supporter. She recently wrote to us, reflecting on how she became a donor, and how she has decided to not only continue her monthly partnership with USC but also to increase her commitment.

Dear Folks at USC,

When I started my monthly donation some 26 years ago, it was the day after my first grandchild was born. I took one look at her and said, "I want to see her grow up," and threw my cigarettes in the trash. I decided that I would like to do something with the money I would be saving and as I have always admired the work your organization has done, I began my monthly donations to you.

Cigarettes were \$1 per package at that time so that is what I donated. It would be nice if I could afford to donate the cost of cigarettes today; however, I am retired now and on a fixed income so I will do what I can.

Keep up the good work,

Anne Gledhill

Please consider becoming a member of USC Canada's Monthly Partnership Program to help build strong communities worldwide. Contact Teresa at **1.800.565.6872** ext. 233 or by email at **tgaravito@usc-canada.org** and she'll be happy to explain the program. It is a simple and convenient way to donate that helps us keep costs low and means more of your donation gets directly through to the people who need it.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For The Year Ended April 30, 2005

### USC CANADA

#### Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	1,051,071
Advances to overseas projects	586,177
Investments	2,725
Capital assets	128,291
	<b>1,768,264</b>
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	277,486
Contract advances and deferred revenue	1,200,722
	<b>1,478,208</b>
Net assets	<b>290,056</b>

#### Statement of Operations

Support from general public	1,116,917
Webster Foundation	248,501
USC Foundation	760,000
CIDA	3,232,071
Other (including investment income)	53,611
Total revenues	<b>5,411,100</b>
Program expenses	4,145,284
Non-program expenses	1,235,391
Total expenses	<b>5,380,675</b>
Net result	<b>30,425</b>

### USC FOUNDATION

#### Statement of Financial Position

Current assets	374,554
Investments	6,332,728
Charitable remainder trust	59,734
	<b>6,767,016</b>
Accounts payable	<b>131,099</b>
Net assets	<b>6,635,917</b>

#### Net assets comprised of

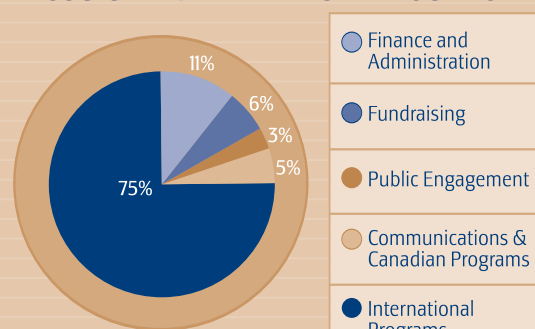
Unrestricted net assets	186,600
Internally restricted net assets	6,062,553
Stewart Moore Endowment Fund	42,464
Manson & Mary Toynbee Endowment Fund	201,245
Kurt & Evelyn (Russell) Haas Endowment Fund	45,100
Ten-year gifts	97,955
	<b>6,635,917</b>

#### Statement of Operations

Donations	30,419
Bequests	782,286
Investment income & capital gains	388,305
Total revenues	<b>1,201,010</b>
General administrative expenses	33,608
Contribution to USC Canada	760,000
Total expenses	<b>793,608</b>
Net result	<b>407,402</b>

The USC Canada audit for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2005 was conducted by the firm of Ginsberg Gluzman Fage & Levitz, LLP, Chartered Accountants. Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

#### USC CANADA - EXPENSE ALLOCATION



#### Media Donations

Once again this year, USC Canada has received generous support in the form of donated airtime and column space from radio and television stations, newspapers, and magazines across the country. USC Canada would like to express its deepest gratitude to the many media outlets that donated their ad space and airtime.

#### Institutional Funding

Numerous government agencies, foundations, and corporations throughout Canada have also shown continued interest and support for the work we do. We remain extremely grateful to these generous donors for their yearly commitments.

Canadian International Development Agency  
 Alberta LTD.  
 Arriscraft International  
 Calgary Foundation  
 Carmen & Frances D'Intino Charitable Trust  
 Centennial High School  
 Community Foundation of Ottawa  
 Cranmere Trust Fund  
 Foundation Edward Assh  
 Howick Foundation  
 Justin & Elisabeth Lang Foundation  
 Manitoba Council for International Cooperation  
 Manulife Financial  
 Morrison Foundation  
 Ontario Power Generation Employees' Fund  
 Pirie Foundation  
 R. Howard Webster Foundation  
 Royal Canadian Legion - Br.351  
 Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation  
 Southworth Charitable Foundation  
 Unitarian Church Congregations  
 United Way Chapters  
 Wild Rose Foundation

# Board of Directors

## Board of Directors

Honorary Patron

Her Excellency,  
the Right Honourable

**ADRIENNE CLARKSON,**  
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.,  
**Governor General of Canada**

## Honourary Board

**JUNE CALLWOOD**  
**BRUCE COCKBURN**  
**DON DORAM**  
**ANDREW HOWICK**  
**NORMA WALMSLEY**

## USC Canada Board of Directors

2004/2005

**PUSHKAR BAJRACHARYA**  
Director/Nepal

**DOUGLAS COUSINS**  
Chair/Canada

**RICHARD J. FAST**  
Director/Canada

**MARNIE GIRVAN**  
Director/Canada

**DALE HUNTINGFORD**  
Director/Canada

**TREVOR PAGE**  
Director/Canada

**JOYCE L. PICKERING**  
Director/Canada

**PAULINE PORT**  
Treasurer/Canada

**HABIBUR RAHMAN**  
Director/Bangladesh

**BRIAN TANSEY**  
Director/Canada

La version française de ce rapport annuel sera disponible sur notre site web ([www.usc-canada.org](http://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](mailto:info@usc-canada.org)**.

## Contact Information

**USC Canada**  
56 Sparks Street  
Suite 705  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5B1

**Telephone:** 613.234.6827  
**Fax:** 613.234.6842  
[www.usc-canada.org](http://www.usc-canada.org)  
**E-mail:** [info@usc-canada.org](mailto:info@usc-canada.org)  
**Toll-free line:** 1.800.565.6872

Charity Registration No.  
11927-6129-RR-0001  
USC Canada was formerly  
known as the Unitarian Service  
Committee of Canada