



THE HOWARD G. BUFFETT FOUNDATION

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Established in 1999, the Howard G. Buffett Foundation's primary mission is to catalyze transformational change, particularly for the world's most impoverished and marginalized populations. We see the Foundation's resources as rare risk capital that can be deployed to improve conditions and create change in the most difficult circumstances and geographies. We invest our funding in four main areas:

- Food Security
- Conflict Mitigation
- Combatting Human Trafficking
- Public Safety

Our support for global food security is primarily directed toward agricultural resource development and management for smallholder farmers in the developing world. We support a range of investments, including research, conservation-based production practices, water resource management and education to promote the ideas that will have the broadest impact on the most vulnerable and under-resourced farmers. In the United States, we raise awareness about the critical role American farmers play in meeting the world's growing demands for food while promoting better production practices that sustain and revitalize our natural resources.

Conflict and citizen insecurity are key barriers to achieving global food security and economic prosperity. We seek out investments to mitigate conflict and improve citizen security in two ways: by working to end or improve the conditions that fuel violence and conflict; and by supporting communities that have been affected by violence or conflict. We consider the pervasive gang-related violence affecting communities in Central America to be a form of conflict and make targeted investments to mitigate these circumstances.

Our initiative to combat human trafficking in the United States builds capacity and amplifies the efforts of law enforcement, prosecutors and victim service providers in targeted communities to disrupt human traffickers, dismantle their networks and bring justice to victims of human trafficking.

Public safety is the primary focus of our community-based grantmaking in the United States where we have operations and employees. We partner with local sheriffs' offices to identify and address key community public safety concerns; invest in initiatives to improve policing and police training; and we support volunteer fire departments in rural communities where resources are scarce.

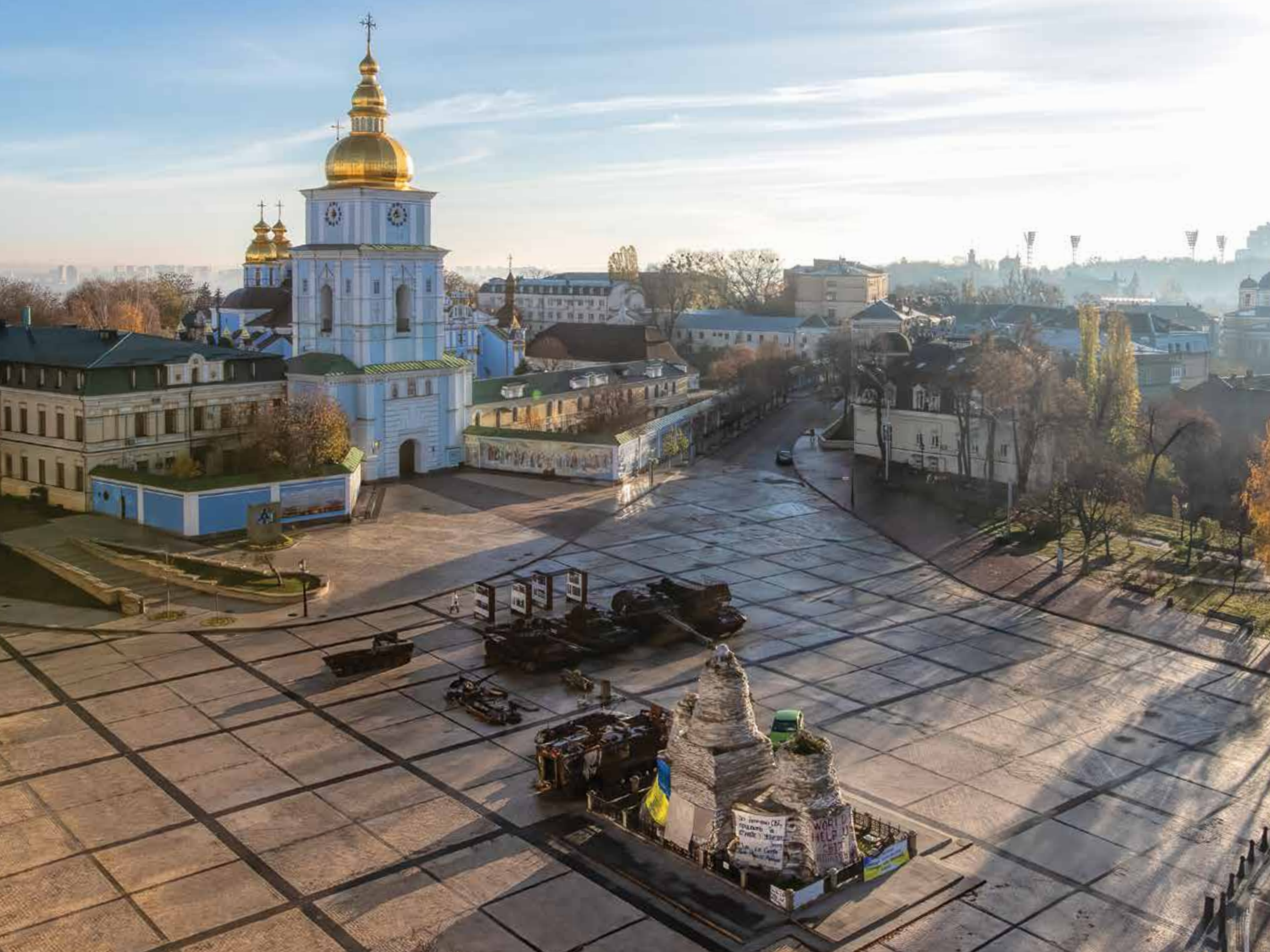
The Foundation provides other support to the communities where we have operations and employees, and we continue to make smaller investments in areas where we have historical knowledge and relationships, including cheetah and mountain gorilla conservation.

The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals, and we typically do not provide general operating support. December 31, 2045 is the final dissolution date of the Foundation's assets.

TRUSTEES

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

My first trip to Ukraine was in February of 1991—six months before the Ukrainian Parliament voted on August 24th to separate from Russia and declare its independence. Following the Parliament's actions, in December of 1991, 90 percent of the 84 percent of eligible Ukrainians who voted chose independence.

Left: Howard stands in Sophiivska Square, Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1991. This square is located three blocks from the larger square featured here, present day.



Despite growing up in Nebraska, I was not prepared for the bitter cold of Ukraine. We first landed in Moscow and then continued on to Kyiv (Kiev). The purpose of the trip was to meet with government officials and farmers to discuss how private farming functioned in the United States. I asked the farmers to show me some of their equipment. The equipment confirmed for me how the collective farming system was working, which was not very well.



Top left: I regularly took photos of farm equipment during my visits with farmers in Ukraine in 1991. The condition of the equipment seemed to represent the entire system: broken and inefficient. Top right: A photo of the inside of a typical collective farmhouse in 1991.

I remember there were no McDonalds' restaurants, and it was not easy to find a Coca-Cola. The streets were almost like a ghost town in the evenings, completely different from today's (pre-war) crowds. When we were getting ready to return to Moscow, we were delayed at the airport because they were removing seats from the Aeroflot plane to load chickens onto the flight. It was not the most pleasant flight back to Moscow.

Thirty years later, I returned to Ukraine under very different circumstances. The cover photo of this report is School Number 17 in Irpin, Ukraine, less than an hour's drive from Kyiv. The school was hit by Russian missiles in March of 2022. At the time, it was one of 57 schools that had been destroyed or damaged by Russian artillery, as independently verified by the Associated Press. As of today, at least 810 educational institutions have been destroyed, and over 1,640 damaged. I was visiting the school when the nonprofit organization World Central Kitchen was using the cafeteria to feed several hundred

mostly elderly people from the community. The roof had been repaired and unexploded ordnance were removed, yet the windows still had bullet holes. The young girl peering through a large hole in the wall made by a Russian missile was a reminder that the war was still all around us.

This particular photo from Ukraine also reminded me of an image I took in Georgia in 2009 on the one-year anniversary of the Russo-Georgian War. The woman in that photo was living in a makeshift area under a tarp in her home. Russian tanks had shelled her house, and little was left intact. When we met her, she asked us to wait for a moment. I remember being puzzled as she quickly walked away. We soon learned there was a peach tree in her backyard that survived the tank rounds, and she had gone to pick peaches to share with us. I captured the photo of her returning with the peaches through the damaged walls. The war lasted 12 days, but it displaced approximately 230,000 people, and some farmers permanently lost their fields due to the Russian occupation. This war was the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union that the Russian military had targeted an independent state.¹ In 2021, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia violated six articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, including ethnic cleansing of Georgian civilians during the 2008 invasion.¹

Our Foundation's history of working in conflict areas did not start out as a conscious decision. I have written in the past about my experience in Czechoslovakia, when I was 14 years old during the Soviet occupation. That experience no doubt influenced my decision to include conflict mitigation as part of our mission.

Our Foundation's purpose is to focus our funding to address and mitigate the circumstances affecting the world's most marginalized and disenfranchised populations. To do that, we continually find ourselves working in conflict and post-conflict areas. I have found myself in refugee camps with angry people, under house arrest, detained, weapons occasionally pointed at me and once in a helicopter struck by a PKM machine gun round. We have learned the delicate balance between engaging with different sides while they were each fighting one another.

Opposite page: Traveling through the country of Georgia in 2009, we visited farmers who had lost their farm ground when Russia invaded the prior year. We also met the few remaining people in the area who stayed living in the remains of their homes after the conflict ended. The woman in this photo had very little food, mostly potatoes, but she shared a few peaches with us when we visited. The top right photo is her backyard, which served as her kitchen, eating area, laundry and bathroom.

¹ The Russian Bear on the Warpath against Georgia. Kaarel Kass (2009)





We have also learned that conflict does not always take the form of overt fighting. We have seen hidden conflicts that drive people to make the decision to leave their homes and everything they have for an unknown future. The world puts different labels on them depending on their circumstances: refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), stateless people and migrants. It is interesting how people react differently to the labels of refugees and IDPs versus migrants. The obvious signs of conflict that create the labels of “refugee” and “IDP” make it much easier for outsiders to understand, sympathize and accept peoples’ movements. The label “migrant” implies a choice to move—yet the people categorized as such frequently see their movements as their only option for survival.

Immigration is one of the most complicated issues I have ever studied. It involves a number of dynamics including the impact on children, leaving behind family and personal assets, the danger in traveling across difficult and dangerous geographies and exposure to criminal elements. It may appear that displacement from conflict and migration are very different, but they share some very similar issues. In the first instance, violence takes everything from a person; in the other instance, violence forces a person to give up everything. It may even go beyond violence to include extortion, poverty or other factors that make life extremely difficult and dangerous. In each case, the basic necessities for survival are removed, diminished or are at serious risk of loss.

Our Foundation has funded projects in over 30 countries that would fall into one of these two categories. The variations in circumstances are extreme. However, they all share one common element: people living in fear with a high likelihood of being injured, killed or losing everything they possess.

I have witnessed and photographed many forms of human suffering all over the world. Because my mind thinks in terms of photographs, I remember certain images vividly, but because photographs convey different layers of expression, these are not always the photos that look the most dramatic. The cover photo is one that communicates many things at once. The emergency exit sign in the upper left takes on a different meaning with a cavity in the wall created by a missile only a few feet away. This photo reflects the reality that children are living in an environment that has completely disrupted their lives. For many children, school is a place of comfort and security—it is like a second home, where you meet your friends and where teachers help you grow and learn. When a child sees his or her school destroyed, it takes a toll. Attacking schools is a way to disrupt an entire generation and sow fear and doubt among the most innocent within a community. With little imagination, you can envision what it must feel like to go to bed at night, falling asleep to the sound of air raid sirens. **The disruption and trauma of war can last a lifetime.**

Left: A family from Guatemala walks alongside the U.S./Mexico border fence outside San Luis, Arizona. The Guatemalan Highlands have some of the highest malnutrition rates in the world.

In June of 2022 in Bucha, on my second trip to Ukraine since the war started, I met a 20-year-old woman named Tetiana at a coffee shop. All around us were shelled out buildings. She shared her experience of when the Russians occupied her town three months earlier. The first shelling took out the electricity, then the gas, then the water. When the gas was lost, they started cooking with fires. Most neighbors fled when the Russian advancement started, but she and her parents made the decision not to leave their home. Her grandparents lived nearby, and her father did not want to leave them alone.

The Russians took over multiple apartment buildings; taking all the food and returning on a regular basis to use the toilets, showers and beds. The residents who stayed were told by the Russians to wear white so that it was clear who they were, and so they could easily be identified as residents of the town.

Tetiana's stories were detailed, but she relayed them in a monotone voice. She described how the morning of March 24th she and her mother and father were walking down the street; they were wearing white so they could easily be identified as residents, something the Russians insisted on. Her mother was walking in front of her, and with no warning, she saw her mother's head jolt back. She described the awful details of the impact of a Russian sniper's bullet traveling through her mother's head.

As her mother fell, she and her father also immediately dropped to the ground. She crawled over to her mother and watched her take her last breath. The Russians detained her father, placing a sack over his head and tying his hands behind his back before taking him away. Tetiana was able to run to her grandmother's house. A few days later they dropped her father off on a street where some local people helped him find his way home. The Russians later allowed the family and a neighbor to return to remove her mother's body. Tetiana believes that the men who committed these crimes will someday be brought to justice.

Other than the individual stories, perhaps the most difficult aspect to comprehend in an environment experiencing conflict is the constant sense of fear and instability created by the reality that at any time, another missile or rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) could strike. However, it does not always take a missile strike or a rebel group to force people from their homes. In certain places in Congo, when people send their daughters to school or to fetch water, there is a reasonable chance that they will be raped on the journey. In many states in Mexico, the cartel may control an entire community. In El Salvador's city centers, shopkeepers can expect to be threatened with extortion by gang members and risk being killed if they do not provide payment. In places where we work in Colombia, the only viable livelihood to feed a family may be to grow coca, the raw ingredient in cocaine, putting the entire family at risk. These are the situations—the

more hidden conflicts—that lead people to make difficult and undesirable decisions about leaving their homes and their country.

None of these experiences should ever be considered normal or acceptable. Feeling unsafe undermines every aspect of life. Yet in Kyiv, Irpin, Bucha and other places I visited in Ukraine this past year, these threats have become so normal that when air raid sirens sound, many people continue going about their business. The war in Ukraine is a war on civilians. The most common “targets” I saw were shopping centers, apartment buildings, houses, restaurants, churches and schools. It was a very different set of circumstances than the areas where we typically work. In Congo, civilians can be caught in the fighting; or in Colombia, civilians may be persecuted in small groups. But seeing blocks of streets that have no military significance completely destroyed was something I had only experienced once before, in Bosnia.



In El Salvador, organized gangs control territory, undermine rule of law and prey upon the population, not unlike rebels operating in other countries. The gangs use fear, extortion and violence to survive. This MS-13 gang member has his gang affiliation tattooed across his face, which was common when the gangs first gained prominence in the 1990s but less so with today's members.

In 1999, while visiting Bosnia at the end of the conflict, I met multiple land mine victims, saw long swaths of urban areas destroyed and a soccer field turned into a cemetery. This type of carnage had a huge impact on civilians and displaced over two million people. It was the first time since World War II that there was such a massive outflow of refugees from Europe. This is now exceeded by those who fled Ukraine.

What I remember the most is the impact on children. We met several young teenagers who had lost legs or arms to land mines. But the photograph that is etched in my mind is the soccer field that now stands as a massive grave site. I remember standing and looking at it for a long time, realizing no photograph could convey how I felt seeing it in person.

While in Bosnia, we were constantly aware of land mines. When we stopped to talk with a few people in a village that had endured significant shelling, I wandered off and went into a building, walking up three flights of stairs so I could get an elevated photograph of the street. As I approached a window, one of the individuals below yelled at me that the building I was in had not been cleared of land mines. I immediately turned and carefully walked to the staircase and down to the ground level, trying my best to retrace my steps and not disturb any debris.



Top left and right: When I visited Bosnia in 1999, I was guided through a building where a team was clearing land mines. Land mines are indiscriminate weapons, often killing or maiming innocent victims, including children. Tihomir Ostojic, pictured top right, lost the lower half of both his arms from a land mine when he was playing in an orchard close to his home.

Bottom: The photo I remember most vividly from Bosnia is a soccer field that had been converted into a cemetery. So many people were killed so quickly that they were buried in any area that was available, including the grass islands dividing traffic lanes.

Opposite page: The first time I saw wholesale destruction of urban areas from conflict was in 1999 in Bosnia (left). When I was in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1969, there were many buildings riddled with bullet holes and an occasional mortar round, but entire blocks of buildings remained intact. In Borodianka, Ukraine (right), multiple blocks of buildings, including schools, churches, shopping centers, gas stations, apartments and homes have been destroyed by Russian shelling. This is the case in a number of cities throughout Ukraine.







In another situation, I saw an old church that had been hit by explosives. Not far away there was a new church being built. I asked the driver to stop; I wanted to photograph the new church through the blown-out windows of the old church. I got out of the vehicle and started walking towards the old church. An older woman stopped me and was very animated. At first, I thought she was upset with me. Tensions were very high at the time. But as the interpreter approached, he told me that she was explaining that if I was going to walk that direction, I must step in the footprints that were already in the snow, otherwise I could be blown up. I decided it was not that important of a photograph.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is different from the war in Bosnia in several ways. The war in Ukraine reverberated globally. Many countries immediately understood the implications of a sovereign nation contending with an unprovoked attack, including the realization that we could find ourselves closer to the use of nuclear weapons than at any other time in my adult life. Then the reality began to set in; Ukraine is a significant supplier of grain for a number of nations which require food assistance. On top of that, many of these countries are politically unstable, with food insecurity being one of the top drivers of internal conflict. And then there are the economics: the impact on commodity prices, food costs, availability of fertilizer and the significant disruption to energy markets. In the first six months of the war, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that one third of Ukrainians were forced from their homes. As of September 2022, 7.8 million refugees had been registered outside Ukraine; 2.9 million crossed into Russia as the only safe passage, while approximately 13 million people remained stranded in areas, unable to leave due to security risks or Russian occupation.

In August of 2022, six months after the invasion of Ukraine, the first humanitarian shipment of grain departed Yuzhny (Pivdennyi) Port on the Black Sea. In cooperation with USAID and through the World Food Programme (WFP), the Foundation provided the funding for the 23,000 metric tons of grain destined to help 750,000 refugees in Ethiopia. The shipment came at a time when a record 345 million people in 82 countries were facing acute food insecurity while up to 50 million people in 45 countries were on the edge of famine. Consequently, we ended up supporting additional shipments in collaboration with USAID through WFP.

Left: In March of 2022, 50,000 Ukrainian refugees arrived each day by train in Przemyśl, Poland. By May of 2022, over three million Ukrainians had fled across the Ukraine/Poland border. Since the start of the war in 2022, close to eight million refugees have fled Ukraine. The girl on the left arrived at midnight at the Przemyśl Główny train station. The girl on the right had crossed the border at the Medyka border crossing in Przemyśl only seconds before I took this photo. She was upset, confused and clearly exhausted.

RISK

My wife calls me the most optimistic pessimist she knows. There is a lot of truth to her observation. I think it may be one of the reasons why I am willing to take risks in difficult places. In 2012, when we were funding the construction of a hydroelectric plant in the Democratic Republic of Congo, situated in the middle of the conflict between the M23 rebel group and the Congolese government, I remember one of the engineers remarked how the project would abruptly end if one of the groups that was fighting hit a bulldozer with an RPG. Without even thinking, I said no it won't, we will buy another bulldozer. If we are unwilling or cannot adjust to the unexpected or the unknown, we cannot do serious work in the worst places in the worst of times.

On a phone call discussing Ukraine with USAID Administrator Samantha Power, someone asked about the size of our team in Ukraine. I almost laughed out loud as I responded that we do not have a team in Ukraine. We stepped onto Ukraine soil six weeks after the invasion. Before we left that first visit, we had wired about \$20 million to provide grocery packs to civilians in areas where no food was available; we had formulated a plan to help get the wheat harvest completed for small-sized farms; and we had started the process of supplying over 160,000 pounds of vegetable seeds to World Central Kitchen and the Ukrainian government to distribute to smallholder farmers and other civilians for home gardens. Our rental vehicle served as our office, and these actions, along with others, occurred on the drive between Lviv, Ukraine and Poland. I made suggestions as Shannon Sedgwick Davis, CEO of the Bridgeway Foundation, typed messages on her phone, bouncing along the road as if we had two flat tires. That was our team. But to be fair, our efforts are to fill critical gaps and do it quickly with the hope that other funders can in turn reach the scale required to address the size of the challenge. USAID has been an important partner to us in Ukraine.

I'm not sure where my appetite for risk comes from, but it seems to come naturally. One of the most important gestures my father made when he established our foundations was to tell my sister, my brother and me that small efforts yield small results, that we had the freedom to try big things and that he would not judge us by our failures. Simply translated, I see our Foundation as philanthropic risk capital. The freedom to fail is a great motivator when we want to work where many people or foundations will not work. I like to think what we take are calculated risks, but the truth is, in a conflict zone with almost no known future outcomes, little understanding of the consequences of anything that is happening and very few dependable partners, sometimes we simply make the best judgements that we can at the time. **We don't always know if our decision is the best one or the right choice, but what we do know is that we must do something. That is the freedom to fail.**

It is funny how some things have not really changed that much in my life. My mom used to say to me that I loved operating bulldozers and farm equipment because I did not have enough Tonka toys when I was little—I used to jokingly respond by asking her, “Whose fault was that?” Besides the instructions that my dad provided, there are several things that allow me to operate our Foundation the way I do. I have no patience, which can often be a problem, but in our Foundation’s work, it drives urgency. If people are dying, if people are being forced from their homes or if people are living in fear, if we do not have urgency, then we shouldn’t be working there. If we’re going to head home the minute bullets start to fly, when the Embassy issues a no travel advisory, or when some nonprofit organizations are pulling out, then we shouldn’t be working there. Not everyone is interested in this type of work, but we gravitate towards it.

We are often able to operate more quickly and with more flexibility than larger foundations. For example, on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, the Russian military began its retreat from the city of Kherson, and two days later, on Friday, November 11, Ukraine declared Kherson liberated. By 5:00 p.m. that same day, I received a text from an executive from the WFP, asking if our Foundation could provide \$9 million to feed 100,000 people in Kherson for three months. There was a particular urgency to this request because Kherson’s residents had already been without regular access to food for many months due to the Russian occupation. We knew we needed to move quickly. Our staff worked through the weekend, and by Monday morning, November 14, we had wired the funds to WFP.

I have been in many similar circumstances where our small staff size and flat organization structure allows us to make decisions and deploy resources quickly where others cannot. I remember one meeting I had years ago in Mozambique with the executive director of WFP and a senior program representative from a huge foundation. We were discussing the need to quickly move food assistance into Sudan where thousands of people were starving. I said our Foundation would commit \$10 million to WFP for immediate food assistance if the representative from the other foundation who was also present would do the same. Unfortunately, and despite an annual grantmaking budget that was nearly 80 times larger than ours at the time, the representative did not have the authority to make a similar commitment on the spot. This experience, and similar ones like it, reminds me how fortunate I am to have the ability to make decisions quickly. As our grantmaking budget has grown, we have made sure to retain that ability to be flexible and able to deploy our resources where they are most urgently needed.

I think some of this approach is also the result of what I learned from my dad’s selective and subtle approach with me when I was growing up. He was big on letting us make our own mistakes; I had no shortage in this area. But he also had a subtle way of expressing confidence in us. I argued with my mother for weeks to go to Czechoslovakia in 1969

when our foreign exchange student Vera invited me. My mother refused to let me go. Finally, at the right time, my dad simply said, “Let him go; it will be good for him.” He was right: it was a life-changing experience. Later in 1990, when former Congressman John Cavanaugh was planning a trip to the Soviet Union, my dad simply said, “Why don’t you take Howie?” I could list many more of these moments where a few words from my dad changed my life and how I saw the world. These were opportunities and an education that were irreplaceable.

