



2012 GRANT PORTFOLIO*

*Developed August 2012

AgroEcology Fund (“the Fund”) is pleased to announce its award of \$1 million in grants to support six high-performing, innovative organizational collaborations to promote agro-ecological solutions around the world. The Fund believes that its impact will be greatly increased by support from additional partners, and invites members of the philanthropic community to collaborate on future efforts. More information on the Fund and its initial portfolio of grants is below.

ABOUT THE PORTFOLIO

In August 2012, the Fund awarded a total of \$1 million to six organizational partnerships whose project goals align with the Fund’s vision and grant-making strategies. These grants were given over a two-year grant period to grantees working in a variety of locations, including Central and South America, West Africa, the United States, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

The specific projects grantees are pursuing include: building awareness and capacity among individual farmers and networks to influence policies that favor agroecology; facilitating farmer knowledge exchanges; and increasing the use of more environmentally sustainable farming methods. The initiatives represent collaborations that engage a range of partners on local, national, and international levels. All projects seek to empower marginalized populations, including indigenous, women, and smallholder farmers, land stewards, and their communities. As a whole, the portfolio of grantees drives global and local solutions that advance agroecology and food sovereignty as an alternative to current practices that damage both the environment and local farming communities.

FUNDED PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The Fund supported six projects, most of which are collaborative efforts by multiple organizations. The table below contains a summary of the grants, and more detailed descriptions of each project follow.

AgroEcology Fund : Grantee Portfolio August 2012		
Project Title	Grantee Organization(s)	Grant Award
A Catalyst to Expand the Global Agro-Ecology Movement	Lead Organization: Grassroots International Partners: International Development Exchange, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, and Focus on the Global South	\$300,000
A Global Partnership to Amplify Peasant and Family Farm Agro-Ecology as Part of Food Sovereignty	Lead Organization: La Via Campesina Partners: GRAIN and ETC Group	\$300,000
Scaling Farmer-led Agro-Ecology in West Africa	Lead Organization: Groundswell International Partners: Food First, ILEIA, Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development, Sahel Eco, and Association Nourrir Sans Détruire	\$200,000



Strengthening and Expanding Agro-Ecological Systems for Food Sovereignty & Local Leadership, Chiapas	Lead Organization: Desarrollo Socio Económico para los Mexicanos Indígenas	\$100,000
Save Our Seeds (SOS) - Legal Challenges to Seed Intellectual Property Rights & Seed Patent Regimes	Lead Organization: Center for Food Safety Partners: African Centre for Biosafety	\$50,000
Women's Networks for Biodiversity and Agro-Ecology	Lead Organization: Navdanya	\$50,000
Total Grant Awards		\$1,000,000

1. “A Catalyst to Expand the Global Agro-Ecology Movement”

A project led by Grassroots International in partnership with International Development Exchange, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, and Focus on the Global South

Geographic Focus: International

Primary Issue Area: Public Policy/Advocacy

The Fund awarded Grassroots International and its three partner organizations \$300,000 to grow the international agroecology movement in order to counter the rapidly growing industrial agriculture movement favored by international corporations and their allies. These organizations will partner to enhance agroecological farming practices by encouraging farmer-to-farmer learning and to link international food, water, and climate policy activities with grassroots groups and networks that have agroecology experience so that they may influence international policy. To implement these goals, they will coordinate a series of four learning exchanges in the Global South and support organizations working on agroecological policy and practice. The learning exchanges will bring together farmers and advocates to compile and disseminate farmer knowledge and develop avenues to showcase innovations developed on the ground. The grant will also support grassroots agroecology leaders’ participation in important regional and international processes. By simultaneously honing farmers’ practices and supporting their participation in regional and international activities, this project will facilitate greater coordination among on-the-ground grassroots networks and international policy