OUR APPROACH

I believe a family foundation usually reflects the personality of the first generation to oversee it. I realize that the next generation will not see risk, understand risk or embrace risk the way I do. That is one reason why, when our Foundation was created, the prerequisite my dad gave us kids to receive money was that we needed to stay actively engaged in the operations of the Foundation. Another clear directive was that we would never create an endowment to perpetuate the future of our Foundation. We were also afforded another incredible freedom: to pursue what we were passionate about. We were never given instructions or guidance about what to support. I do remember one night at the dinner table in the early days of the Foundation when most of our grantmaking was focused on conservation work, out of nowhere, my dad asked me, “Why cheetahs?” I believe he was just curious, but I had a hard time going to sleep that night trying to answer that question for myself. Another subtle lesson.

In today’s hyper-digital world, every person has a platform to criticize, misinform or humiliate a person on just about anything. It is one reason our Foundation does not maintain a social media presence. Social media becomes a distraction, and too often, people are reacting with little first-hand knowledge while making some terribly bad assumptions, or just projecting their own personal political views. As a private foundation, we are legally required to stay out of politics, which makes it easier to focus on our job of improving peoples’ lives based on the experiences we see first-hand informed by the people who are living those experiences and proposing solutions we can fund. We always want to be transparent about where we focus our resources and why, but you will not see it on social media. It is why I write this letter and why we publish an annual report and post it to our website.

Another subtle lesson, this one learned from watching my dad for over 60 years, is to operate as lean as possible. Our operating percent relative to our distributions is consistently below 2.25 percent and we have an incredible team of 14 people who distributed \$307 million in 2022 in some of the toughest places in the world. We have a great board of trustees that cares about what we do and helps our team succeed. And

we have some great partners that understand and embrace our style. But the greatest assets I have are the lessons I have learned from my family, my friends and my first-hand experiences.

We will continue to fail at some of what we attempt, but what I have learned from our failures is that we are better and more prepared for the next challenge. I believe it is important to share our failures. In 2010 our entire annual report focused on our failures and lessons learned. Most organizations want to tell you the great things that they have accomplished; we do that as well, but it is just as important to talk about failures so that others can learn what we have learned.

We are working in difficult places, and because of that, I know we are improving lives and, even at times, creating choices for people to avoid fleeing their homes so they can create a better future right where they live. At times it is difficult, frustrating and sometimes very sad work, but there is no better opportunity than to be given the chance to improve the lives of as many people as possible.

I recently read a statement by Jim Sloan that he applied to my father: **“Take notice of a great leader’s determination to protect and improve the lives of others in a way that will outlast his individual presence.”** This is why our Foundation was created, and it is why every day we try to make investments that will outlast our Foundation’s existence.

Howard G. Buffett

Top: In 2017, Howard and General Alberto Mejia, General Commander of the Military Forces of Colombia, watched a demonstration by the Colombian military’s Humanitarian Demining Brigade in Planadas, Tolima, Colombia. (Photo courtesy of Jeannie O’Donnell)

Bottom: Shannon Sedgwick Davis, CEO of Bridgeway Foundation, has been instrumental in assisting the Foundation with our investments in Ukraine. Shannon and Howard are shown here receiving a briefing from the Ukraine Territorial Defense commander. (Photo courtesy of Laren Poole)





In April 2022, while traveling from Lviv, Ukraine to the Polish border, we stopped several times to speak with farmers in the field. Wherever I am in the world, I always travel with small John Deere toy tractors and John Deere hats to give to children I meet on the farms I visit. On our first stop, after I handed this boy a tractor and hat, he showed the tractor I gave him to his father who was planting potatoes (above).

On our last stop to talk with farmers, I noticed a young boy leaning against a fence post, looking preoccupied, staring off into the distance. After visiting for a few minutes, the boy walked up and stood next to one of the farmers. I offered him a toy tractor, but he refused to accept it.

After the boy walked away, one of the farmers told us that he was there with his mother and that they were refugees from Kyiv. He shared that the boy's mother had forbidden him to play with toys that he found or that were offered to him. The farmer further explained that the Russians had concealed explosives in toys, and children had lost hands and arms as a result.

I later heard confirmation of this tactic from a doctor who had responded to injuries resulting from this specific type of violence. In addition, the organization we supported with explosive detection K-9s shared examples of items K-9s had identified while searching for explosives. As the war continued, more and more documentation surfaced of refrigerators, washing machines and other items exploding; we learned that when the Russians retreated from the initial invasion of the Kyiv area, they left behind items that had been cleverly set to detonate when people returned home. This proved true later when the Russians fled areas such as Chernihiv, Kharkiv and other areas in the East.



A military demining K-9 found an improvised explosive device (IED) hidden inside a child's toy and designed to kill or maim the person who found it. This IED was made with a nitroglycerin solution with a counter balanced trip switch. A ball bearing was used as a connection to complete the explosive cycle when held in a certain position.



This box of chocolates has a simple pressure detonation fuse fitted to explode when the lid is opened.



This flashlight was converted to an IED by using a P4 plastic explosive with a fused trigger switch. When the power switch of this flashlight is turned on, it connects the circuit and detonates the device.



Top left: Senior Lieutenant Loboda of the Kyiv Regional Police trains with her K-9 Suza. The Foundation donated 10 K-9s to the Ukraine State Emergency Service and 10 K-9s to the Kyiv Regional Police to assist in search and rescue and explosives detection. (Photo courtesy of Oleg Semeniuk)

Top right: Traveling across the country, signs warning of the presence of land mine areas are everywhere, including along major roads. It will take years to clear the mines left by Russians. These mines include “butterfly” mines, which are designed to maim, and POM-3 mines, which are activated by the vibrations of someone approaching, making them more difficult to detect prior to detonation.



Bottom left: An abandoned teddy bear lies by a playground in Horenka, Ukraine. One of the war’s many horrors includes children’s toys being converted into IEDs. I left the bear alone.

Bottom right: As we talked with people outside a building that had been heavily shelled, a group of toys caught my attention. I thought back to my experience with the young boy on the farm who refused to accept the toy tractor I offered him as a gift for fear it was one of the explosives his mother had warned him to avoid. I was tempted to go examine the toys, but decided it was better to move on.

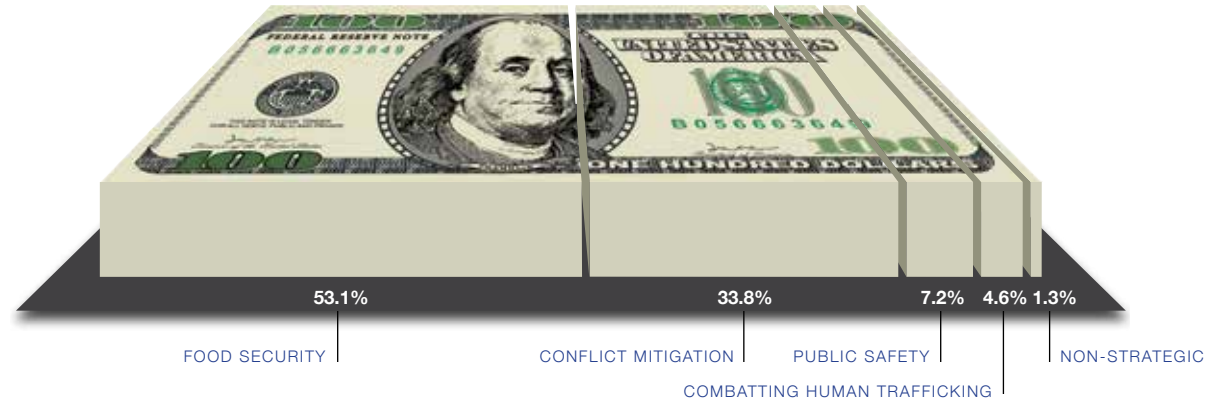




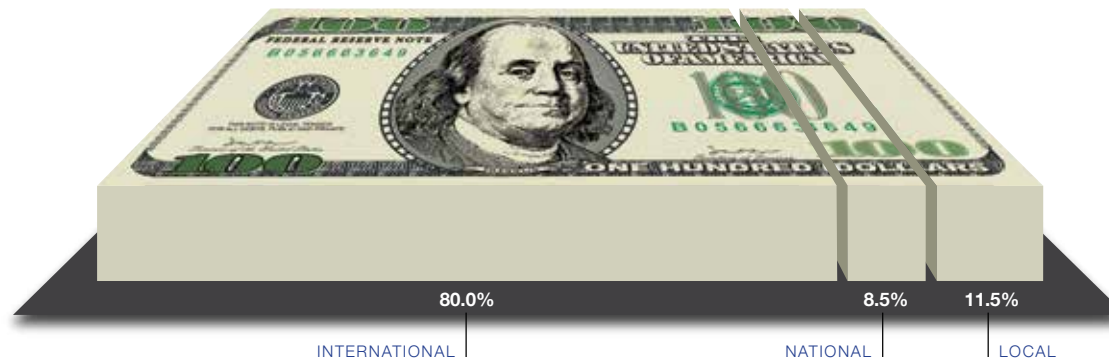
2022 **FINANCIALS**

2022 CONTRIBUTIONS

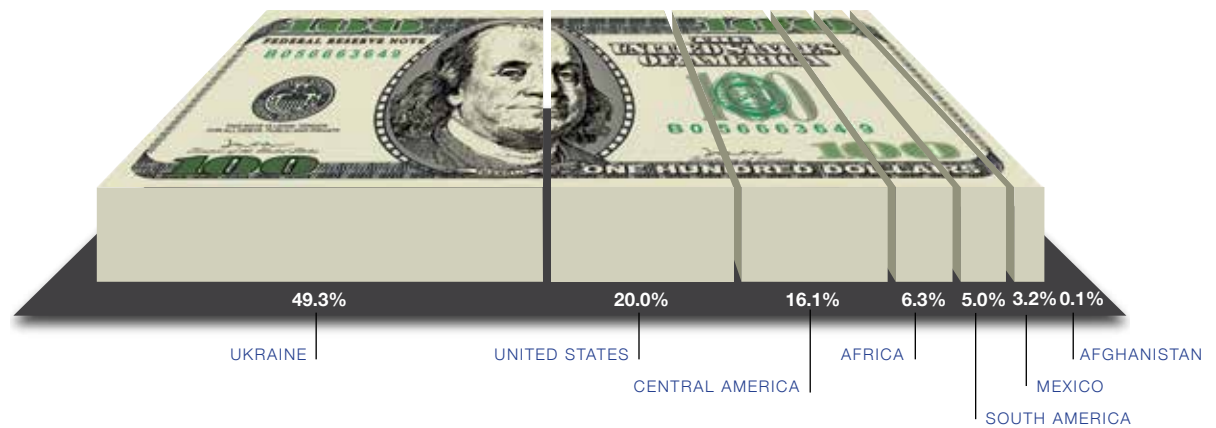
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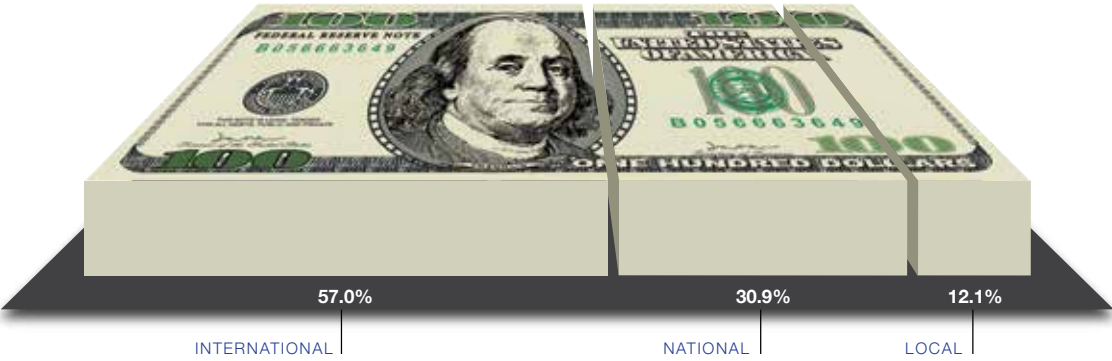


FINANCIALS

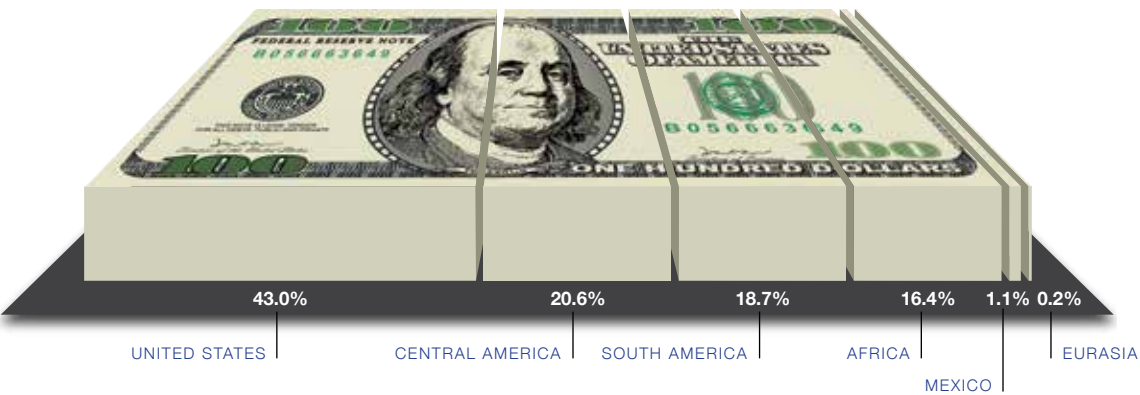
CONTRIBUTIONS BY CATEGORY



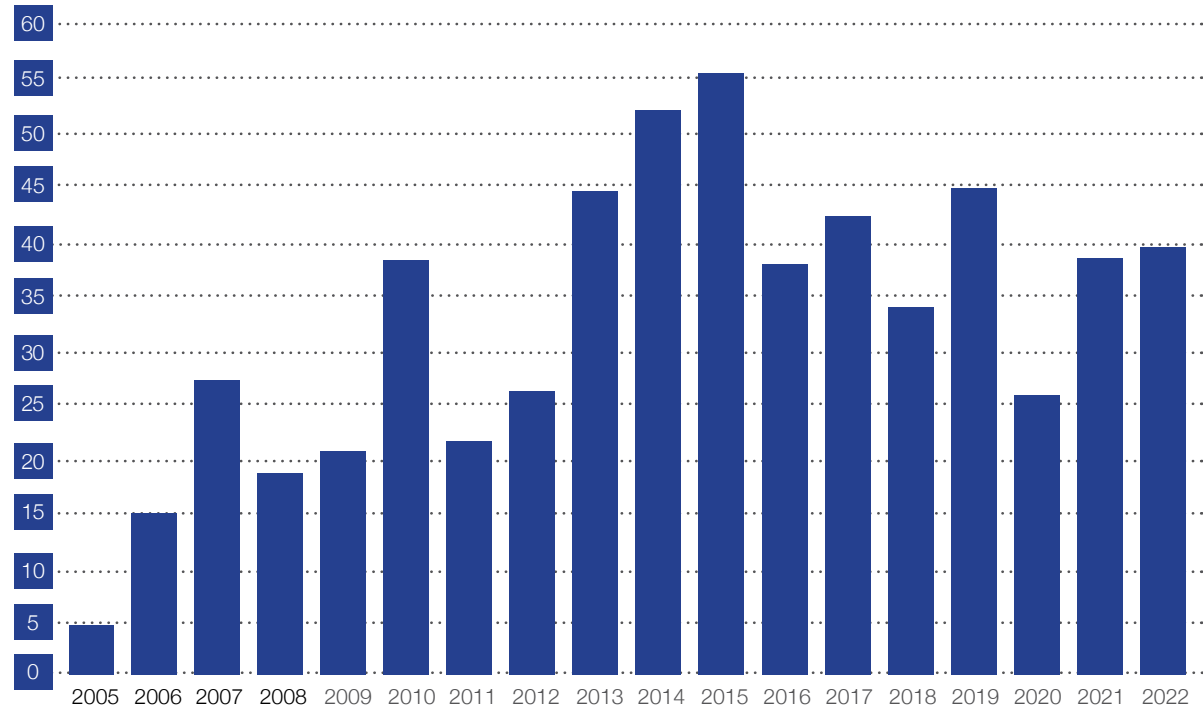
CONTRIBUTIONS BY DESTINATION



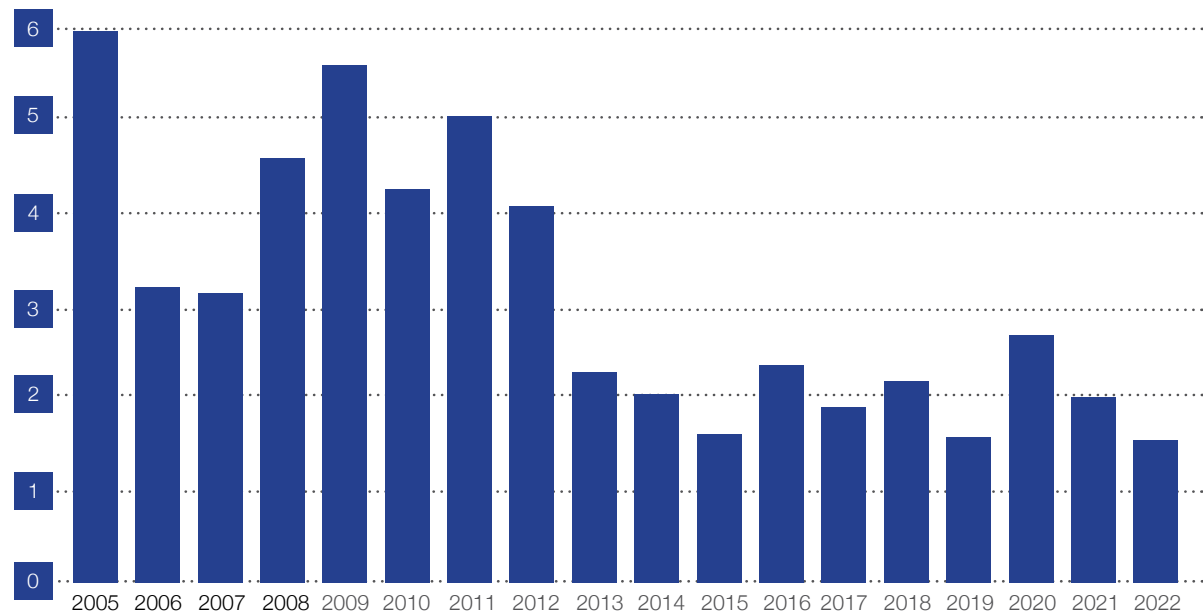
CONTRIBUTIONS BY GEOGRAPHY



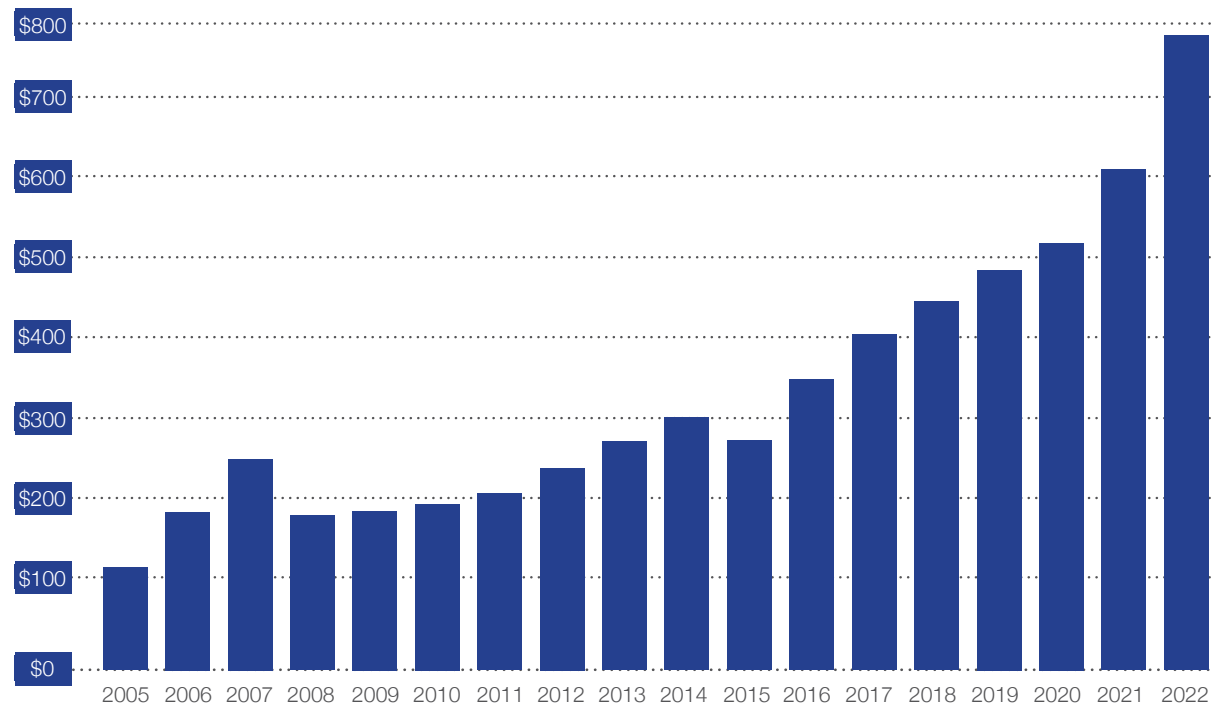
QUALIFYING DISTRIBUTIONS
(AS PERCENT OF ASSETS)



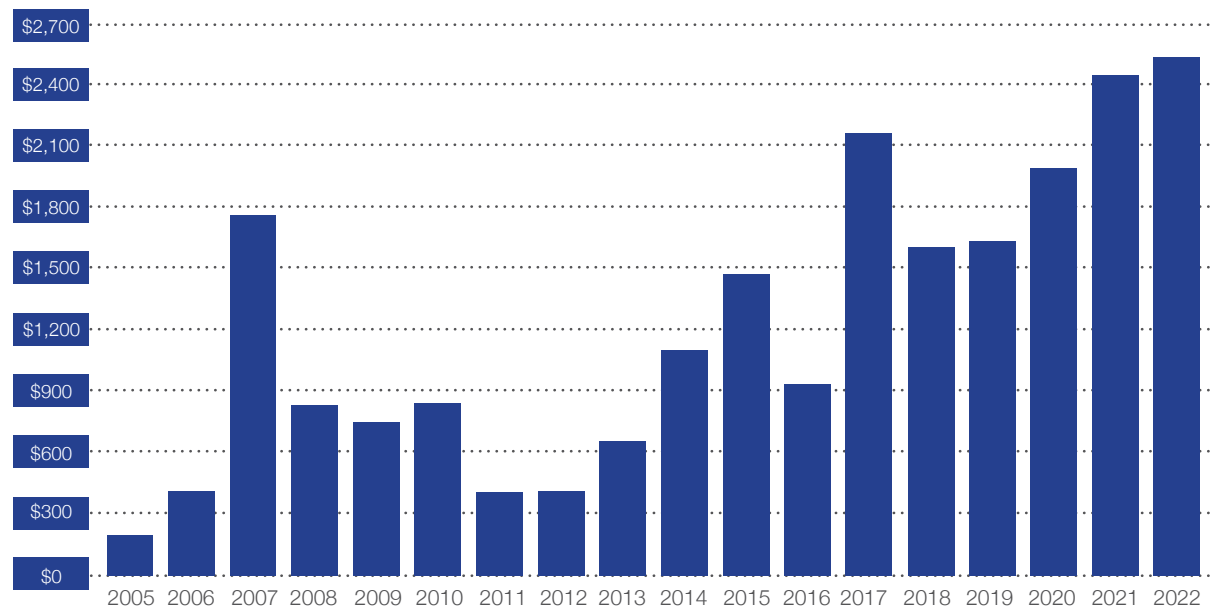
OPERATING EXPENDITURES
(AS PERCENT OF GRANTS)



FINANCIALS



TOTAL ASSETS
(IN MILLIONS)



AVERAGE GRANT SIZE
(IN THOUSANDS)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION¹
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	177,944,891
Investments		604,948,634
Other assets		50,164
Land, Buildings, Equipment, net of accumulated depreciation		<u>621,784</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$	<u>783,565,473</u>

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$	56,692
Income tax payable		<u>17,895</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>74,587</u>

Net Assets:

Unrestricted		<u>783,490,886</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>783,490,886</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$	<u>783,565,473</u>

¹ Statements prepared on a cash basis/income tax basis

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES¹
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

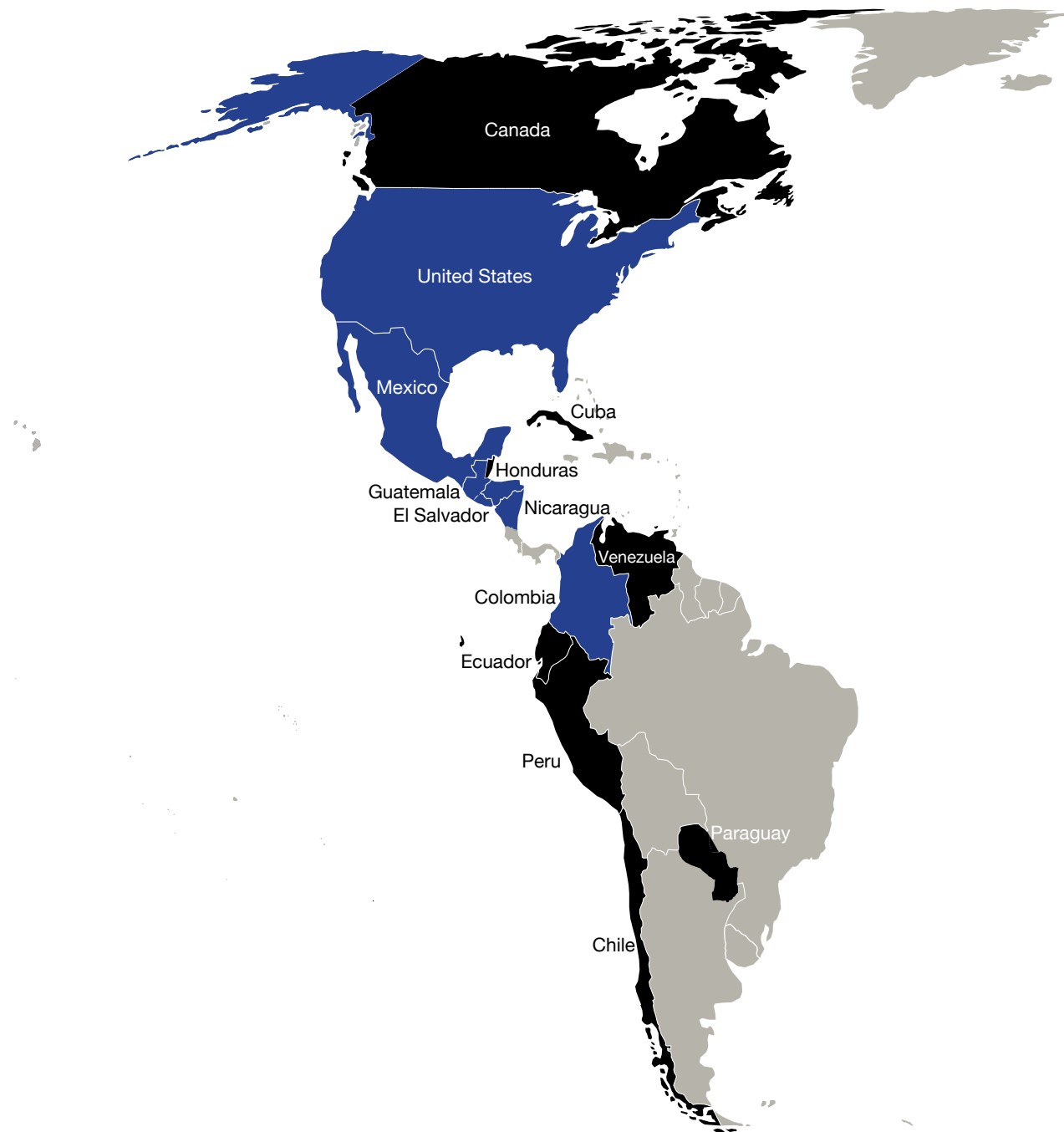
REVENUE AND SUPPORT:

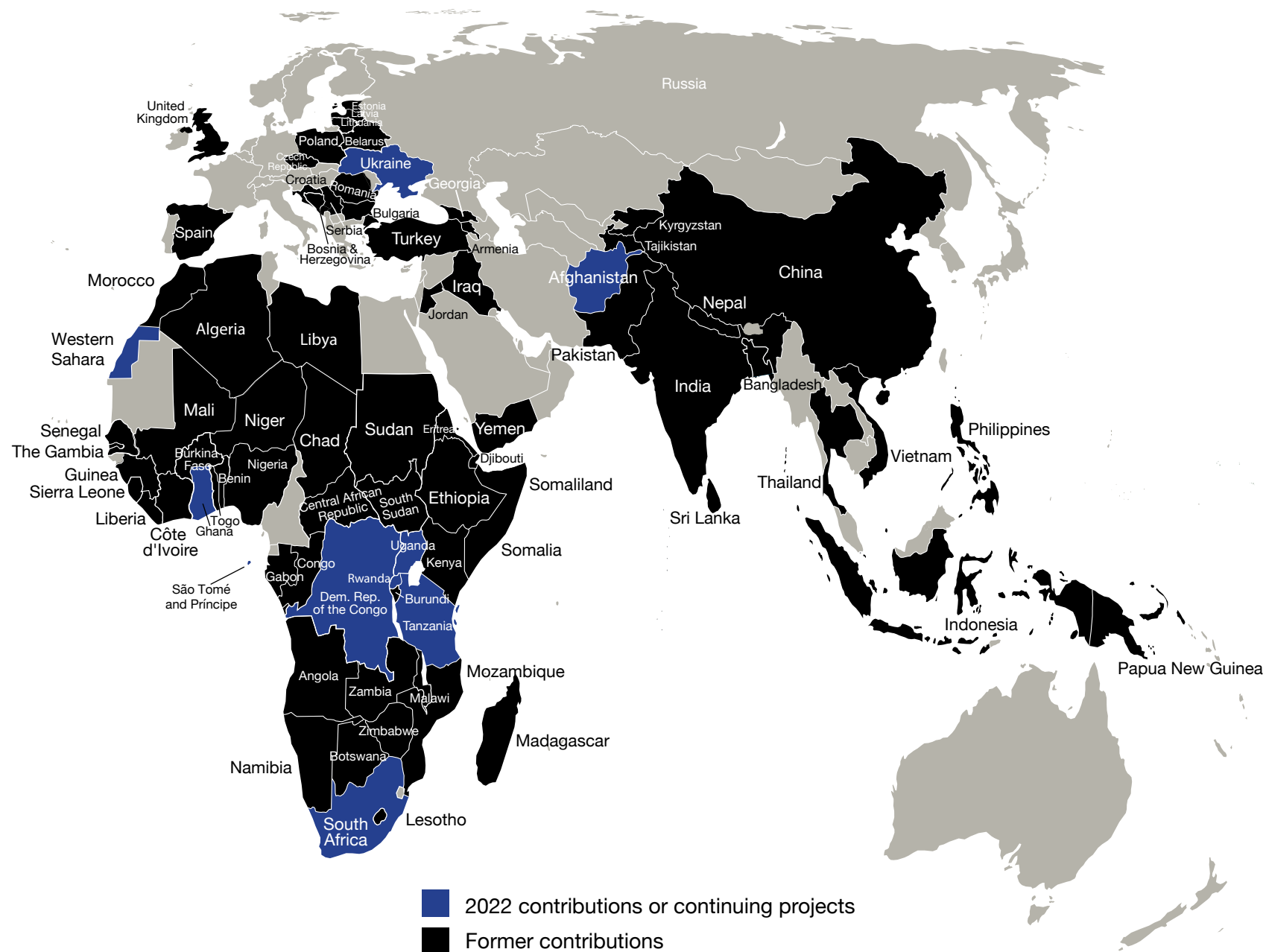
Contributions and Grants:	
Operating	\$ 308,700,526
Total contributions and grants	<u>308,700,526</u>
Gain (Loss) on sale of investments	24,525,157
Interest and investment income	2,246,299
Unused grant returns	126,907,713
Other income	<u>82,630</u>
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	\$ 462,462,325

EXPENSES:

Program:	
Food Security	\$ 493,577
Conflict Mitigation	3,651,675
Community	45,400
Human Trafficking	367,698
Public Safety	<u>661,168</u>
Total Program	<u>5,219,518</u>
Contributions, Gifts, Grants Paid	297,309,174
General and administrative	5,292,749
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>307,821,441</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	154,640,884
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	618,859,956
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED GAINS ON INVESTMENTS	9,990,046
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 783,490,886</u>

¹ Statements prepared on a cash basis/income tax basis





Countries receiving funds in 2022 also may have received funds in prior years.





FOOD SECURITY

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND ITS IMPACT ON GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

The war in Ukraine has had serious implications for global food security. Ukraine is considered the “breadbasket of the world” with its food exports feeding over 400 million people. Since the start of the war, millions of Ukrainians, especially those displaced by the conflict, are now food insecure, and Ukraine’s ability to harvest and export food has been disrupted. This in turn has made critical food aid less available for millions of hungry and starving people in Africa and the Middle East. It has also forced WFP to cut food aid rations for over five million people to less than 50 percent of the daily requirement. A record 345 million people in 82 countries are now facing acute food insecurity and up to 50 million people in 45 countries are on the edge of famine, making this the largest food crisis in modern history.

Since the start of the conflict in February 2022, the Russian military has exploited Ukraine’s role as a net exporter of critical food commodities by disrupting the agricultural sector in a variety of ways, including stealing or destroying farm equipment and stored grain, and attacking production facilities. Ukrainian farmers who return to their farms find them filled with land mines and their equipment destroyed, in what has been characterized as a Russian strategy to cripple Ukraine’s agricultural industry and use starvation as a war tactic, in direct violation of the Geneva Convention.

VICTORY HARVEST: SUPPORTING SMALL FARM PRODUCERS IMPACTED BY THE WAR —

To mitigate the disruption to Ukraine’s agricultural production, the Foundation worked quickly at the start of the conflict to procure and donate farming equipment valued at nearly \$20 million to help Ukrainian farmers with smaller farms continue to harvest, store, distribute and plant crops. Our goal was simple: keep farmers farming to mitigate the supply disruptions that are increasing food insecurity in Ukraine and around the world. Conflict breeds food insecurity, but food insecurity also breeds conflict. Many countries that depend on Ukrainian food exports are home to internally destabilizing populations that can be radicalized in times of economic crisis and rising food insecurity. Working to restore Ukraine’s ability to export grain reduces instability globally, saves lives and greatly decreases the cost and scale of trying to address the consequences of this conflict in the years to come.

EMERGENCY INTERVENTIONS FOR POPULATIONS IMPACTED BY THE WAR —

The Foundation also worked to respond to the immediate food insecurity needs in Ukraine and abroad. Russia’s invasion made over 35 percent of Ukrainians food insecure, according to the WFP. To address this very real need, we partnered with several organizations to provide food to Ukrainian civilians in the early months of the war, as well as immediately following territorial liberation. We also worked to restore critical exports of food aid.

We provided a \$19 million grant to World Central Kitchen (WCK) to provide grocery kits to families in newly liberated towns in Ukraine and occupied areas in the Donbas region, distributing more than 1.1 million food kits in total, equivalent to nearly 25 million meals. In mid-June, a Russian missile attack on a cargo train near Pokrovsk destroyed 34 to 50 pallets of food supplies. We were able to provide immediate funding to replace that food, allowing WCK to quickly resume food kit assembly and delivery. Our Foundation team also spent weeks sourcing, procuring and arranging the distribution of 158,000 pounds of vegetable seeds for Ukraine’s farmers and home gardens.

With a \$1.8 million contribution from the Foundation, Global Empowerment Mission (GEM) purchased, assembled and distributed food and basic supply kits to 687,500 people living in newly liberated regions and communities close to or on the frontlines. Each kit includes 28 pounds of vital supplies, such as hygiene products and blankets, and enough Ukrainian-produced food to feed a family of five for two weeks. Given Russia’s strategy to cripple Ukraine’s energy sector and basic services, civilians across the country, but especially those close to the frontlines, lack the most basic of necessities and rely almost entirely on this type of humanitarian support.

The Foundation also committed \$8 million in partnership with First Lady Olena Zelensky to build and operate a central production kitchen in Bucha that will help 31 schools meet the urgent school lunch needs of over 10,000 children. Many schools in the Bucha community were looted and damaged during Russia’s military occupation and can no longer provide proper food services for students. Once complete, the central production kitchen will prepare lunches for all the schools in its network and deliver them for reheating and consumption. Funding support also includes kitchen upgrades, cafeteria equipment and repairs for participating schools.

The sustained closure of Ukraine’s Black Sea ports had perhaps the war’s most dramatic and direct impact on global food security. Over 90 percent of the six million tons of grain that Ukraine exported every month before the war went through the ports. After Russia’s invasion, those export volumes fell to 1.6 million tons a month, and the impact on the global grain supply market was deeply felt in places that rely on WFP’s food assistance. Before the war, in 2021, almost 58 percent of WFP’s overall wheat procurement came from Ukraine.

Following the signing of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July 2022, which allowed a limited re-opening of key Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, the Foundation provided WFP with a \$22.6 million grant to purchase 60,000 metric tons (66,139 tons) of Ukrainian grain for the first two humanitarian shipments of grain that left the country under the agreement. WFP used the grain to support its response to the threat of famine in the Horn of Africa, where drought and the war in Ukraine have caused millions of people to face severe hunger. The shipments of grain purchased with Foundation funding went directly to feed millions of people in Ethiopia and Yemen.



Immediately following the liberation of Kherson in November 2022, the Foundation made an additional donation to WFP of over \$9 million to support 100,000 people in newly accessible areas in the region. Our ability to move quickly to fund immediate needs meant that WFP was on the ground providing this much needed support on the very next day following liberation. The Foundation's donation allowed WFP to provide one month of ready-to-eat rations and two months of general food packages to civilians who lived through some of the war's worst fighting and occupation.

PROJECT EXPEDITE JUSTICE: WAR CRIMES IN AGRICULTURE

From Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 through October 2022, the Kyiv School of Economics estimates that Russia has stolen or destroyed 4.04 million tons of grain and oilseeds, valued at about \$1.9 billion, from Ukrainian territories. Ukraine accounts for one-tenth of global wheat exports, so Russia's actions have created a worldwide food crisis. Additionally, evidence on the orchestrated theft of a critical share of Ukraine's food supply needs to be properly collected and documented for future adjudication as a war crime.

To accomplish this, the Foundation has partnered with the nonprofit organization Project Expedite Justice (PEJ) to support Ukrainian authorities to investigate and compile this evidence. PEJ's analysis of corporate networks and illicit shipping operations thus far supports the theory that the theft of Ukraine's grain stocks (as well as other food commodities) was planned before the Russian invasion in February 2022, and that several individuals were preparing logistical capacity to support the invasion. Furthermore, they believe there is a deliberate, ongoing effort on Russia's part to cover-up the origin of stolen Ukrainian grain sold on the international market.

PEJ is working to identify and document the actions, individuals and companies involved in the organization, preparation, facilitation, as well as the actual theft, transport and sale of plundered products related to Ukraine's agricultural production and food supply. PEJ is also preparing briefs against identified parties to support future criminal prosecutions. It is a meticulous process, but ultimately, it will allow Ukrainian authorities to have the documentation they need to pursue prosecutions and seek justice and retribution for war crimes that affected Ukraine's food production and supply.

Top left: Howard at a food distribution in Posad-Pokrovs'ke, Ukraine. (Photo courtesy of Spencer Taylor)

Top right: A photo of one of the train cars hit by a Russian missile attack near Pokrovsk, destroying 34 to 50 pallets of food supplies. (Photo courtesy of Kateryna Onishchenko)

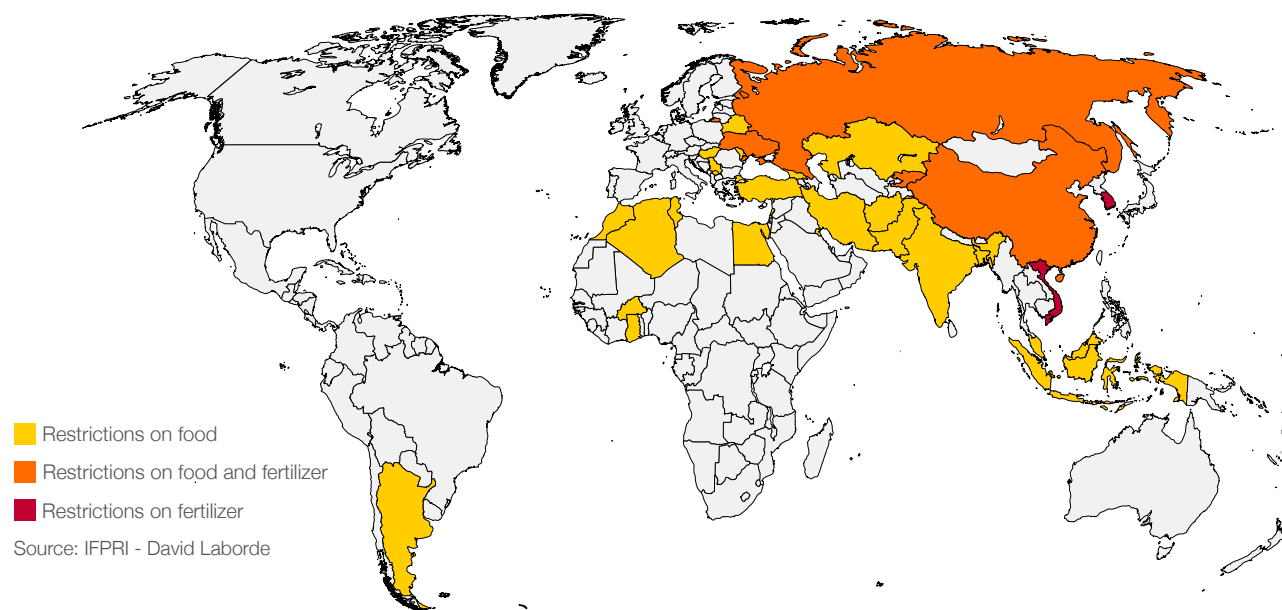
Bottom: This map shows the locations of the communities that received emergency food and supply assistance distributed by GEM through a grant from the Foundation. The areas in red denote the front lines and Russia-occupied areas.



THE IMPACT OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS ON GLOBAL AGRICULTURE TRADE

Following the invasion, policymakers are increasingly viewing food security as national security. The trust-based system that had guided the international food trade will become less international and more protectionist. The result will be a mix of managed trade, reoriented supply chains and “friendshoring,” strategic overseas and domestic investment in agricultural production, and more self-sufficiency and redundancies.

Export restrictions for food and fertilizers applied February-August



THE LONGER ROAD AHEAD

Reduced value of Ukraine's grain

Buyers of Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products will expect a discount until the country is no longer seen as vulnerable to Russian interference.

Self-sufficiency: Escaping international supply chains

The crisis and subsequent trade barriers eroded trust in international markets and their role as a reliable supplier of commodities.

Supply-chain reorganization: Friendshoring

Given the geopolitical nature of current disruptions, many countries are restructuring cooperation in strategic sectors such as agriculture and energy.

HAPPENING NOW



Logistics disruption

Disrupted logistics services and financial issues led to transport bottlenecks and farm input scarcity, driving prices higher. In July, about 10 percent of container vessels remained unavailable at a given time amid supply chain delays.



Trade restrictions

About 30 countries enacted export restrictions for commodities, mostly via bans and, in a few cases, export licenses and taxes.

HAPPENING SOON



Russia likely to take some of Ukraine's market share

Forecast wheat exports 2022-2023



Russia decoupling from global supply chains

Concern about reliance on Russian imports led some firms to diversify sourcing, especially for energy, raw materials, and fertilizer.

Key producers will seek alternative sourcing for fertilizers, but this will not meet short-term demand.

More investment in land-rich developing states for food supply

This strategy mitigates the sensitivity of net-importing states to global food prices and supply shocks by allowing them to secure overseas supply.

But this could cause political risk and instability owing to potential disputes over land and local farmer rights.

THE WEAPONIZATION OF FOOD IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

TAKING UKRAINIAN GRAIN

Evidence collected by Project Expedite Justice (PEJ) suggests that Russia is potentially engaged in pre-meditated action to take Ukrainian grain. With nearly 20 percent of Ukrainian cropland in occupied territory, Russian troops have had the opportunity to seize agricultural produce or force farmers to sell to them at below-market prices.

The evidence that PEJ and others have gathered about these practices includes:

- ✓ Advertisements from Russia for drivers to take freight trucks from various locations in occupied Ukraine to Sevastopol in Crimea;
- ✓ Information showing that a Russian transportation company bought several bulk carrier vessels in the three months leading up to Russia's invasion and immediately deployed them to Sevastopol;
- ✓ Media reports of occupying officials openly discussing the transportation of this grain in pro-Russian publications.

Bulk carriers traveling abroad from Crimea allegedly export the grain (From 11 April to 22 June)



Source: Loyds List Intelligence

GRAIN TRAVELS



Data presented in this fact-sheet was provided by Eurasia Group

FROM THE U.S. TO UKRAINE, FARMER SOLIDARITY IS UNIVERSAL

Written by Howard G. Buffett



South of Chernihiv in Ukraine, Howard G. Buffett operates one of the combines purchased by his foundation to help farmers, including those who had their machinery destroyed by the Russians. A fellow farmer, he was asked by local farmers to help harvest their crops.

During the fall harvest, across rural America, you may at times encounter a mechanical convoy of combine harvesters rumbling down the road, headed who knows where. As likely as not, the drivers of these huge machines are going to a farm they don't know to harvest a crop they never planted for a farmer they've never met. And they do this without asking for a penny in return.

It's a common act of generosity and solidarity in farm country. The harvest waits for no one, and when a farmer is too sick or injured to bring in a crop, neighbors – and strangers – show up to help.

This farmer-to-farmer ethic holds strong across rural America. It's something I think about as I land home in rural, central Illinois after my fourth visit to Ukraine since the start of the war. It's what compels me to extend this generous spirit farther, to help farmers who have been struggling to harvest and plant their fields since Russia's unprovoked invasion in February.

Ukraine is one of the world's great breadbaskets, a vast heartland of wheat, corn, barley and sunflowers. Its simple yellow-and-blue flag is a farmer's flag, evoking golden fields and endless sky. But since the start of the conflict, Ukraine's fields of rich black soil have been trampled by troops, cratered by artillery shells, burned and salted with land mines. For months, its vital Black Sea port was blockaded, keeping critical food aid from hungry countries and wreaking havoc on global food prices and supply. The situation remains perilous. Meanwhile, winter is closing in, many Ukrainian farms and crops have been destroyed, and the conflict shows no sign of ending.



Howard G. Buffett visits a mass grave site on the outskirts of Izium on November 6, 2022.

All wars are brutal, but Russian President Vladimir Putin's onslaught has been particularly savage to civilians. Despite Russia's denial of responsibility, each week brings news of more humanitarian atrocities, mass graves and the systematic torture of soldiers and civilians.

Missile and drone attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure have left millions without electricity, part of a sustained campaign against civilian targets. Children and the elderly have been slaughtered as Russia's military has aimed its firepower at schools, playgrounds, religious sites, hospitals, residential neighborhoods – and farms.

I am not a soldier or politician. But as a farmer and philanthropist who has worked on global food-security issues for more than 20 years, I know that when farms are destroyed, the damage spreads far and wide, and recovery is prolonged. People go hungry.

Before the war, Ukraine exported about 6 million to 7 million tons of grain per month, with about 30% going to Europe, 30% to North Africa and 40% to Asia, according to the Ukrainian Grain Association. Much of that grain is desperately needed in places devastated by conflict and drought, like the Horn of Africa. Many of Putin's worst-suffering victims live far beyond Ukraine's borders. Not long ago, in Kyiv, I met a man who owned a farm near Bobrik, a small village about two hours south of the capital. He told me that early in the invasion, Russian forces seized his farm for an operating base. Soldiers moved in and stockpiled ammunition and supplies.

This man gave the coordinates of his farm to the Ukrainian military, so they could bomb the soldiers and munitions occupying it. My new friend had no insurance on his tractors, and no way to replace the fertilizer and other assets he lost. He could have done nothing, but instead he gave up his farm to protect his country. He told me he would do it again if necessary. I heard a version of this story more than once in Ukraine.

No one knows when and how the war will end. When it does, it will take many years for Ukraine to recover. In the meantime, there are things we can do to help.

This is not a distant war that does not affect Americans. The foundation I run has long understood the relationship between food security and conflict. Americans are not insulated from the effects of far-off hunger, instability and violence. We must do everything in our power to keep Ukraine's farms productive and exports flowing. We know that Russians have stolen and sold Ukrainian grain to fund their war machine. They are bent on destroying the agricultural sector so the country can no longer feed the world or itself. These crimes must be stopped and prosecuted.

As Ukrainians courageously stand their ground, we Americans can help. Our foundation supported the first two shipments of grain for food aid through the Black Sea in collaboration with the World Food Programme and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Last summer, we donated thousands of pounds of vegetable seeds to Ukrainian families for home gardens. We are helping farmers clear their fields of mines.

I urge all Americans to summon that farmer-to-farmer ethic and pitch in where they can. On my last two trips to Ukraine, I had the opportunity to run some of the combines we donated, helping bring in the wheat and corn harvest under the blue Ukrainian sky. I know many fellow American farmers would be doing the same if they could.

I've arrived home to a new Congress taking shape, thinking about the bravery and determination of our Ukrainian friends and hoping US leaders, regardless of party affiliation, continue their steadfast support. I'll continue to try to help Ukrainians any way I can and urge all Americans to join me.



Homes and buildings in Kam'yanka, a village 3.5 hours south of Kyiv, have been destroyed by Russian shelling. A burnt-out Russian tank remains, as do land mines.

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STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AGRICULTURE IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

EXPANDING WATER-SMART AGRICULTURE IN MESOAMERICA

Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and southern Mexico have some of the highest rates of food insecurity in Latin America and are highly vulnerable to extreme weather events. Prolonged dry spells and periods of intense rainfall have negatively affected regional crop production, leaving farmer households prone to hunger and malnutrition. Data shows that subsistence farmers—who make up 62 percent of households in the region's Dry Corridor—have lost between 50 and 80 percent of their harvest to crop failure in the past few years, triggering high levels of food insecurity and forced migration from the region. According to the United Nations, reduced agricultural productivity and crop losses are the second-most cited causes of migration from the Dry Corridor, with food insecure people three times more likely to migrate than those who are better off. To address these challenges, the Foundation is investing in sustainable and scalable solutions to improve agricultural productivity and resilience, including the regional Water-Smart Agriculture (WSA) initiative.

WSA builds on nearly two decades of experience in promoting conservation-based production practices to help smallholder farmers increase their productivity and resilience to extreme weather events. WSA is based on the three principles of conservation agriculture: cover crops, crop rotation and no-till farming. Together, these practices improve soil health and water availability to improve yields. The first phase of WSA, piloted with support from our longstanding partner, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) from 2015-2021, combined field testing by smallholder farmers with efforts to promote water-smart policies and investments by government, donors and development organizations. Program data shows that improved soil fertility management (the right source of nutrients at the right rate, time and placement) and use of conservation agriculture practices helped farmers improve their crop productivity and resilience. WSA-monitored farms outperformed farms using conventional practices by at least 15 percent. Increased yields on WSA farms, in turn, significantly raised net income for program-supported maize, beans and coffee farmers. WSA producers also fared better against extreme weather events and were able to maintain their yields above the regional average during the 2018 drought and 2020 hurricane season. Based on these results, regional leaders are increasingly adopting WSA practices as a solution to revitalizing smallholder, rain-fed agriculture in Mesoamerica.

In 2022, the Foundation expanded its support for WSA as a regional food security solution with a six-year, \$35 million grant (WSAII). This second phase of WSA will expand conservation practices from single plots to whole farms and support a critical mass of farmers and their families, especially women and youth, to optimize their earnings

from increased productivity and market access. To extend WSA's reach and promote sustainability, WSAII will continue working with national agriculture ministries to transfer WSA methodologies and co-develop a regional virtual information and extension hub. To guide program implementation, WSAII is also producing a climate modeling study, *Tortillas Off the Roaster*, as a follow-on to the 2010 Foundation-funded *Tortillas On the Roaster* report, to help identify the best climate-resilient crops for production over the next 50 years. The Foundation hopes the new *Tortillas* study will help current and next generation farmers adapt to changing climatic patterns and guide Central American governments and development entities towards responsive and research-informed agriculture strategies over the coming decade.

ALIANZA CACAO II: ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE CACAO VALUE CHAIN

While cacao is indigenous to El Salvador and was cultivated for nearly 3,000 years, its production has dropped in recent decades as farmers turned to producing more profitable coffee for export markets. However, falling coffee prices and the devastation of plantations in lower altitudes from a fungus, known as coffee rust or *roya*, have now made coffee production less economically viable for many Salvadoran smallholder farmers. To revitalize farmer livelihoods, national producers and agricultural institutions are returning to cacao.

In 2014, the Foundation contributed \$10 million to jumpstart the Salvadoran cacao value chain through a co-financed program called *Alianza Cacao* (Cocoa Alliance). While the project—implemented by CRS—made progress in creating cacao agroforestry systems (AFS) and increased the number of national cacao producers, it failed to achieve its value chain targets. This led the Foundation to fund a second, five-year, \$10 million *Alianza Cacao II* program in 2019, to achieve the project's original goal of revitalizing cacao production, processing and distribution.

Three years after the start of *Alianza Cacao II*, nearly 80 percent of the 2,100 project-supported farmers have achieved fully productive cacao agroforestry systems. Farms that are applying water-smart agriculture practices have increased their production of dry cacao six-fold, reaching 886 metric tons (MT) (1,953,295 pounds) in the third year of the program as compared to 147 MT (324,080 pounds) in year one. This accounts for approximately 80 percent of the total cacao produced in El Salvador. Increased production has in turn generated a 13 percent increase in employment on cacao AFS farms.

With sufficient production, the project is now focused on promoting sustainability across the value chain by connecting Salvadoran producers to national and international markets

while strengthening local processors and small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). The program has trained over 400 farmers to improve their processing techniques at 50 drying and fermentation centers serviced by the program, resulting in a greater volume and quality of fermented and washed cacao demanded by buyers. To strengthen national demand for cacao, the project has to date provided technical training and business development support to more than 70 cacao and chocolate SMBs seeking to provide sustainable business services.

A key goal to achieving a sustainable national cacao value chain is to replace Salvadoran cacao imports with locally produced beans. Prior to *Alianza Cacao II*, the country imported 84 percent of its cacao for consumption. With the program's support, imports have decreased as SMBs are opting to buy more of their cacao from local farmers, who now satisfy 57 percent of domestic demand. In the program's third year, Salvadoran SMBs purchased 609 MT (1,342,615 pounds) of cacao from local farmers, a 90 percent increase since the start of the project. Cacao farmers and cooperatives are also now independently managing commercial negotiations with SMBs without project support. Despite international supply chain disruptions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, project-supported cacao producers increased the amount of high-quality fermented cacao exported to Europe and the United States to nearly 30 MT (66,139 pounds), a 140 percent increase in three years. For farmers, increased cacao sales are translating into improved livelihoods. The average income reported by producers from their agroforestry systems increased from \$758 per hectare (ha) (\$1,895 per acre) in year one to \$2,874 per ha (\$7,185 per acre) in year three—a 279 percent increase—with an average in net profits of \$1,876 per ha (\$4,650 per acre).

To continue promoting the national cacao value chain abroad, *Alianza Cacao II* is encouraging national producers and chocolatiers to showcase their talent. In 2021, *Xocolatisimo*, one of four project SMBs participating in the Northwest Chocolate Alliance Awards, won two golds and one silver in three different award categories. In the 2022 edition of the same U.S. festival, *Belú Cacao*, another *Alianza Cacao II*-supported business, won gold in the inclusion chocolate category. Project producers are also receiving growing international recognition. In 2021, producer *Cooperativa Barra Ciega*, was classified as among the 50 best cacao samples in the world at the Cocoa of Excellence Awards in Paris and won second place under the award's Central America and Caribbean regional category. These successes highlight the emerging high-quality of Salvadoran cacao and help position the national value chain for long-term success. During *Alianza Cacao II*'s final two years of implementation, the project will gradually transition its functions to the local public and private sector, a last step to achieving a self-sustainable cacao value chain.

LEYDI SORIANO | FARMER AND PROMOTER



After working in a shop for 20 years, Leydi Soriano became a cacao producer in 2015. With the support of *Alianza Cacao*, she set up a 350-plant nursery. At the time, people criticized her for reinvesting her savings from working in the shop to her farm.

Leydi learned how to cultivate and process the crop thanks to the training she received from *Alianza Cacao*'s extension technicians. She then started teaching other farmers how to graft cacao branches. Leydi is now working full-time on cacao cultivation, post-harvest management and processing at the cooperative she leads, ACODESMOVI. She is also working as a community promoter to provide technical support to 37 other cacao producers in the municipality of Puerto El Trunfio in Usulután.

In 2021, a cacao sample from ACODESMOVI won third place among 27 samples in the Salvadoran National Cacao of Excellence contest. She called this a family achievement as her husband also supports cacao post-harvest management and processing.

"I feel happy with what my farm gives me—cacao and bananas are sustenance for my family. I am glad I can help other people improve their cacao practices and have better incomes."

GLENDY FERNÁNDEZ | SMALL BUSINESS OWNER



A few years ago, Glendy Fernández and her husband Juan Carlos decided he would migrate to the U.S. to find a better paying job to support their family. After a few years in the U.S., Juan Carlos was deported back to El Salvador. Unemployed and with little savings, Glendy and Juan Carlos started making hot chocolate tablets (or *tablillas*) to generate income. Sales were initially slow, but Glendy and Juan Carlos soon saw a future in chocolate and named their business *Chocolates Tetonalli*. In ancient Aztec, *Tetonalli* means "soul," a concept associated with new beginnings.

Alianza Cacao II trained Glendy and Juan Carlos on cacao post-harvest processing and marketing and invited them to business fairs. A year after finalizing their business plan, *Chocolate Tetonalli* is now being sold in five strategic points around San Salvador. *Chocolate Tetonalli*, made with 100 percent Salvadoran cacao, is now a growing business that employs three staff to process locally sourced cacao.

"Thanks to everything I have learned from Alianza Cacao, I now have the right skills to sell my quality products. The income Tetonalli generates covers our family needs. It's not the American dream, it's the Salvadoran dream, because we have found everything we need locally," says Glendy.

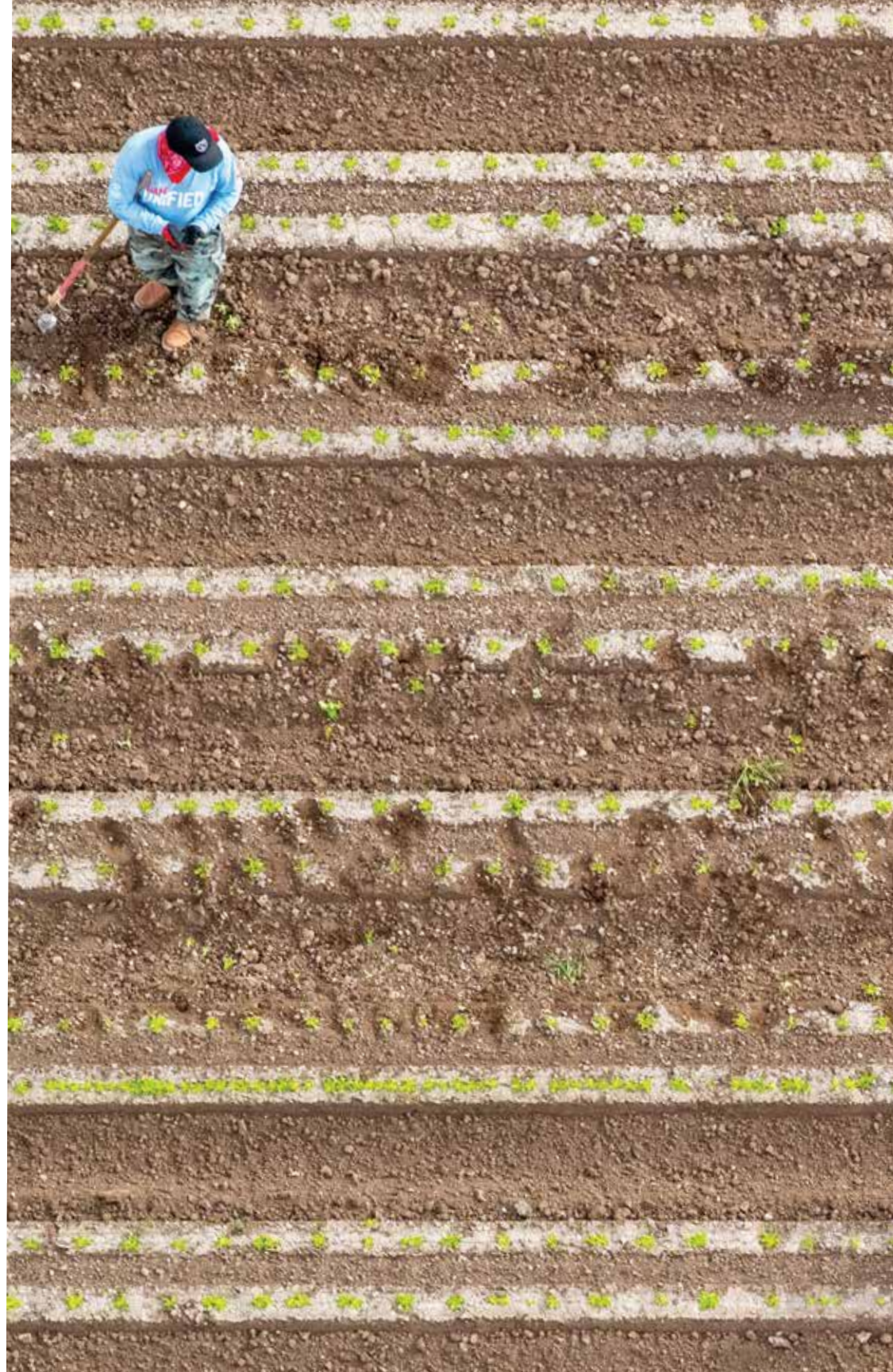
RECRUITING FARMWORKERS FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

The high demand for labor in the United States is one significant driver of irregular migration from countries south of our border. Connecting workers with employers through legal pathways to employment has the advantage of addressing that labor need while reducing the number of migrants who take the dangerous risks of crossing the border illegally. In 2022, the Foundation provided funding to pilot a new program in partnership with CIERTO Global to provide more legal pathways for Guatemalan farmworkers to access H-2A visas.

The H-2A visa program was created in 1986 to help U.S. growers meet domestic labor shortages and has become an integral part of our country's food production system. However, increasing demand for H-2A workers has encouraged recruiters to expand their operations to unregulated and corrupt countries in search of people desperate to take job opportunities offered at any price, without demanding employment benefits. In such cases, few formal mechanisms exist to ensure that recruitment, labor conditions and agriculture processes are free from abuse.

To address these unequitable labor recruitment practices, in 2016 the Foundation provided CIERTO with seed funding to create an ethical H-2A recruitment model to protect farmworkers from fraud and abuse. CIERTO's model also protects growers by ensuring the workers they need are not charged unethical fees or otherwise exploited. CIERTO initially focused on workers from Mexico who qualify for H-2A visas because Mexico has historically been the main source of foreign farm labor to the U.S. CIERTO's goal was to demonstrate the model and market among employers and workers for recruitment practices that create a more stable and productive workforce. By working with growers in the U.S. to create rights-respecting opportunities for several thousand workers over the last six years, CIERTO has unlocked an estimated \$98 million in pre-tax income gains for participating workers, over and above the Mexican minimum wage, improving the livelihoods of participating workers.

The Foundation's 2022 funding allows CIERTO to pilot its ethical model to legally recruit over 9,500 Guatemalan farmworkers who would otherwise be at risk of migrating to the U.S. in search of employment. Guatemalan workers are currently underrepresented in the H-2A labor pool, accounting for less than one percent of all H-2A visas. The Foundation's support helps level the playing field for Guatemalan workers by offering U.S. growers incentives of up to \$500 per worker to offset the logistical cost of recruiting, training and transporting Guatemalan workers under the H-2A program. As of the end of 2022, CIERTO is meeting its recruitment targets, securing contracts for over 556 Guatemalan workers and brokering contracts for additional 600 workers.







DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE

For nearly a decade, the Foundation has made a big bet on agriculture in Rwanda. While this tiny, land-locked country of a thousand hills is not the most obvious place to invest to transform agricultural systems, the strength of its government institutions and its willingness to partner on conservation-based solutions at scale meant it was the ideal partner for our Foundation. Our investments to date range from building capacity and leadership to working to transform smallholder agriculture and the systems supporting farmers.

INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE

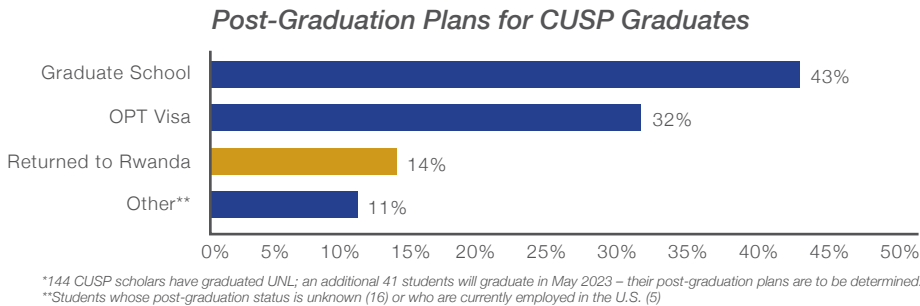
In 2015, the Foundation partnered with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to launch the College of Agriculture and Natural Resource's Undergraduate Scholars Program (CUSP), providing more than \$47 million in scholarships and fellowship opportunities to 200 Rwandan students. Participating students committed to return to Rwanda to work in the agriculture sector for at least five years, to form a cadre of well-trained and skilled leaders working to support Rwanda's long-term targets for agricultural growth.

CUSP scholars graduate with a bachelor's degree in Integrated Science after four years of in-classroom and experiential learning emphasizing conservation agriculture, leadership and entrepreneurship. Students also explore specialty areas related to agriculture, including soils, water quality and availability, nutrition, food safety, food engineering and processing, engineering, irrigation, mechanization, and technology. The experiential learning component is delivered through technical trainings and seminars, research with UNL faculty and industry mentors in Rwanda.

Seven years into the program, CUSP scholars have proven to be innovative researchers, engaged learners and thoughtful leaders. Many students have made the Dean's List, pioneered new research alongside faculty, served in student government and volunteered their time in community organizations. As of December 2022, 144 scholars graduated from the program (many with honors and distinction) and the remaining 41 are expected to graduate in 2023, representing a 92 percent graduation rate overall.

To help students meet their scholarship's post-graduation requirements, the CUSP program has partnered with the Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Rwanda Education Board, Rwanda Agriculture Board and talent placement provider Bridge2Rwanda to connect graduates with employers in Rwanda for jobs, post-graduate fellowships and internships. The Foundation-funded Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture has also offered CUSP scholars internships, experiential learning programs and employment and fellowship opportunities. Unfortunately, despite this robust network, many scholars have to date failed to fulfill their scholarship's post-

graduation requirement, instead opting to pursue employment opportunities in the United States. This program has underscored the difficulty of funding scholarships for study in the United States when the goal is to build capacity in a student's home country.



Despite this significant shortcoming of the original goal of the program, CUSP has been the catalyst for several partnerships established between Rwanda and Nebraska and created a platform for increasing research collaboration between MINAGRI and UNL. Areas of collaboration include site-specific crop management; One Health; water quality; hydroponics; nematode biodiversity; meat safety; coffee trading policies in African countries; social and economic well-being of farm and ranch management in eastern Africa; business ecosystem of smallholder irrigation in Rwanda; conservation principles; and streamlined access to financial and technology services for rural farmers in Rwanda.

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE EDUCATION IN RWANDA

In 2022, the Foundation-funded Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA) achieved a number of milestones:

- The third and final cohort of 84 students began the three-year degree program in conservation agriculture;
- Campus construction neared completion for RICA's main facilities;
- The Foundation contributed \$1.3 million to establish an Entrepreneurship Fund to support RICA's mission to promote entrepreneurship among its students;
- The Foundation committed to further expansion of the campus footprint, adding more housing capacity for faculty and staff;
- RICA's extension activities included having RICA students visit and learn from the Foundation-funded Nasho Irrigation Cooperative (NAICO);
- RICA and the Foundation partnered with One Acre Fund on a \$16.8 million plan to construct a Seed Centre of Excellence at RICA to support Rwanda's seed sector and further connect RICA's education and research to addressing the real-world challenges affecting Rwanda's agriculture sector.

Despite achieving these important milestones, RICA continues to face unique challenges towards reaching a steady-state operational model. Campus construction has been more difficult and costly than anticipated, exacerbated by the global pandemic and the sheer ambition of the project exceeding the capabilities of our architecture and construction partners. To address these shortcomings, RICA has had to build its own construction and construction management capacity simultaneously while operating a higher education institution. As the main campus construction comes to an end, RICA will directly take on the challenge of overseeing a new phase of campus construction that includes additional housing for faculty and staff as RICA's rural location more than two hours' drive from Kigali continues to be a challenge to attracting and retaining staff and faculty.

The Foundation remains committed to supporting RICA's operations and RICA's planning to develop an operational model that is no longer dependent solely on the Foundation's resources. As the first cohort of RICA students prepares to graduate in August 2023, more focus will be put on shifting RICA operations from start-up mode to a more predictable operational model. RICA is also hard at work preparing for the first cohort of graduates to use their degrees and experience at RICA to support Rwanda's national ambitions for agriculture, particularly in encouraging entrepreneurial pursuits. RICA's new Entrepreneurship Fund allows students to apply for support for business plans, and several student groups have already demonstrated success in developing ideas with real-world market potential.

In 2022, RICA students traveled in groups of 20 students at a time to NAICO to visit the solar plant, pump station, and to observe harvest, land prep and planting by NAICO farmers. Students also visited with NAICO farmers to learn about their cooperative structure and extension needs, hybrid seed production, and visited with agro dealers.

Finally, with financial support from the Foundation, One Acre Fund is working with RICA to build a Seed Centre of Excellence on RICA's campus to support Rwanda's seed sector development. The Seed Centre will offer business-to-business services to make it easier for Rwanda's seed industry to get high-quality seed to farmers. Services will include: variety selection and parent seed services; field inspection and quality testing; professional certification for seed breeders; processing and storage services; and seed marketing and sales services. The Centre will include three units of technical excellence: (1) a dedicated potato project to produce disease-free potato; (2) a multi-grain facility to provide shared processing for startup seed companies; and (3) a seed innovation lab to work with Rwandan institutions to find the best seed varieties for Rwandan farmers. RICA students will also benefit from the opportunity to learn from and engage in development of Rwanda's seed sector.

AN UPDATE ON NASHO'S SMALLHOLDER IRRIGATION COOPERATIVE

In 2016, the Foundation and the Government of Rwanda (GoR) established NAICO, comprised of 63 center pivots irrigating 2,899 acres (1,173 hectares) of farmland belonging to nearly 2,000 smallholder farmers. Our goal: demonstrate an agriculture model that improves livelihoods for smallholder farmers who own and farm their land.

Topline Measures of Success

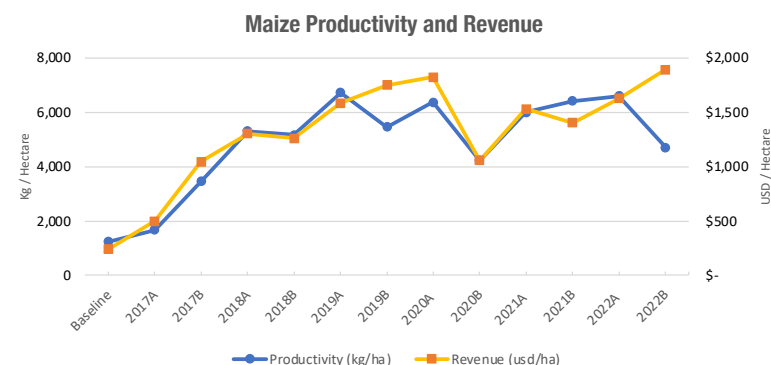
By all measures, NAICO has made substantial progress towards this goal. A pre-irrigation baseline assessment and mid-term impact assessment (MTIA) conducted by the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), combined with seasonal surveys, confirms NAICO's farmers have experienced significant improvements in productivity, revenue and income across crops. According to the 2020 MTIA, from 2016 to 2020, the total average annual household income for NAICO members increased from approximately \$277 USD to \$1,227 USD (+343 percent), significantly out-performing the 38 percent income increase seen by non-NAICO members. Other achievements include:

- Members have recorded significantly higher average maize, soybean and bean yields than neighboring farmers every season since the start of the project.
- NAICO farmers reported that increased incomes have improved their quality of life, rapidly increased the value of their land and allowed more of their children to access higher education.
- NAICO farmers mainly attribute their success to the irrigation system's diminishing the risk of a devastating drought. When a farmer doesn't live in fear of drought, they are more willing to invest in inputs and adopt innovative practices that often result in higher yields. Without an irrigation system, the farmers report they would revert to limiting their investment exposure because they must be prepared to lose an entire harvest to drought.

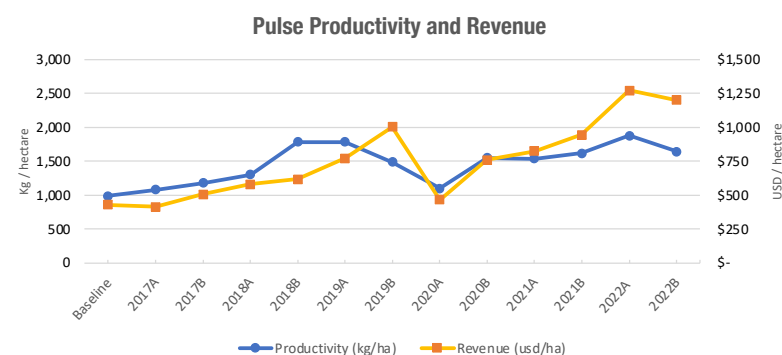
The bottom line, according to survey results: **NAICO farmers view farming at NAICO as a difficult but rewarding profession that provides a stable and respectable avenue to prosperity.**

Productivity and Revenue Improvements by Crop

NAICO farmers improved maize yields nearly 2.7 times more than other local farmers. NAICO regularly exceeds their maize production target of 5 T/Ha (74.4 bushels/acre), while vastly outperforming the 1.5 T/Ha (22.3 bushels/acre) achieved by non-NAICO farmers and the 1.2 T/Ha (17.8 bushels/acre) they were achieving prior to the start of the project. During season 2022B, maize production fell to 4.7 T/Ha (69.9 bushels/acre) due to plant disease (northern leaf blight) and inconsistency of available seed. Despite these challenges, some of NAICO's more innovative farmers continue to realize yields of up to 10 T/Ha (148.7 bushels/acre). NAICO's maize gross revenues have increased from \$254 USD/Ha in 2016 to \$1,895 USD/Ha in 2022B.



According to the 2020 MTIA, NAICO farmers have recorded 1.8 to 2.6 times higher soybean and bean (pulses) yields as compared to non-NAICO farmers every season since the start of the project. As of 2022B, NAICO had still not met its goal of increasing pulse productivity from its baseline of 0.98T/Ha (14.6 bushels/acre) to 2.5 T/Ha (37.2 bushels/acre). Season 2022B's pulse productivity was 1.6 T/Ha (23.8 bushels/acre). However, pulse revenue has increased from \$431 USD/Ha in 2016 to \$1,202 in 2022B. The main obstacle in NAICO achieving its 2.5 T/Ha is access to high-yielding seed varieties. NAICO is addressing this challenge by working with the Rwandan government and private companies to multiply a significant portion of their own seed.



Benefits from Best Agronomic Practices

Agronomic practices introduced and supported by NAICO agronomists have shown significant positive impact on yield sizes and tolerance to shocks such as insects, drought and fungus. In 2017, farmers required up to three months to complete planting in a pivot which made irrigation inefficient. By season 2021A, farmers needed only 11 days. By 2022B, this was down to four days for a majority of pivots.

Planting in rows (baseline 73.6 percent) was not a common practice at the beginning of the project. It took at least three seasons and frequent training for farmers to adopt this practice. Since 2020, 99.8 percent for beneficiaries and 90.8 percent for non-beneficiaries have adopted the practice. Also, conservation agriculture practices like mulching, cover crops, crop rotation, etc. experienced a dramatic increase. NAICO farmers also increased their level of inputs relative to neighboring farmers, particularly their use of inorganic and organic fertilizers, fungicides and insecticides, certified seed, and post-harvest insect control.

In a survey conducted in 2022, NAICO farmers identified the two most important practices they have adopted:

1. Planting in rows to make it easier to harvest, weed and apply fertilizer and pesticides.
2. Targeted application of fertilizers to use them more effectively and cost efficiently.

Other practices NAICO farmers have adopted include:

- **Increased Use of Fertilizers:** DAP and urea application increased from less than 20 percent in 2019B to over 70 percent in 2021B. In addition, during the past three years, 78 percent of farmers applied rhizobia for the first time to boost common bean and soybean yields.
- **Application of Lime:** At the end of season 2019B, soil sampling and testing was conducted at each pivot to determine lime requirements. Results revealed that 27 percent of fields were 'moderately to very acidic' and 78 percent were 'slightly to very slightly acidic'. In response, NAICO farmers applied lime during seasons 2020A, 2020B and 2021A.
- **Fungicide Application:** During season 2020A, soybeans were infected by fungal diseases that resulted in an average productivity decline from 1.50 T/Ha (22.3 bushels/acre) to 0.45 T/Ha (6.7 bushels/acre). During season 2020B, farmers applied fungicides in soybean fields and subsequently yields increased to 1.74 T/Ha (25.9 bushels/acre) and revenue increased 260 percent.

Another indicator of NAICO's success is that many non-NAICO farmers are also adopting NAICO's best practices.

Progress Towards Self-Sustainability

NAICO is already self-governing, with cooperative leaders and technical staff trained to manage cooperative resources, operate and maintain irrigation infrastructure, establish internal rules and regulations and provide extension services to members. Part of this self-governance includes a five-year business plan to guide the cooperative's activities. Key recommendations from the business plan have already been implemented,

including reducing staff expenditures to reflect local industry norms, reinstating non-flood adjusted membership fees, increasing education on using targeted inputs to improve yields, and expanding the share of farmer yields sold through the cooperative. Farmers have also agreed to establish a rotation schedule to make land available for seed and/or french bean production.

The business plan also calls for increasing farmers' contributions to NAICO's sustainability fund, which finances extension services and operates and maintains NAICO's irrigation infrastructure. In 2022B, 93 percent of NAICO's farmers contributed to the fund's current balance of approximately \$780,000 USD. To mitigate future risk, NAICO's General Assembly voted to require members to save at least 10 percent of their net revenue in a program NAICO created called Vision NAICO. Members are organized into saving groups at the pivot cluster level and as of 2022B, there were 37 savings groups with 851 members.

An unintentional result of NAICO's success in increasing incomes is that NAICO's costs to sublease land are increasing to the point where NAICO will soon find it difficult to sublease land needed for seed and french bean production.

Availability and Affordability of Key Inputs Remain a Barrier

A number of barriers to NAICO's continued success remain:

- **Certified Seed Scarcity:** Preferred seed varieties for maize, bean and soybean continue to be difficult to source. Use of certified maize seed by NAICO farmers increased from a baseline 62 percent at the time of the launch to nearly 100 percent in 2022B and certified soybean seed adoption has reached 95 percent. However, utilization drops during periods when certified seed varieties are not available, as in season 2019B, when the shortage of certified maize seed led to only a 20 percent utilization. To reduce the risk of market availability, NAICO produced 130MT (143.3 tons) of certified maize seed and 415 MT (457 tons) of certified soybean seed in 2022B.
- **Affordability of Key Inputs:** Farmers view inorganic fertilizers, fungicides and insecticides as critical to their success but not affordable, a situation exacerbated by inflation and disrupted global supply chains.
- **Power Availability and Reliability:** A Foundation-funded 30kV transmission line upgrade is complete but not yet commissioned, leaving NAICO's irrigation system dependent on lower quality, and less reliable back-up power. Currently the system's pumps operate at approximately 60 percent of their full capacity.

While the Foundation played a critical role in the creation of NAICO, it is now clear that the farmers are leading the way to their own productivity and prosperity.

NAICO FARMERS SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES

On October 21, 2022, the Conflict and Development Foundation conducted a qualitative focus group survey of 10 NAICO pivot leaders and four NAICO agronomists to hear their views on the project.

- NAICO farmers attribute NAICO's irrigation infrastructure and leadership to its success in improving farmer incomes, productivity, confidence and standards of living for nearly 100 percent of NAICO farmers.
- The vast majority of NAICO farmers believe they are better off now than they were before NAICO, and that they are better off than farmers located outside of the cooperative.
- NAICO agronomists said the Government of Rwanda often sends agronomists to NAICO to learn best practices.
- The NAICO farmers also attributed their success to:
 - NAICO's investment in long-term soil fertility through the application of lime, conservation agriculture practices like maintaining a permanent soil cover, erosion control and other improved practices
 - NAICO member benefits like access to credit, seed, fertilizer, pesticide and training.
- Every respondent agreed that the Government of Rwanda and development organizations should support the creation of additional irrigation cooperatives like NAICO.
- A future irrigation cooperative like NAICO should address any farmer hesitation to joining a cooperative like NAICO by encouraging the farmers to visit NAICO to see the success for themselves.



THE INNOVATORS OF PIVOT 40

Among NAICO's 63 center pivots, the farmers of "Pivot 40" have a history of being leaders in crop production and farmer mobilization. It is a smaller group of 29 farmers who own and work the pivot's 14.2 ha (35.1 acres). They quickly learned to coordinate farming activities and complete them in as short a time as possible, like planting the whole pivot in three days, paying contributions to the cooperative early in the season, and planting a season C crop one year. Most farmers on Pivot 40 are no longer removing crop residue, and most are doing minimal tillage by scraping the surface instead of turning the soil with a hoe.

The Foundation approached the farmers of Pivot 40 to propose planting their fields mechanically for a service fee, both to see how it might improve crop production and to understand if mechanization might be economically viable for the rest of NAICO's farmers. Pivot 40 is also one of the flattest pivots in Nasho, with soils draining well and minimal erosion so it makes for an ideal test site. Planting time will improve only marginally given the short planting period they have already achieved by hand but the real potential is improving the germination rate, and therefore yields, with mechanized planting, especially through the heavier crop residue left behind from hand harvesting.

In the coming seasons, we are collecting data to learn the following:

- What service fees are farmers willing to pay for mechanization and are they sufficient to cover the equipment's all-in costs?
- How have crop yields changed with mechanization?
- How have farmers' net profits changed with mechanization?
- What other benefits and challenges does mechanization introduce?

Top right: Crop residue left behind by Pivot 40's hand harvesting makes mechanized planting more difficult. It was necessary to stop the planter regularly to avoid residue blockages but the end result was good.

Bottom right: Farmers from Pivot 40 pull weeds by hand as the soybean crop—planted mechanically—shows good germination through the prior season's maize residue.







CONFLICT **MITIGATION**

RESPONDING TO A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

One of the longest-lasting consequences of war are the land mines and unexploded ordnance left behind. For context: six years after ending its 50-year conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the government of Colombia continues its decades-long effort to painstakingly survey and remove land mines from the rural countryside. This is essential to allow agricultural production and basic commerce to resume and develop.

Ukraine is just beginning to grapple with this reality of modern warfare. In less than a year of active conflict, *Bloomberg* estimates almost half of Ukraine's land area, roughly 116,000 square miles, needs to be surveyed for potential explosives left behind by Russian forces. Much of the area in need of demining is productive agricultural land that cannot be planted or harvested until free of mines. Reporting in *Foreign Policy* documented the victim-activated, anti-personnel devices left behind by retreating Russian forces in food facilities, car trunks, washing machines, hospital beds, dead bodies and even toys and shiny objects likely to attract attention from children. This is in direct violation of the rules of war and land mine regulations set by the 1997 Ottawa Convention, which Russia did not sign. Demining operators estimate that even if the conflict had ended in 2022 it would take over 10 years to fully clear Ukraine of land mines.

Recognizing the destabilizing role of land mines, especially in agriculture, and Ukraine's need to ramp up demining efforts concurrently while defending against the Russian invasion, the Foundation provided \$20 million to the State Emergency Services of Ukraine (SES) to equip 12 new demining teams. The SES is the government agency that assists civilians during emergencies. SES is building Ukraine's capacity for humanitarian demining, which will continue to be necessary long after the war ends.

The Foundation provided additional support to SES to secure the first mechanical minesweepers in Ukraine, which will have the capacity to clear large swathes of land quickly and remotely, thus minimizing the risk for manual mine clearance teams. The Foundation also provided SES with 10 explosive detection canines, along with their necessary equipment, food, training, handling needs and transport vehicles.

Right: Explosive detection K-9s train to search for unexploded ordnance in the remnants of a home destroyed by Russian shelling.

Opposite page: A demining team member prepares to place a detonating cord on an unexploded ordnance. The line is run back to a safe distance before being detonated.





A more scalable and innovative demining solution is in development thanks to the Foundation's support. The software development company SecuRED is combining artificial intelligence and mapping technology to develop drone software that can identify land mines in fields, in real time and without human interaction. This unique automated drone technology could substantially increase Ukraine's capacity to demine quickly and safely, saving lives in the process.

Finally, to bring in more outside expertise, the Foundation provided a \$4 million grant to the Danish Refugee Council, a humanitarian organization working on humanitarian demining for decades. Our grant will equip and train five mine-clearance teams and two non-technical survey teams to clear an estimated 430,000 square meters (106 acres) of land from land mine contamination in 2023 and 2024.

POST-CONFLICT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIA

When Colombia's 50-year conflict with the FARC ended in 2016, the real work began. Many rural communities had no connection to the national government, and many rural farmers were dependent on coca production, the base ingredient in cocaine. Finding viable alternative crops and livelihoods, and a program to help farmers substitute their coca for these alternatives, is the single biggest barrier to Colombia's post-conflict recovery and economic development.

In 2018, the Foundation set out to test models for voluntary substitution of coca crops in Colombia. We sought viable alternative crops that would be profitable, have established value chains and a guaranteed market for farmers to access—the very things that make coca so attractive and viable to smallholder farmers. We partnered with the Colombian National Coffee Federation (FNC) for a coca-to-coffee substitution pilot with 100 farmers in El Rosario, Nariño, and with Mercy Corps for a substitution and land titling project in Cauca. Several years into the implementation of these programs, we are starting to see how well-designed substitution projects can work for individual farmers and for Colombia.

Almost two years after the completion of our initial FNC pilot project, farmers in El Rosario are beginning to see the benefits. Participating farmers eradicated a total of 24.5 hectares (60.5 acres) of coca and planted 19.5 hectares (48.2 acres) of coffee. They also planted over 5,000 agroforestry trees for shade, soil conservation and water uptake regulation. According to the FNC data from 2021, income from coffee is an estimated 14 percent higher than the income farmers made from their pre-program coca sales. This was due to both high coffee prices as well as an increase in farmers' coffee productivity from the technical assistance provided by the project. The program continues to improve incomes

for farmers who substituted their illicit crops. Home gardens planted during the project also provided on average \$1,700 in savings per beneficiary. The success of this project is due partly to the purchase guarantee and premiums offered by the project's market partner, Nespresso, which gave farmers an extra incentive to sell their coffee directly through the local cooperative rather than through costly middlemen. Over \$23,000 were paid in premiums by Nespresso to farmers, and coffee sales in El Rosario more than doubled between 2018 and 2020, increasing from 238,000 pounds to 593,000 pounds. This pilot has since been expanded to additional farmers in the community, who were encouraged by the success of their neighbors.



Mayerly Sánchez, a participant in a Foundation-funded program implemented by Mercy Corps, substituted 1.3 hectares of coca for high-quality coffee, obtained legal ownership of her land and increased her income from \$4,200 in 2019 to \$8,800 in 2022. Mayerly won the National Rural Woman Award in 2021 for her work as a peacebuilder and community leader. (Photo courtesy of Mercy Corps)

Participants in our much larger Mercy Corps pilot in Cauca, also launched in 2018, have also achieved positive early results. Farmers eradicated an estimated 1,800 hectares (4,448 acres) of coca, saw a 68 percent increase in annual coffee income and a 20 percent increase in their coffee productivity. Farmers were able to increase production from an average 2,856 pounds of coffee sold per farmer before our project, to 3,436 pounds sold per farmer in 2022. Even more importantly, incomes from coffee sales were 2.4 times the income farmers received from coca sales before the project. This program also included a long-term incentive for participants who removed their coca to continue to only grow legal crops: securing the title to their land. Many rural farmers have no formal proof that they own the land they farm. Our program helps participants navigate the laborious bureaucratic process to secure their actual land title. Farmers with documentation of ownership of their land can now access credit, which allows them to improve on and get more from their land. It also means that if they revert to growing coca, they can lose their land.

These projects provide early evidence that rural farmers can earn more by growing legal crops instead of coca. External factors such as high global coffee prices certainly also contributed to the higher incomes, but our partners on the ground have seen very few farmers abandoning the program to go back to growing coca. Farmers want to grow legal crops as long as they can earn a reasonable income. So far, these projects are demonstrating that incomes are being matched, and additional benefits like land titling, purchase guarantees and productive infrastructure have had positive impacts on participants and their communities at large.

RECOVERING LIVELIHOODS IN TIBÚ

The Foundation continues to prioritize its work in Colombia in the Catatumbo region. Located near the border with Venezuela, Catatumbo's residents have long suffered violence and forced displacement due to the presence of illegal armed groups. While the signing of the 2016 peace accord with the FARC generated a short-lived decrease in violence, other illegal armed groups like the National Liberation Army (ELN) and smaller drug trafficking groups continue to operate in the region as they fight for control of coca production. In 2020, violence in Catatumbo peaked, forcibly displacing over 1,000 people, generating a humanitarian crisis. The impact of this violence has destabilized communities like Tibú, a municipality where the Foundation has prioritized its investments since 2019.

To support peace and development in Tibú, the Foundation partnered with WFP to provide short-term food assistance and transitional support to 433 IDPs—182 families—fleeing violence in the two communities of Barco La Silla and Totumito Carboneras. The goals of the program are three-fold:

1. Ensure families' immediate access to food while displaced and as they return home;
2. Promote the early recovery of farmer livelihoods through productive projects;
3. Strengthen community organization, with an emphasis on improving women's leadership, financial and organizational skills.

During the project's initial four months, families received monthly food baskets with 30 pounds of food to meet recommended caloric and nutritional needs while they began strengthening their production capacity. Given limited access to animal protein in Tibú, families chose to strengthen livestock production lines for improved self-consumption and commercialization. Families received kits to farm eggs, chicken and fish and technical training over five months until they were able to yield results. WFP also worked with participants to develop business plans to market their products, and 80 community leaders received training to strengthen their organizational, leadership and financial management skills.

Families reported notable improvements in their food security and nutrition by the end of the project. Twenty-three percent of households said they no longer needed to limit food portions or restrict consumption to make ends meet. Households also reported improvements to their livelihoods with the number of families forced to sell productive assets or reduce health expenses down from 41.9 percent to 19.4 percent.

The Foundation's peacebuilding strategy in Catatumbo seeks to strengthen communities like these by fostering economic opportunity and supporting farmers to rebuild sustainable livelihoods.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador's steady decline in homicides over the past six years—falling from 105 per 100,000 in 2015 to 18 per 100,000 in 2021—ended in March 2022 when gangs committed 87 murders over four days. The Salvadoran government responded to the sudden spike in homicides by instituting severe anti-gang emergency measures, including mass arrests, many with little to no due process. Although the Foundation ended our investments in citizen security in El Salvador over a year ago because of the deteriorating political situation, we had made progress identifying better alternatives to government-led “mano duro” (strong hand) policies. One example of that work is with Glasswing International in the city of San Juan Opico.

At the root of El Salvador's epidemic of violence is a cycle of trauma and retribution that transforms victims into future victimizers. According to the World Health Organization, victims are 5.5 times more likely to commit violence than non-victims.

Yet, public services in El Salvador consistently fail to meet the basic needs of victims, and public hospitals fail to provide psychosocial assistance to victims of violence, which prolongs their trauma. The police, many of whom are themselves victims of overexposure to trauma, often lack emotional coping skills, undercutting force readiness and resulting in police who may use excessive force. Teachers struggle to help traumatized students learn and stay in school. These less-noticed forms of violence, together with continued gang violence, degrade El Salvador's social fabric by contributing to high levels of toxic stress and trauma, creating new generations of victimizers.

To address these challenges, the Foundation partnered with Glasswing International in the city of San Juan Opico to work with community schools, police and health centers to strengthen existing services so that they can prevent and mitigate the causes and consequences of violence through integrated, evidence-based programming and strategies. Although Glasswing was unable to fully execute its community-based prevention model because of contextual hurdles and the closure of our citizen security programs, they made significant progress during the first two-and-a-half years of the project. Glasswing converted the San Juan Opico police into a trauma-informed agency, enabling officers to better care for themselves and those they serve. They also increased the socio-emotional skills of at-risk youth through after-school programming, and implemented hospital-based violence prevention programs that significantly reduced re-hospitalization among violent crime victims. These initial gains demonstrate what can be achieved by focusing on building community resilience to prevent violence-at an individual, family, and institutional level.



WALDIR | NURSE, SAN RAFAEL HOSPITAL

"I've been working as a hospital nurse in the Intensive Care Unit of the San Rafael Hospital since 2020. That same year, I started participating in the Healing Wounds program where I learned about trauma-informed care. I now know how to care for patients from the second they come in until they are ready to leave. I've learned to be present and to really listen to them. Our care is more than just treating a wound—patients come in with a lot of psychological stress and are emotionally burdened. Thanks to the training, I can provide more comprehensive treatment. The Healing Wounds program has also helped me personally. It has helped me manage my workload and my stress level."

Unfortunately, Glasswing's progress towards improving police service provision in San Juan Opico was undermined by the institution's role in enforcing pandemic emergency measures. At the outset of the pandemic, the Salvadoran government reoriented law enforcement towards crisis response and ensuring compliance with mobility restrictions. The tensions this created at the community level were evident in the perception surveys that Glasswing used. Although Glasswing believes the project would have made progress with the easing of pandemic restrictions, the ongoing state of emergency in El Salvador due to gang violence would have posed a significant obstacle to improving community/police relations and trauma-informed service provision. Additionally, convening stakeholders from across target schools, hospitals and precincts that were at the frontlines of responding to the country's public health crisis proved increasingly difficult with each successive wave of the pandemic, forcing Glasswing to defer integrated programming that was central to its model.

CREATING COMMUNITY ROOTING IN GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS

U.S. border authorities recorded a record 2.38 million unauthorized crossings of the United States' southern border during fiscal year 2022. That historic flow of migrants is a result of many complicated push and pull factors, including the pandemic, economic downturns, surges in violence from both nonstate actors and authoritarian governments and national immigration policies. Over 150,000 of the individuals apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection were unaccompanied minors, with even more children and young adults arriving in family units. Many of the children, teenagers and young adults who arrive to our border have completely lost hope of ever having a future in their communities of origin—they have little access to quality education and even more limited access to quality employment. Many seek reunification with a parent who migrated to the United States years earlier.

The Foundation-funded Youth Impact Leaders program with Glasswing International is designed to address many of the factors compelling young people to leave their home communities in search of a better life in the United States. A key element of the program is connecting youth to their home communities, both to improve them through community development work and to feel a part of them. The project brings AmeriCorps-style service-learning programming to the Central American context for the first time and in doing so, offers hundreds of Hondurans and Guatemalans, ages 15 to 22, the opportunity to earn a stipend to complete paid internships in community organizations.

The pilot has so far proved successful in increasing community rooting and household financial stability, with only 0.3 percent of participating youth choosing to migrate, despite 68 percent of them having family already living in the United States. This is particularly

significant given that program beneficiaries are at high-risk for irregular migration given contexts of poverty, lack of access to education and health services and previous attempts to migrate. Though participants could still migrate months or even years after completing the program due to factors the intervention was not designed to address (like violence, for example), in the near-term, they are using the stipends they earn to improve their family's financial stability, spending it mostly on household utilities (38 percent), food expenses (21 percent) and education (13 percent).

Glasswing has also engaged the private sector in the program to offer mentorships and potential job opportunities to program graduates, helping to further strengthen what will hopefully become a long-lasting, regional youth service program along the lines of AmeriCorps in the United States.

The program has already received praise from governments and the private sector, attracting interest from other donors, including the U.S. government, whose additional funding support would help ensure its long-term viability. Based on the program's early successes, the Foundation has approved an extension of the pilot so that it can continue to demonstrate the impact of this type of youth engagement in the Central American context. The extended pilot will directly benefit more than 13,000 young people in Honduras and Guatemala.

Though the Foundation's initial investment in this pilot cannot by any means solve the hemisphere's migration crisis, it is an example of the kind of creative, investment-based solution that works to address some of the root causes of why young people migrate.

CATALYZING REGIONAL MOBILITY SOLUTIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA

The current scale of the migration crisis in the western hemisphere requires two things: (1) regional migration management solutions that provide economically desperate people a legal way to migrate; (2) more investment in "root causes" in countries of origin so people can live and prosper in their home countries. Much of the Foundation's grantmaking in Latin America is about investing in (2). In 2022, the Foundation also expanded on its investments in (1) by providing funding to Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP), an organization that works to expand safe and legal channels for workers to access quality jobs across borders.

LaMP is looking at existing legal migration mechanisms that have the potential to be expanded to provide more labor migration pathways not just to the United States, but to other countries with labor shortages in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. LaMP's work will also include pre-vetted potential partners so that interested funders, including

governments, can pursue these opportunities in the short term. The goal is to surface other visa programs in the region like the United States' H-2 guest worker visa program that can help vulnerable people in the hemisphere migrate for better paying jobs in a safe, legal and cyclical manner.

Safe, efficient and well-regulated labor mobility can dramatically improve the lives of economically precarious Latin Americans, through remittances back to home countries and by addressing the labor needs of host countries. In the absence of such legal pathways, migrants are vulnerable to irregular migration, prompted by economic and climate shocks, violence, security threats and exploitation.



PREVENTING MASS ATROCITIES IN NORTH KIVU

In 2022, the Foundation renewed our financial support for the Kivu Security Tracker (KST) in collaboration with the Bridgeway Foundation, the Congo Research Group (CRG) and Human Rights Watch. The KST records violent incidents committed by armed groups and members of the Congolese security forces in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)'s North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. There are currently over 120 armed groups operating in eastern DRC. Among those is the Islamic State's affiliate in DRC, locally referred to as the ADF, which has gained international attention in the last year for its increasing brutality. The U.S. State Department has designated the ADF a foreign terrorist organization. The mass atrocities groups like the ADF commit in remote regions of the DRC highlight the critical need for this early warning system and tracker.

Through maps, graphs and analysis, the KST helps explain patterns, trends, causes of insecurity and serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. To date, the KST has collected over 11,000 incidents, affecting more than 21,700 victims, and is building greater understanding of the complex dynamics behind the regular but often overlooked violence in this part of the world. According to Bridgeway's analysis of KST data, the ADF's area of operation is now four times larger than it was in 2017, and their levels of violence continue to grow. By July of 2021, the ADF had committed more double-digit massacres during the calendar year than in all of 2020.

Despite the clear ideological motives driving ADF leadership and boosting recent recruitment, Bridgeway's debriefs of former fighters shed light on another subset of ADF members: the forced conscripts. These are Congolese and foreign members of the group who have been kidnapped or tricked into joining and fight simply for their own survival. While military operations are necessary to defeat the ideological leadership, providing alternatives to conflict can encourage voluntary defections of members who were coerced, tricked into joining or are among the disillusioned rank-and-file.

To help encourage voluntary defections, the Foundation, in partnership with Bridgeway, is piloting a community sensitization program in Beni and southern Ituri to establish safe reporting sites for potential ADF defectors and improve reintegration efforts. The goal is to weaken the capacity of the ADF to commit crimes against civilians. The program works with the community to set up local defection points, prepare communities to receive defectors and provide alternatives to would-be recruits and collaborators.

Right: Josephine is a young Ugandan woman who was tricked into moving to an ADF camp in eastern DRC by her husband. Life became a nightmare. Three of her children died before the age of one. She tried to flee but was captured by ADF fighters who cut off her hand as punishment. She was finally able to successfully escape with her youngest child but left two behind in the camp. Josephine suffers from symptoms of PTSD from her traumatic experience and guilt at having left behind her other children. She and her daughter are receiving mental health treatment and protection at a Foundation-funded deradicalization center in Kampala, Uganda. The center provides food, housing and supportive services to escapees in the hopes of encouraging fighters to defect.





POST-CONFLICT RESCUE AND RECOVERY FOR AFGHANS

In August 2021, after the United States withdrew from Afghanistan, the Taliban took control of Kabul and with it, the government of Afghanistan. Thousands fled the country in the following days and weeks, the largest mass evacuation since the Vietnam War. Among those who escaped were the students and educators of Afghanistan's first and only all-girls boarding school, the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA). SOLA, in the process of building a new campus in Kabul, had adopted a boarding school model to allow its students safety from the threats and violence they faced in Afghanistan for pursuing an education, and from the expectations of doing domestic chores that often interfere with studying.

As the Taliban's takeover became clear, SOLA's founder, Shabana Basij-Rasikh, burned the school's records to protect her students and their families before evacuating nearly 250 members of the SOLA community—students, staff and family members—to Kigali, Rwanda. SOLA chose Rwanda at the invitation of the country's President, Paul Kagame.

In September 2021, with our significant work in Rwanda, past investments in agriculture in Afghanistan and our interest in mitigating the effects of the Taliban's takeover on those who were forced to flee the conflict, the Foundation granted SOLA \$1.5 million to cover the first year of operations in Rwanda. The grant had three strategic objectives:

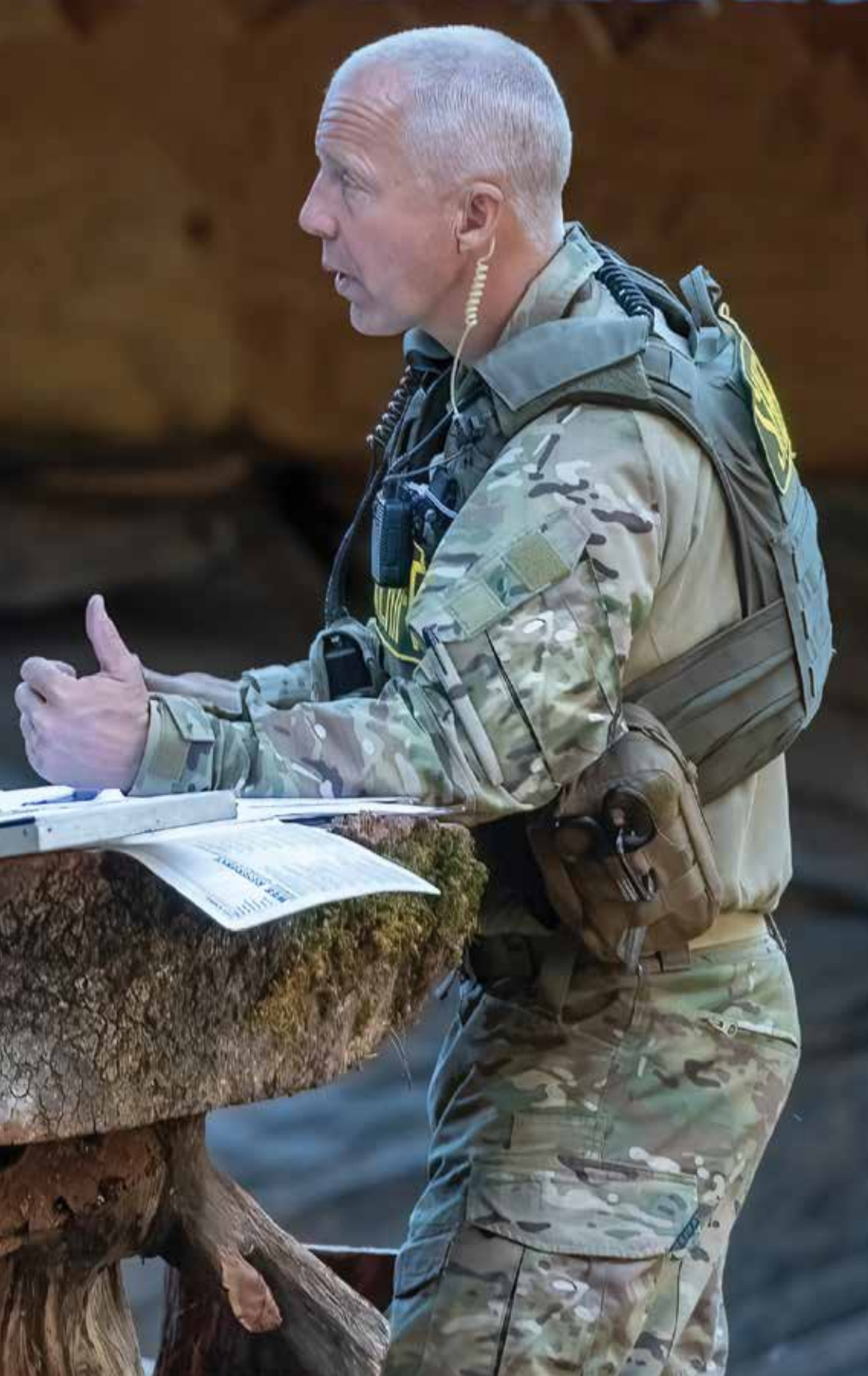
1. Maintain continuity of learning for SOLA students in Rwanda;
2. Open pathways for older students to pursue opportunities at boarding schools and universities in the United States, and for the non-student community to pursue immigration opportunities to Canada;
3. Begin a new admissions season no later than early 2022, with the intent to educate girls from the Afghan refugee diaspora.

At the time of their evacuation, SOLA's student body had 49 girls, pre-6th through 9th grades, receiving instruction from a largely remote, international team of teachers. During their first year in Rwanda, 41 students enrolled in top U.S. boarding schools and eight alumni enrolled as freshmen at Middlebury College in Vermont. Ninety-six members of the non-student community have since departed Rwanda and 49 are awaiting permission to travel to Canada or the United States.

In early 2022, SOLA opened their 2022 admissions process online with the goal of recruiting as many as 50 Afghan girls from refugee camps from around the world. Over 150 girls submitted applications and 27 students were accepted to join SOLA in the fall of 2022. Some applicants included girls still in Afghanistan, who unfortunately could not be accommodated given the Taliban's reinstatement of restrictions on girls' education.

Left: These Afghan girls are among the 250 students, faculty and staff who fled Afghanistan after the Taliban reclaimed power in August 2021. The School of Leadership Afghanistan found sanctuary in Rwanda, allowing the girls to continue their education. The Foundation provided funding to cover the relocation and operating costs in Rwanda for their first academic year. (Photo courtesy of SOLA)





COMBATTING **HUMAN** **TRAFFICKING**

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Victims of human trafficking are almost universally marginalized, and typically it is their inability to access economic opportunities that make them vulnerable to human trafficking. By funding efforts to address food insecurity, mitigate conflict and improve public safety, the Foundation has long worked to address the structural factors that make people vulnerable to human trafficking.

Beginning in 2014, the Foundation began to target the systems that lead to this abuse, investing in pilot projects to reduce labor trafficking in the agricultural sector. What we learned after nearly eight years of research and grantmaking led us to launch the Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking in 2021. In 2022, the Foundation made a variety of grants to strengthen community capacity to unite and amplify the efforts of law enforcement, victim service providers and community members.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN COMMUNITIES TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Foundation is making key investments in multidisciplinary teams of dedicated law enforcement officers, prosecutors and victim service providers to detect, investigate and support victims of trafficking. While our mission is to address all forms of human trafficking, our current priority is developing promising practices to address forced labor in agriculture.

In August 2021, we established our first pilot location in Georgia. By funding dedicated personnel at the Georgia Bureau of Investigations, Georgia Legal Services and Tapestri, and working in collaboration with the Georgia Attorney General's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office and Homeland Security Investigations, this is the largest effort in the history of the domestic anti-trafficking movement to exclusively focus on labor trafficking in agriculture.

In November 2021, our partners in Georgia supported one of the largest labor trafficking operations in recent years. Proceeding from a five-year investigation at Homeland Security Investigations, Operation Blooming Onion indicted 24 defendants for operating a \$200 million human trafficking and money laundering scheme. The defendants trafficked hundreds of workers from Central America and Mexico to farms in South Georgia—where at least two people died due to the brutal conditions.

To support the victim side of this Operation, Tapestri has served 43 survivors of labor trafficking and 25 H-2A workers. Georgia Legal Services has filed 38 T-Visa applications for victims and their family members and opened 60 new cases for clients needing direct legal services related to their trafficking experience. Our partners have learned that each victim they represent requires legal services on at least three legal matters to adequately address their victimization.

Meanwhile, the Georgia Bureau of Investigations launched intelligence-gathering missions to identify potential victims and initiate criminal investigations. This information, combined with the expertise of a criminal intelligence analyst, will drive investigations moving forward.

While Georgia is in its early stages, the preliminary results demonstrate that multidisciplinary partnerships with motivated leaders and dedicated resources can create meaningful law enforcement action and comprehensive services for victims.

At the end of 2022, we funded two additional sites to have a greater array of approaches and contexts to develop and refine best practices to address forced labor in agriculture. In Western New York, we are funding an expansion of the Western District of New York Human Trafficking Task Force, which has more than 15 years of experience addressing all forms of human trafficking. This new partnership will expand the task force's geographic reach, add new partners and help determine how to replicate and scale promising practices in different contexts. In Wisconsin, we are partnering with a statewide effort led by United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) and the Wisconsin Department of Justice. With these three strong pilot projects underway, we are excited to identify, refine and evaluate promising practices. Our goal is to develop practical resources to equip and empower other communities to address labor trafficking.

Recognizing the complexity of our endeavor, and that funding and dedicated personnel alone cannot ensure results, we added three supplemental efforts to give our pilot sites the best possible chances of success:

- **Implementation support:** We recruited a team of multidisciplinary practitioners with extensive experience combatting labor trafficking to assess pilot sites, develop requirements for multidisciplinary teams and provide implementation support through advanced training and informal coaching to their counterparts. In addition to this tailored implementation support, pilot projects will also be able to learn from one another.
- **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation for continuous improvement:** Little is known about “what works” to combat labor trafficking. Data is needed to refine and improve our own programming and help identify what is replicable and scalable to other communities across the United States. In fact, one of our hypotheses is that little action is taken in communities because there is no roadmap to success. We partnered with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago and Colleen Owens, some of the best labor trafficking researchers in the country, to develop our performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. They are collaborating with us to use data to inform our implementation support, program design and funding strategy.

- **Prosecutorial capacity-building:** The little data that exists on multidisciplinary efforts to address human trafficking underscores the need for strong prosecutorial buy-in and leadership. Prosecution rates, along with feedback we received from our pilot site recruitment efforts, demonstrated that we need more prosecutors who are equipped and willing to combat forced labor. We partnered with AEquitas, a premier nonprofit comprised of former prosecutors, to expand its anti-trafficking resources and coaching to build prosecutorial capacity across the United States. Within the first year of this project, AEquitas provided tailored technical assistance to more than 80 federal, state and county prosecutors as well as law enforcement agencies, victims' rights attorneys and multidisciplinary teams. To better scale this expertise, AEquitas is developing a Model Response to Human Trafficking that includes example strategies to better identify, investigate and prosecute sex and labor trafficking cases.

VICTIM IDENTIFICATION AND SERVICES

One of the biggest challenges in addressing labor trafficking cases is identifying victims. Unlike sex trafficking, law enforcement is not the first line of proactive identification, and the majority of cases stem from referrals from organizations with access to these hidden populations. The Foundation is investing in projects to inform our approach for identifying and serving victims of labor trafficking.

In December 2021, the Foundation provided a grant to Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services (LAS) to expand its farmworker outreach program and provide legal services to victims of labor trafficking in Central Illinois. In its first year, LAS conducted over 120 site visits and outreach events and interacted with nearly 1,000 farmworkers. They also provided legal services to 16 clients, including 10 victims of human trafficking, on 60 legal matters, primarily focused on immigration relief for trafficking survivors.

The Foundation also funded the International Rescue Committee Miami (IRC Miami) to form a “one stop shop” in partnership with local law enforcement and service providers to support victims of labor trafficking. IRC Miami plans to build the capacity of local law enforcement to effectively identify, respond and investigate victims of labor trafficking as well as train community organizations to identify potential labor trafficking. This is critical to increasing the identification and reporting of labor trafficking victims in the community. In its first year, IRC Miami conducted three trainings to over 70 law enforcement officials and 30 service providers focusing on key indicators of labor trafficking and victim-centered approaches.

These pilot programs are still in the early stages of yielding conclusive lessons. However, one key takeaway is that trust is critical to identifying and serving victims of labor trafficking. Many labor trafficking victims may be hesitant to ask about their rights or share their experiences. Therefore, crafting the right messages and equipping relatable people to convey these messages is important. We found more success during second-round encounters with farmworkers, shifting our approach to ensure that follow-up visits occur at sites.

Alongside these efforts, the Foundation is partnering with Preble Street in Maine to enhance the statewide response to identify and support victims of labor trafficking in the agricultural and seafood industries. Preble Street is well known and the leading service provider for victims of labor trafficking in Maine. Unlike our other grants, which cover smaller geographical areas, this project will be our first state-wide model that could inform future identification strategies.

SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP

To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the anti-trafficking movement, we must invest in survivor leadership. The anti-trafficking movement is one of the few human rights movements that is not led by those who are directly impacted. Instead, government actors and a handful of nonprofit organizations set the anti-trafficking agenda, and survivors are often not seen as experts whose lived experiences can inform investigative strategies, service provision, research and policy.

To fill this gap, the Foundation is partnering with the Sherwood Foundation and Survivor Alliance to pilot a Survivor Leadership Academy with 18 survivors of labor and sex trafficking. Not only does the Academy provide 18 months of leadership development to these survivors, but it also aims to seed an overall system change by educating allies who want to increase survivor leadership but lack the skills to properly engage, mentor and empower survivors. These systemic changes are critical to success, demonstrated by a third of Academy participants who are reluctant to work with well-meaning allies due to negative experiences that have exacerbated survivors' trauma. Survivor Alliance is constantly monitoring the needs of the survivor leaders and allies to develop and refine a suite of resources as well as provide hands-on coaching and peer-to-peer support. Lessons learned from this pilot initiative can inform the sector on how to best approach and accelerate survivor leadership.

THE CENTER TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING PILOT INITIATIVES

The Foundation is committed to working in the areas of greatest need, which often demands trying new approaches to complex challenges. We believe that solving seemingly intractable problems requires not only financial support, but new ways of thinking and creative collaborations.

The Foundation created the Center to Combat Human Trafficking (CTCHT) to provide multi-year funding for pilot projects in which collaborators are explicitly expected to test ambitious, creative and new approaches. What CTCHT seeks in early stages is not dramatic evidence of overall success but data and insights that can inform the next iteration. In that way, CTCHT fosters learning and innovation through acceptable losses. In other words, we recognize that not every effort of CTCHT will work. We expect many efforts to fail. But we refuse to ignore problems that cause pain and suffering to marginalized communities just because there is no current roadmap on how to be successful.

In October 2020, the details of a case involving the human trafficking of Chinese nationals in growing and distributing illegal cannabis on the Shiprock Navajo reservation drew national attention. The Shiprock case illustrated many misunderstood areas of human trafficking: the severe violence and deprivation of labor trafficking; the unjust treatment of victims of forced criminality as criminals themselves; the challenge of law enforcement interventions on tribal lands; and the hidden violence associated with illegal marijuana operations. While this case appeared in news outlets across the world, those responsible for identifying and intervening on behalf of the victims were unsure of what steps to take to address human trafficking in the drug trade. This form of human trafficking was seen as too difficult, dangerous and unpopular to tackle—exactly the type of challenge CTCHT was created to take on.

Through our research we discovered that transnational criminal networks have shifted from smuggling cannabis into the United States to growing it in California, Oregon, Oklahoma and other states that have decriminalized the use and production of cannabis. Some of these networks are based in Mexico, but others are run from Asia and Eastern Europe. Often operating adjacent to permitted growers and exploiting laws designed to support the legal industry, these criminal networks have increased human trafficking, violence and environmental damage.

Criminal organizations keep their cultivation costs low in part by recruiting or coercing vulnerable individuals to provide labor for which they will receive little, if any, pay. The living conditions on many of these large, remote grows are appalling. Workers are stranded in wilderness areas with no sanitation, minimal shelter and no cell phones or vehicles so they cannot flee. They are often exposed to dangerous chemicals, with no protective

gear. In some cases, the criminal groups smuggle workers into the United States under the ruse of taking them to a good agricultural labor job where they can send money back to their families. When they arrive on the illegal cannabis grows, they are told that if they run away their families will be harmed.

Identifying victims of human trafficking is already a huge challenge. Safely or practically interacting with and identifying victims who tend to be in remote areas guarded by armed grow personnel is virtually impossible for service providers. These remote and dangerous locations are most likely to be accessible only by law enforcement. However, many officers may misidentify victims as criminal actors themselves. Victims in this situation are unlikely to self-identify to law enforcement due to their fear of the transnational criminal actors who are well-known for their extreme use of violence. To better discern the victims from the perpetrators, law enforcement officers require training to recognize the signs of trafficking and ask the right questions in what is called “trauma-informed” interactions.

Additional challenges occur once victims are identified. Service providers are in short supply in remote areas where cannabis tends to be cultivated. Law enforcement personnel are stretched thin and lack the necessary resources to be able to properly investigate and build cases to dismantle these complex, transnational networks.

This kind of complexity demands a multifaceted approach, which is precisely what the CTCHT-funded Northern California Coalition to Safeguard Communities (NCCSC) is doing. NCCSC is a collaboration between law enforcement leaders from Butte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino and Trinity Counties, including Sheriffs and District Attorneys, who are working with a team of experts on environmental crimes and human trafficking, data analysts, victim service providers and other partners to address serious and harmful consequences of illegal cannabis in the region. Formed in 2021, the mission of NCCSC is to protect the safety of local communities by investigating and dismantling transnational criminal organizations’ activities that are causing severe harm. Those activities include human trafficking and other violent crimes as well as environmental damage and extensive water diversion connected to illegal cannabis growing operations.

The environmental impact of this activity has reached a crisis level on two dimensions. First, California is currently experiencing a severe drought, and a cannabis plant can require six to nine gallons of water per day throughout a three-month growing season. Growers without permits are diverting and stealing millions of gallons of water from creeks and streams that otherwise would fill reservoirs and replenish aquifers. Secondly, some illegal growers use highly toxic chemicals including rodenticides, insecticides and other toxins that directly kill wildlife in the surrounding area. Environmental and wildlife officers are routinely finding dead bears, bobcats, eagles and other birds and small

mammals that have been poisoned by lethal “bait” near unpermitted cannabis grows. These chemicals are being used near streams and creeks, and they are leaching into the watersheds.

While local experts and community members have condemned these practices, there are few state or national efforts to address the illegal activities—and even fewer that bring cross-sector resources together for multifaceted collaboration. CTCHT’s unique mission is well suited to support an innovative effort like NCCSC to meet this need.

The efforts of the NCCSC are in its preliminary stages. The first phase assembled resources and processes to support local law enforcement and victim services in identifying and investigating these criminal activities, provide support to victims and share information that can lead to prosecutions.

The hope is that the pilot project will produce a set of best practices that not only succeed in these five counties, but that can form the basis for a larger coalition of counties in California, and extending lessons learned into other states.

A second effort CTCHT is supporting emerged from the Foundation’s past six-year grant to the Financial Crimes Unit (FCU) in Cochise County, Arizona, which has investigated transnational financial crimes along the border. In one such instance, the FCU discovered a labor trafficking scheme connected to organized crime. CTCHT will pilot an approach to investigating cross-border human trafficking via financial investigations, advanced intelligence and comprehensive services for victims.

While still in the planning stages of development, the ultimate goal of these pilot projects in Arizona and Northern California is to accelerate learning and determine which approaches work best when local communities are being harmed by transnational crime.

Top: The rustic sleeping area on this illegal marijuana grow site in northern California demonstrates the difficult living conditions workers endure.

Middle: Illegal marijuana grows regularly use banned pesticides and other chemicals that harm workers, kill wildlife and pollute public waterways. These grows also generate tons of trash and siphon off enormous quantities of water, adding to the environmental toll.

Bottom: Most illegal grows in northern California are in remote areas where workers are completely dependent on site managers and human traffickers to bring them food and other supplies, which may happen infrequently. Many workers on illegal grow sites do not know where they are working—or even what country they are in.





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P. GRIFF



PUBLIC
SAFETY

A STATE-OF-THE-ART TRAINING CAMPUS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2015, the Foundation conceived, developed and provided the financial support to create the Macon County Law Enforcement Training Campus (MCLETC), a premier training site for law enforcement and first responders located in central Illinois. This has been an ongoing investment which addresses national public safety needs, while providing support to the local community. MCLETC supports the education and practical training needs of law enforcement personnel and first responders while also working to improve community relations with law enforcement. The Campus provides state-of-the-art equipment and facilities to ensure that first responders are well equipped to serve their communities and secure the public safety and quality of life for all residents. The Campus also offers opportunities for individuals to improve their understanding of law enforcement's role in their community by participating in select training exercises that help illustrate the types of challenges law enforcement personnel may encounter on the job.

MCLETC's campus includes the following facilities:

FIRE TRAINING FACILITY

This 5,000 square foot structure includes a six-story high-rise tower and a two-story single-family dwelling, each equipped with separate stairwells and burn rooms. The high-rise tower includes an elevator shaft, standpipes on all floors and water sources that trainees can use to retrieve water with pre-made hose packs. An area on the roof allows vertical ventilation techniques to be simulated with smoke and heat removal. The facility is also equipped with machines that produce simulated smoke, which can be released and dispersed throughout the building to meet the needs of any training scenario. The tower's roof deck is outfitted with six anchor point rappelling rings, each rated for 10,000 pounds live-load. The parapet wall is designed to be used for tactical rappel evolutions, and the top level includes cantilevered platforms to practice hanging rappelling techniques.





RAILWAY TANK CAR

A 53-foot, 20,800-gallon railway tank car allows first responders to train in a real-world setting. The tank car also provides opportunities for scenario-based HAZMAT training (pictured top).

DIVE TRAINING POND

The Dive Training Pond allows dive and special operations teams the opportunity to train and practice in a more than two-acre pond equipped with a submerged school bus, two vehicles and brush (the photo in the middle shows the pond before it was filled). This gives trainees the unique opportunity to practice underwater search patterns and techniques around the types of submerged obstacles they will face in the real-world. The pond is also equipped with an underwater concrete pad for swapping gear and training exercises. During the winter months, the pond allows trainees the ability to practice ice rescue training and other cold weather-related procedures.

GRAIN BIN SAFETY BUILDING

At 12,000 square feet, this state-of-the-art facility offers fire and rescue personnel the opportunity to train on the dangers of grain bin engulfment and entrapment, and the rescue and recovery procedures for victims, all in a controlled and safe environment (pictured bottom).

VIRTRA TRAINING

Three VirTra 300 simulators and one VirTra 180 simulator offer police recruits, corrections cadets and in-service officers the opportunity to experience scenario-based, virtual reality training scenarios. One of the key uses of the VirTra is to engage community members and provide opportunities to experience what police officers face on a regular basis. Participants are coached through de-escalation techniques, critical thinking under stress and use of force decision-making, followed by a debrief and after-action review with active and retired law enforcement (pictured top).

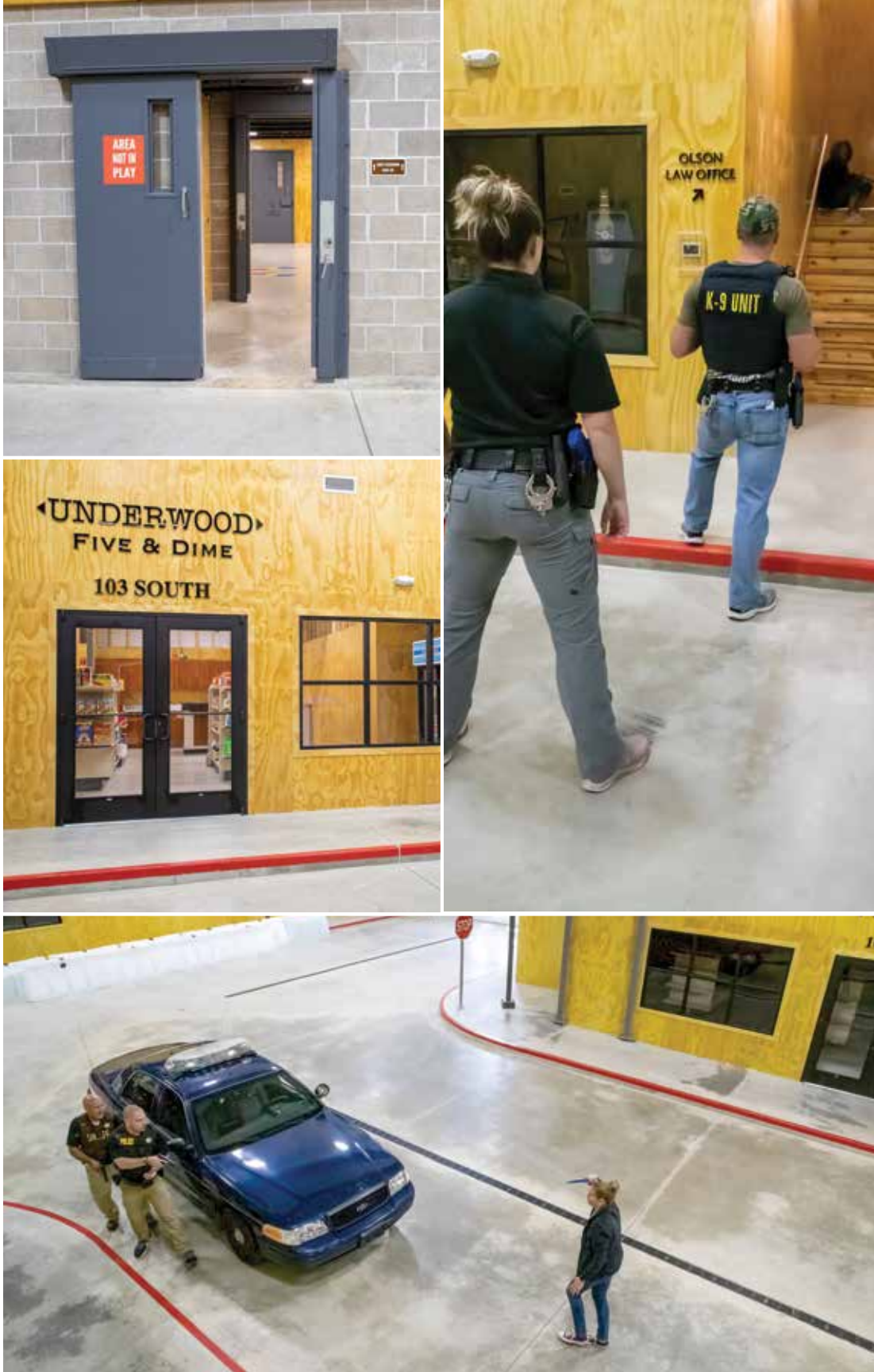
TACTICAL TRAINING MAT ROOMS

Four different mat room training areas offer a total of nearly 9,000 square feet of tactical training space (pictured middle).

THE MACON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER

This academy offers state-certified basic law enforcement and basic corrections training using both classroom and hands-on education, utilizing the best-in-class training facilities, including a 9,462 square foot, 20 lane indoor firing range. This facility was donated to the State of Illinois upon its completion in 2017 (pictured bottom).





BOLEK TRAINING FACILITY

This facility is a 32,000 square foot multipurpose space designed to accommodate a wide variety of training needs. The facility includes several classrooms, a gym, mat room and a tactical village complete with storefronts, city streets and a three-story mock jail with functioning jail doors. The indoor facility is temperature-controlled to allow for year-round training. A new tactical area, completed in 2022, provides six additional scenario areas including a church, school room, office, daycare, fast food restaurant and a large open park.



CENTRAL ILLINOIS REGIONAL DISPATCH CENTER (CIRDC)

CIRDC provides emergency communications services for Macon County, employing 30 dispatchers who field over 300 calls a day for eight law enforcement and 15 fire agencies. This facility was donated to the CIRDC upon its completion in 2018 (pictured top).

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (IDOC)

IDOC utilizes three buildings on the campus: a training building, dormitory, cafeteria and an office building, which includes an auditorium for instructional classes (not pictured).

Training opportunities located near MCLETC include the Grant Farm facility (pictured bottom right and left), two miles from campus. Grant Farm offers a variety of environments across seven buildings and 20,000 square feet of training area, tailored for the specialized training requirements of police K-9s and their handlers, evacuation exercises, active shooter scenarios, Special Response Team (SRT) clearing and other uses. Multiple heated buildings include various room configurations, lockers, multiple specialized K-9 training aids, a K-9 obstacle course, and over 15 acres of woods and 12 acres of open fields for tracking and article searches. A 2,600 square foot farmhouse is used for both K-9 exercises as well as SRT and tactical training. The facilities at Grant Farm include an indoor firearms range, classroom and unique features to facilitate real-life training (pictured bottom left and right).



COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON POLICING

The facilities at MCLETC also provide a unique opportunity for members of the community to learn more about what it's like to be in law enforcement. The Foundation has developed a program where individuals are invited to experience the VirTra simulator, facilitated by experienced law enforcement professionals. Simulations allow visitors to virtually go out on police calls in the role of a law enforcement officer. The goal is to educate the public about police procedures and real-time decision-making officers regularly face, to encourage dialogue and improve community relations with law enforcement.

To date, 685 members of the community have participated since the start of the program in 2021. They include journalists, church groups, college students, educators, elected officials and other community groups.



Community members participating in the VirTra training offered their feedback on the experience:

JULIE MOORE WOLFE | MAYOR, DECATUR, IL

"Most of us will never face the split-second decisions police are forced to make in the line of duty. We can watch video clips of a shooting and say they were wrong, and we never would have fired a weapon. The VirTra Training is an opportunity to spend a few minutes in their shoes and glimpse the life and death decisions police make. I firmly believe all Illinois lawmakers need to experience this training as they explore police reform."

DR. JUANITA MORRIS | COORDINATOR, JERRY J. DAWSON CIVIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

"The simulation was powerful—it created an environment to raise individual tension, heart rate, and the experience required self-reflection. This experience, while a tip of the iceberg from the law enforcement perspective, helped me make a small step in understanding better the task of law enforcement."

DR. JARMESE SHERROD | PRESIDENT & CEO, S.I.M.P., INC.

"There is no way you can walk away from this experience without a clear conception of the required skills, immediacy, critical thinking, compassion and training it takes to do this job for 8+ hours a day with accuracy."

TERRENCE TAYLOR | PRESIDENT & CEO, TAT INC.

"When it comes to law enforcement, it's easy for us to say what we would do or wouldn't do until you are actually placed in those situations. This experience is something that will alleviate the barriers between community members and law enforcement, and it is truly needed."





CLOSING THOUGHTS

BY HOWARD G. BUFFETT

It was on my fifth trip to Ukraine in the 11 months since the war started that I found myself thinking about how these trips—and the act of “showing up”—have gotten more difficult for me as I’ve gotten older. There is of course the sheer logistical challenge: we travel with armored vests, Kevlar helmets and I always take a lot of camera equipment to document our work. There is always a large bag of gifts for people we will meet or have met on prior trips, a small show of gratitude for them allowing us to insert ourselves into their lives to better understand their suffering and needs. The distances are far and often challenging to navigate, and itineraries often come together in real time because in conflict areas, on the ground realities can change hour by hour. No two trips are the same. But the reason I make them does not change, and the value they bring to our decision-making and the grants we make is incalculable.

My first trip to a conflict area was to Czechoslovakia in 1969. Back then, I was too young and too naïve about the world to understand the implications of the Soviet Union’s 1968 invasion and subsequent occupation, let alone the impact on the lives of the Czech people. The daily activities we take for granted at home are full of risk in such circumstances.



It took me 30 years to visit another conflict zone. In 1999, I arrived in Sarajevo, Bosnia full of anticipation of what I would see and learn. It was on that trip that I began to understand the importance of “showing up.”

As someone who was fortunate enough to be born in the United States to a family able to fully realize the American Dream, I can never truly understand the contexts and perspectives of the challenging environments we choose to operate in and the vulnerable populations we seek to help. “Showing up” helps me close some of that gap between experience and understanding so that we can be smarter about the investments we make. It is the only way to learn intimate details about the life-changing impacts of conflict and poverty, and what it means to live in a society where rules and laws are meaningless and where government institutions are nonexistent or predatory. You smell the dust and smoke of bombed-out buildings, you see the wounds and suffering of people, you learn of the desperation people feel and what they tell you they urgently want and need. You hear the distant gun fire and shelling that sometimes reminds you of a much safer space at home where the sounds are firecrackers or thunder. You travel through villages that are like ghost towns because people have fled. And sometimes you can sense that death is all around you.

How we show up is also important. I travel with as few people as possible. I have occasionally entered a country without going through a port of entry, mainly for security reasons, or on several occasions, when I was an ambassador for WFP, I did it to avoid the protocol and entourage that awaited me. I work hard to avoid the photo ops or pre-programmed visits where participants have been coached on their answers. It doesn’t always work—diplomacy sometimes requires me to listen to and do what my host wants me to see and hear—but I will only do it when I know I will also have plenty of time to have more authentic experiences. I’m not interested in a social media-ready understanding of a conflict that can be summed up in a tweet. That is not showing up, it is showmanship.

There are some places I want to go to where it is impossible for me to have an experience that is genuine—so I don’t go. There are other times when the experience is so genuine and sensitive that I ask others on the team to stay behind. The most difficult conversations I have had are with children who are dying or with groups of people who I know I cannot help. I do this work to help people, and when I see human suffering, I’m impatient about finding solutions to alleviate that suffering. So it is especially frustrating and heartbreaking when I encounter people facing difficult circumstances who I know, for reasons out of my control, I cannot help.

Burundi was the first place I visited where the only safe way to get there was by chartering a flight. It was years ago, and there were no commercial flights available. I considered the flight both a necessary mode of transport and an insurance policy. There

were no functioning hospitals, and security was tenuous. I figured it was a way to make a quick exit in an emergency. I have since learned it does not always work that way. Having had several caravan aircraft and a helicopter grounded in different countries by the local military, I have found that there is no guaranteed exit plan if you are arrested or detained. In these circumstances, I’ve learned to choose my words carefully and talk only when necessary. I have had tenuous experiences with tribal members who see me as an intruder, military who see me as an opportunity, soldiers who are undisciplined, police who are angry and governments that are threatened by our presence. It is all part of showing up.

One time a friend of mine in the security business said to me, “don’t confuse being lucky with being good.” I have never forgotten that, but sometimes I realize to learn, to see what I need to see and to talk to the people who can educate me on their reality, I must travel to places and in a way that has some risk. I see it as part of the job.

When encountering people and circumstances very different from our own, it is easy to make assumptions and judge things based on our own experience. I go to the field to have my assumptions challenged and to try to understand the actual experiences of the people our Foundation is working to help. We don’t live in a conflict area, we don’t go to bed thinking about when the next missile will hit, we don’t worry everyday if our child will be raped, we don’t have to decide which child to feed and which one will go hungry, and we don’t live every day in fear—so how could we possibly understand the impact and consequences of these circumstances? Even by spending a few hours or a few days in these environments, we cannot really begin to understand it, but we will understand much more if we show up.

My desire to see and learn firsthand comes from several influences in my life. I watched my mom be a hands-on activist. I was with her when people were angry and yelled at her and her colleagues. I asked her once why we went to places where people didn’t seem to like us. She explained that we couldn’t solve problems if we didn’t understand them. The implication was clear that understanding them required us to show up.

Opposite page, left: In November 2022, I visited Izium, Ukraine. Serhii Bolvinov, the head of the investigative department of the National Police in the Kharkiv region, walked me through a mass grave site of 451 graves. (Photo courtesy of Laren Poole)

Opposite page, right: We later went to the basement of the police station where Russian soldiers held civilians captive and tortured them. This message says “God, save us and keep us safe.” On other walls there were messages to family members and markings counting the days of captivity.

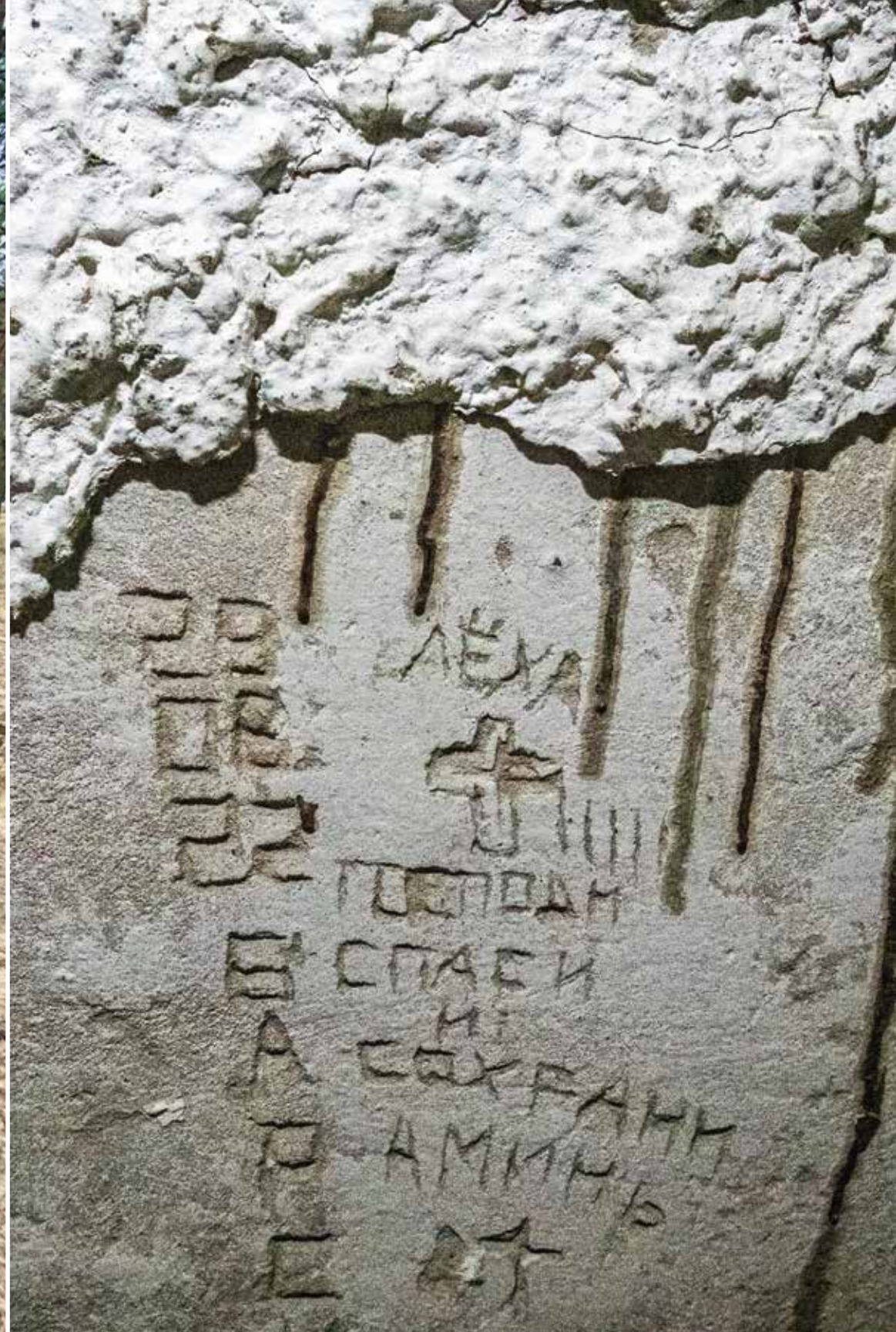




Photo courtesy of Ann Kelly Bolten

Later I found myself in refugee camps and at community meetings listening to angry people. I always walked away with a new understanding of the circumstances they faced. I also believe that seeing so many different, at times disturbing, things in my early travels, gave me a very different perspective. By age 21, I had traveled to 14 countries without a parent, in the days when there were no cell phones. Each trip was an adventure and an education. Sometimes they were scary.

When I was 20 years old, I had the opportunity to travel to India. I went for a run with a few other guys I was traveling with, to get some exercise and to see the streets of Kolkata. It was early in the morning, and we passed wagons that were stacked with bodies. It challenged my comfort level beyond any previous experience. We later learned that picking up the bodies of people who died the night before was a daily occurrence. In apartheid-era South Africa, I saw some of my college friends return from an outing in Cape Town, bloody and shaken. They had made the mistake of talking to a black person. I had read about apartheid, but now I was seeing it.

In Kenya, at about 6,000 feet on the side of Mt. Kilimanjaro, we were headed to a ranger station, arriving hungry and tired. We sat down, impatient and arguing over who would get served first. Then the door opened, and a man dressed in a military uniform appeared, looking tired and upset. The room fell silent. There was a conversation that took place in another language. Then our leader turned to us and explained that a group of rangers had lost a colleague during training and after two difficult days of carrying the body down the mountain, they had arrived at the station exhausted and hungry. Without saying a word, as if there was a conductor of an orchestra giving us silent instructions, we all stood up simultaneously and gave up our seats at the table so the men could eat. It was the first time I had ever experienced the combined power of empathy and action when confronted with an unspoken need. It is difficult to articulate but it was a powerful experience.

I could never have had these perspective-shaping experiences at such a young age without the support of my mom and dad. My mother instilled in me the reason we show up, and my dad reinforced it by giving me the confidence that I would learn and grow as a result. Those early experiences laid the groundwork for the education in human suffering I would get as an adult, traveling to the field to understand conflict and food insecurity so our Foundation could invest the resources my dad gave us as effectively as possible.

I held the hand of a mother in northern Ghana as her daughter lay dying from malnutrition, malaria and meningitis (top left). I remember thinking that if this girl were in the United States, she would live. The young girl from a refugee camp in Pakistan (middle left), her body covered with fourth degree burns, is etched in my mind forever. Her skin was multi-colored and like paper from the burns, but what stood out to me were her eyes. The

image of her I captured with my camera highlights her intense gaze, that was probably a reflection of the pain and confusion she felt. She died a few days later. I will never forget sitting at Karla's small house in rural El Salvador (bottom left), watching her try to hold back tears as she described her fear of what the gangs would do to her children. Many of her neighbors had fled to the United States, in search of better and safer lives, but Karla refused to give up everything they had built over their lifetime. People often forget what they read or what they see on television, but we do not forget these people, their faces or their stories.

These experiences have been an essential education. We've learned how often our assumptions were wrong, and why our ideas may not work; in fact, we've learned why they could make things worse. And we learn that the reality of what we see in the news, sitting at home is much harsher and more devastating.

There are few experiences that compare to when a person we have never met, and likely will never see again, takes our hand and thanks us simply for being there to support them. For showing up. I remember visiting a site in Rwanda where thousands of bodies had been exhumed from the genocide. The gentleman who was taking us room to room showing us the skeletal remains did not speak English. He was tall and slender and had a large and deep depression on his forehead from a bullet wound. A few years later, on my second visit to the site, he showed me his legs: damage inflicted by machetes had covered them with scars and indentations. We could not speak each other's language, but we didn't need to. As we turned towards the office, he took my hand, and we walked in silence. On a trip to Romania, I stopped along the road and spoke with some farmers. When I went to leave, one of the women came over and gently kissed me on the cheek. In Ukraine, I walked over to say hello to a woman who was likely in her 80s sitting on a short wall outside the train station. As we talked, she repeatedly thanked me for visiting her country. Her eyes began to tear up and she couldn't continue speaking, but she didn't need to say anything more. Communication comes in many forms, but we have to be there to receive it.

I have included a few stories on the following pages. These stories illustrate why I do things the way I do. A book or someone else's description could not provide the impact that these experiences have had on me and on our Foundation's work.

I have been incredibly fortunate to have had these experiences. I have also been very fortunate to come home from a few. As I get older, I realize I may not be able to show up as often as I would like, but I will keep trying. There is one thing I have learned: every trip is different, and every experience teaches me something new. And, I have learned that you don't always need to go 10,000 miles to show up. Do whatever challenges your comfort zone and helps you understand and empathize with people who are different or less fortunate than you. It will provide you with some great life lessons. Show up.



Photos courtesy of Devon Buffett (middle); Ryan Youngblood (right)





SHOWING UP

A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES

Showing up allows me to meet people and hear their stories. These stories provide more context, help answer my questions and give me a better understanding of how our philanthropy can best serve the communities we support. These are just a few of the stories I have heard in my many years of travels to over 150 countries. Some stories confirm what you think you know; others provide insight into issues and challenges you could not understand without being there. They all represent something important to the people sharing them.

I remember how difficult some of these conversations were. In Chad, a few miles from the Sudan border, at the height of people leaving Darfur, I met a tribal chief who had just crossed the border. We talked for a few minutes, and I remember thinking all he has left is his title. He reached out and took my hand. He tried to squeeze it, but he didn't have much energy. He implored me in his local language: "Don't forget me, don't let the world forget us." As I drove away, I knew most of the world would forget. That is why I carry a camera. Forgetting allows us to do nothing; photos remind people that we must all do something.

These stories are why I show up.

Left: I visited with a family in Sierra Leone who described how they ran and hid in a forest when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) raided their village. They could not use fires to cook because the smoke would reveal their location; instead, they were forced to eat bark and leaves to fill their stomachs. It was the first time I had a mother explain to me how she had to choose which child would live and which child would die because of the scarcity of food available to feed them. It was not the last time I had a mother confide this to me.



UNITED STATES, 2001

As we drove through a small town in West Virginia, I spotted a man checking his mailbox. I was shocked at how thin he was. I wanted to talk to him, so we stopped our vehicle across from the house and my colleague went to the door and knocked. **When he stepped out on the porch, I asked if he was a veteran. The instant he heard my question, he saluted the flag.**

His name was Everett. He lived alone. He was a veteran of the Korean War, and he showed us his uniform with the medals he had received. Inside his house was a single light bulb hanging over a small table where he had been working on a puzzle. In his kitchen, the shelves were mostly empty; a box of cereal was all that was visible.

We asked Everett how he was doing. He said he needed to sit down for a minute. As he sat, he began shaking. We later found out that he had Parkinson's disease. He struggled to say, "Please don't leave; I will be OK in a minute."

It was clear he thought we would leave once we saw his condition. We assured him we would not. He sat in an old, raggedy chair, and I asked him if we could somehow help him. He responded by saying that the veterans needed help. He began telling us how there were very few Korean War veterans left, but he had gone to every funeral. I knew he was too proud to accept anything for himself, so I quickly took several \$100 bills from my pocket and tucked them in his hand. I told him to use the money to help the veterans. He stood up—with our help—and put his hand on my heart and told me that I was a wonderful person.

I will never forget Everett. He was a tired and lonely man, but also strong and proud. We tried to find him about six months later, but learned that he had passed away.



Photo courtesy of Andrey Stavnitse

UKRAINE, 2022

While having dinner at a hotel in Kyiv, an occasional air raid siren would sound. I was visiting with a man who owned a farm outside Kyiv. As we talked, he described something that most of us could not imagine. As the Russians advanced, they overtook his farm which is about two hours south of Kyiv. The Russians set up an operating base to support their ongoing invasion. The number of Russians on his farm increased, and they began to stockpile ammunition. They ransacked his farmhouse and butchered his animals to eat.

As the number of Russians increased, he called the Ukrainian military to provide them with the coordinates of his farm so they could strike the Russians and their stockpiles of ammunition and artillery. He had no insurance on his tractors; no way to replace the fertilizer supply he lost; and all of his animals were gone.

I later met Andrey, who had a similar experience. He fled his home on March 5th when Russian soldiers occupied his village and seized his property. Several staff members were still at the house when the Russians arrived. Eventually the Russians stripped the staff naked and sent them off to the woods. When the staff reached safety, they called Andrey and told him the Russians were stockpiling valuable items from the surrounding areas which they had stolen. More importantly, they also reported that numerous military vehicles, including rocket launchers, were located on the property. **Andrey proceeded to call the Ukrainian military and provided the coordinates of his home, along with the information about the Russians. The photo shows the aftermath: Andrey gave up his home and property to protect his country.**



LIBERIA, 2007

These three women (Kebadede, Elizabeth and Korpeo) all survived Liberia's civil war. Kebadede did not remember when she left her village with her two children to go to a camp in the capital of Monrovia. Both her mother and father were killed before they could leave. Elizabeth left in 1992 and fled to Guinea, later to Monrovia and then returned home. During this time, her husband, brother, child and nephew were killed. As we talked, her voice broke often; she held back tears and struggled to find the words to tell her story. Korpeo also went to an IDP camp in Monrovia. She described the risk in traveling to the capital: women were raped, children kidnapped and men killed.

The disruption to their lives and the description of their suffering was brutal. These women were trying to rebuild their lives. They were all farmers—it was the only skill they possessed. They struggled against overwhelming odds: 92 percent of the population was either moderately vulnerable to food insecurity or food insecure.

The country had just emerged from a violent conflict. As we departed for the next village, our driver summed up the situation in a profound way that many would not understand without seeing it firsthand: **“peace is a process, not an event.”**

SIERRA LEONE, 2007

I watched the movie *Blood Diamond* four times before I had the chance to travel to Sierra Leone. I questioned if the horrific events portrayed in the movie were accurate. When I walked into the Kono diamond mine for the first time, it seemed surreal. It quickly became very real. This was life at the bottom, hard labor, almost no pay and complete abuse of human beings. I knew that many of the men had either killed others or had their family killed. The tension generated by my presence and my cameras quickly made me uncomfortable. The guards did not want to be photographed—it was one of the few times I did not risk trying. All of my doubts about what this country had suffered and the challenges ahead were suddenly gone as I stood in the middle of millions of dollars of wealth buried in the ground being dug out by some of the poorest and most desperate people in the world.

The boy carrying the bag on his head is at the Kenema diamond mine and is essentially a slave. Miners working in these conditions typically earn about 12 cents a day and a cup of rice. The business is complex, with diamonds changing hands many times before they ever reach a retail outlet. One man said to us, **“In the diamond business, you are always living on hope.”**





SENEGAL, 2001

This photograph was taken in a compound in a small town in the middle of the desert. **There were at least 50 young boys who were in shackles, some chained to trees.** After about five minutes of taking photographs, an angry crowd gathered, and I had to quickly exit the compound while my colleague distracted the crowd. Once I was in our Land Cruiser, a young man jumped into our vehicle; he attempted to drive the vehicle head-on into a wall. If he crashed our vehicle and injured us in the process, he would be treated as a hero. To stop him, I hooked his arm so he could not shift gears, and one of my colleagues, who was in the far back of the vehicle, immediately came around the side to pull him out. We locked the doors and waited for the rest of our colleagues so we could depart.

I was told that these were children of families whose parents turned them over to their marabout (religious leader). This religion allowed for men to have several wives, creating very large families. The marabout required these boys to beg for money in the streets each day. If they failed to reach their “quotas,” they were disciplined. Later, if they attempted to escape, they were shackled.



HONDURAS, 2005

Carla, age 13, works in a garbage dump in Honduras with her younger sister (shown above). Carla is sniffing glue to lessen the stench of the dump and to deaden the reality of her life. She is representative of many young girls who earn 50 cents a day sorting garbage and selling what they find. Her daily meal often comes from what she scavenges from the heaps of rotting food. Many girls in these circumstances find that it is easier to earn money by using their bodies, which they frequently do with truck drivers at the dump, earning between \$1 and \$5 for each encounter. The youngest girl we met who was already being exploited in this manner was ten years old. It is difficult to convey the despondency and sadness of these girls as we listened to their stories. **They do not want to sell sex, but it is “better” than digging through the garbage.**



ROMANIA, 2002

Chiprian lives in the sewer, which is visible in the lower left corner of this image. He is one of the estimated 20,000 street children in Romania. When he was 12 years old, he lost his leg after falling asleep on a railroad track; at the time, he was with a group of children in a trafficking ring in Europe. He sniffs glue to try to deaden the pain and pass the time. Children in these circumstances live without any protection. **The number of children globally who live in the streets is unknown but estimates range from 10 million to 100 million.** What is known is that the vast majority live in the poorest countries, with nonexistent social safety nets.



BANGLADESH, 2001

People often assume economic growth reduces poverty. This is not always the case. Economic growth means little to the poorest unless it also produces effective policies, new ideas and opportunities to ensure the benefits of growth actually address poverty-related problems.

This young girl scavenges through the local garbage dump, looking for something to eat, likely her only meal for the day. Photographing in a landfill is difficult. Often the people do not like being photographed. The smell is inescapable: methane burns your eyes and the stench penetrates everything, including your clothes. **After an hour, I found it hard to breathe and my eyes burned so badly that I could hardly keep them open.** These are the living conditions these children experience every day.



SIERRA LEONE, 2008

About 75 percent of the population of Sierra Leone lives on less than \$2 a day. When I visited, the country was trying to recover from 10 years of brutal civil war. Interviewing former child combatants is emotional. “Little Cromite” (pictured left), meaning the youngest one, was abducted at age six. Little Cromite was his jungle name, given to him by his commander when he was captured. He was immediately trained to use an AK-47. Not able to carry the weapon, he would drag it until he needed to use it; then he would drop to the ground to fire. He showed us where his commander cut his chest and rubbed in cocaine to keep him “pumped up,” a common practice used on the younger “soldiers.” **The first time they did this to him he was nine years old. He said, “you become like wild dogs.”**

“Pepe” described watching his father be killed by the RUF guerillas. At that moment, he had to make a decision. He was told, “You join us, or you die.” He said, “Right now there is no hope—only finding a way to survive.”

Each of our meetings with the former child soldiers included three individuals. Groups of women and men were separate. The first name we asked for was their jungle name, the name they were given by their commander. The commanders mentioned were CO-Blood (Commander Blood), Superman and Scorpion. I asked them a number of questions, some they would not answer. The men were often more willing to provide details than the women. They explained how they would “chop” hands to send a message to the president. They described how they were trained to use weapons and how helicopters would fly into Kono to trade diamonds for guns, grenades and drugs. One way to move diamonds during the conflict was through neighboring countries. Côte d’Ivoire, which had not had a diamond industry for more than a decade, exported an average of 1.5 million carats a year to the Belgian High Diamond Council during the late 1990s. It’s a stark reminder of how too often the world turns a blind eye to human suffering, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.

SIERRA LEONE, 2008

On our last day meeting with survivors of Sierra Leone's civil war, we were introduced to three women. Their jungle names were "Born Naked," "Burn House" and "Small Pepper." They were 9, 10 and 18 years old when they were captured by rebels. One of them pointed to her eyes and said, **"I have seen things no person should witness."** She continued, "the stories have been buried so they do not come out easily—buried very deep."

They were given a "husband," and if a higher-ranking commander wanted them, they were taken. One of the girls described being pregnant and losing the baby because of the constant walking, carrying ammunition and using heavy weapons.

They were trained to fire against the human shields used by the West African armed forces (ECOMOG). Drugs were forced on them so they would "have the mind to kill—even if you saw your own mother, you would kill her." Burn House said she snorted gunpowder and put it in her food—"it makes you strong."





MALI, 2003

Mohair lives in Timbuktu, a place that many of us have heard of, but few have visited. She lives just outside an area the locals call “the belt of misery,” the outer perimeter of the city. This is a place where people barely survive on 25 cents a day.

Mohair, like many young women we saw in the area, was unmarried and had a child. We were told that when a trader stops in Timbuktu, by tradition and religion, he can select a young woman and pronounce that she is now his wife. She is then obligated to sleep with him that night. **In the morning, the man can simply say to her, “I divorce you,” three times, and he is on his way.** There is no obligation to support the woman or a child if one is born. Timbuktu is a very remote area with very few escape options for young women.



SIERRA LEONE, 2007

Foday Marah was on his way to the field to work when he was ambushed by rebels. They told him, **“You voted with your right hand, so we will cut off that arm. You signed for the president, now you will be chopped.”** The rebels gave him his severed hand and a letter, and instructed him to deliver both to Sierra Leone’s president. As others beside him were also “chopped,” the rebels killed one man and taunted Foday, saying, “See that man? He is sleeping.” Then they cut off his son’s hand. Foday was a farmer, but now he lives in a small community with other amputees, unable to work in the fields.



ZAMBIA, 2007

The four men in the photograph were once notorious poachers. Thomson Tembo, third from the left, went to prison three different times for a total of 18 years. **These men, along with over 400 others, gave up poaching to join a conservation-based agriculture program to provide for their families.** This was achieved through a unique community program based in the Luangwa Valley in Zambia.

In 2008 when I visited the project, they had collected over 800 weapons and more than 50,000 wire snares that were used for poaching. The project helped poachers transition from their illegal activity to establishing small farm plots. In 2001, participating households earned an average of \$18 a year; in 2008 it had increased to \$65 a year.



ETHIOPIA, 2008

I was traveling with the UN WFP as we arrived at a food distribution site in Gara Godo. The day we visited, over 2,000 mothers were there. Farther on, at Misrak Badawacho, there were 4,257 people waiting for food distributions. It was here that we found Negese Feleke, a 12-year-old boy who had been healthy a year earlier. He was now severely malnourished. His mother farmed half a hectare to feed 11 family members. When their crop failed, she sold all of her goats and cattle to buy food. **Her last animal died in February from the drought. Now she had nothing as her son withered away.**



ARMENIA, 2005

When my son, Howie, and I landed in Armenia, we already knew the statistics: 40 percent of Armenians live in extreme poverty. Another 30 percent live in poverty, on about \$2 a day, well below the U.S. definition.

First, we visited a family that had just buried their son. He died because they could not afford to have him immunized. **The father's parting words to us were, "No way to live, and no way to leave."** As we traveled across the country, we saw Soviet-era factories sitting idle, broken and useless. We visited families where there were large, empty rooms and then a room with five or six beds where the family slept together, primarily to survive the bitter cold in wintertime.

Anna (pictured left) is particularly difficult to forget. As we walked through the streets of her village, she stopped us and invited us into her home. Her sister Maria, who was 84, lived with her. It became obvious to us that Maria suffered from some sort of mental illness and Anna was her guardian. Anna showed us the rope she used to tie the door between the kitchen and the living room shut at night. In her delirious state, Maria had tried to strangle her at night, so Anna slept on the porch, which also served as the kitchen. As she talked, tears ran down Anna's face, over her wrinkled skin.

Anna went to the closet to find documents to show me that her sister had fought against the Germans in Russia. She operated an anti-aircraft gun. Anna did not understand how they could fight for a country and then be forgotten. The first and only time Maria spoke, she yelled, telling us that she was never afraid and that she was proud to fight; she was one of the best shots in the military. Then she fell silent again.

Anna described how difficult it was to survive. Neighbors helped her with wood for heat in the winter, but they were always hungry. She showed us the living room where Maria slept. We had to enter carefully because there was human waste on the floor. I cannot describe how I felt as we left. There are many questions I cannot answer. My urge is always to help, but often the futility of doing so makes that impossible.

ITALY, 2008

Every year thousands of African migrants attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe via Lampedusa Island, Italy; many do not survive. I asked a young woman if she would tell me about the three-year journey she took before arriving on the island. Originally from Eritrea, she was serving a compulsory term in the military when she was refused personal leave time and forced to provide unpaid domestic services for her superiors. She was coerced to cook, wash dishes and clean. When she began to speak about her departure from Eritrea, she expressed concern that she could not properly explain in Arabic what had happened. She felt she needed to express it in Tigrinya, her local language. The UNHCR staff I was with were able to find her friend who spoke her local language and English.

We resumed the conversation. She said, **“They did not respect me as a woman.”** The translation was carefully repeated and clarified. She said being raped by her superiors was a common occurrence. Finally, she decided to take the risk of running away. Her journey to Lampedusa was not easy. She walked from Eritrea to Khartoum, Sudan, over 1,000 kilometers through difficult terrain. She then worked for nine months to earn money. Then she crossed the desert to Kufra, Libya, and was arrested when she crossed the border. She spent two months in jail in Kufra. Eventually, she paid \$200 to get out of jail, only to be arrested again by the same officers two kilometers away from the jail. She later paid \$500 to be freed.

She was able to reach Tripoli, Libya. In Tripoli, she was put in prison for one year. In prison, she was raped repeatedly. When she was released, she found people from her country who helped her hide from the government. Libyan smugglers later hid them until it was time to leave for the island. At this point, our interview ended abruptly as she broke down and emotions turned to tears. She was unable to continue our conversation.





BOSNIA, 1999

I was sitting in a room in Mostar talking to a woman who literally ran for her life with her child in her arms as her brother and husband were killed. After fleeing across a bridge, she stepped on a land mine. The next thing she remembered was waking up in a hospital. Her immediate question was if her son was alive, and she learned that he was fine. She had absorbed the impact of the explosion, and he had been thrown clear. Then she began to struggle with her words, and tears ran down her face. She slowly described how the physical pain was not her greatest agony, even though she had lost her entire leg up to her hip. The very first time she had been reunited with her son, he would not go to her; he was scared because her leg was missing. After she was released from the hospital, she moved to an old building with limited access. She lived on the fourth floor, and not long after she moved into the building, the elevator stopped working. I thought of the four flights of concrete steps we had climbed to talk to her, and I realized she was in an impossible situation.

Bosnia gave me a new understanding of the human condition and the wreckage conflict leaves behind. The photo above was taken in a rehabilitation center with a man who had also lost a limb in the war. **I remember every time my shutter released on my camera, it sounded like a cannon going off in the silence.** It was one of the most uncomfortable series of photographs I have ever taken.



GUATEMALA, 2007

Mirna's story is one of economic suffering, modern slavery, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS. Mirna left her home in El Salvador when she was 16 years old. **A woman promised her a job at a restaurant, but instead she sold her to a house of prostitution in Guatemala for \$400.** Mirna tried to work off the debt, but the continuing charges for her room and food made it impossible. Then a man helped her escape, and she began working in a bar. She was 25 at the time.

Mirna met a woman who offered her housing in exchange for performing daily chores. After moving in with the woman, Mirna fell ill. She was first hospitalized in Malacatan, but the doctor was not sure of the diagnosis. She was then treated at Coatepeque where they determined she had tuberculosis. When she was in the hospital, she was tested for HIV and was found to be positive.

Mirna lost 12 pounds when she first arrived at a hospice center, but she had gained back three at the time of our visit. She received two blood transfusions and had numerous physical and emotional challenges. In spite of all of this, she spoke of leaving the hospice and finding work. Her enduring optimism, despite all she had been through, was remarkable.

ANGOLA, 2006

In 2006, on a trip to Angola, I visited the drought-affected area of Ukuma. Towards the end of a six-hour drive to the village of Luvo, we passed multiple graveyards, all recently dug. As we neared a graveyard where several men were digging a new grave, I asked if we could stop and talk to them. The driver told me to wait in the vehicle while he approached the men to ask their permission. Shortly after, he motioned for me to come over. It was only then I realized I wasn't sure how to ask the men about such a difficult subject.

As I approached, I noticed that most of the graves were not more than three or four feet long, so the first question I asked was why so many children were dying. The men explained that due to the drought, malnutrition was widespread, many people were starving and there was an outbreak of malaria. After visiting for about 10 minutes, we left the men and headed towards the village.

When we arrived at Luvo, we pulled into an area with grass huts surrounded by trees. As I exited the vehicle, the first thing I noticed was a line of about 20 women holding their children, many of whom appeared to be very young. I looked at the ones who were closest to me and remember thinking, there is no way that any of these children are going to live.

I then felt a push on my right side and as I turned, a woman started to shove a tiny baby into my chest. She was very upset, and her voice gradually got louder and more frantic. The interpreter told me she was demanding that I take her child. She was almost yelling at this point, telling me she had no more milk and there was no food—her baby's only chance of survival was with me. Several women began to try to calm her down as I awkwardly explained that I could not take her child.

Later, I walked through the village and found this mother trying to provide a drink to her child. I remember her expression vividly: it was as if we were not even present. Someone in our group asked her a question, but the faraway look in her eyes never changed, and the interpreter chose not to translate her reply. I spent weeks after I left Angola trying to develop a plan to assist that village, only to learn how impossible it was to coordinate the difference pieces required to help. It was not as simple as just getting food to this village. Feeding starving people is a medical intervention. We needed, but could not secure, a doctor to assess every person and determine individualized feeding plans. Then we needed the WFP to have adequate supplies of commodities within a timely distance of the village—which they didn't have. Seeds for planting crops were ruled out because they would just cook and eat them. It was the stark reality that many starving people are at the mercy of logistics and supply chains. I had visited just one village, and there were countless others nearby with the same needs. I had our Foundation's resources and the will and desire to help but could not. It's a day and a lesson I will never forget.



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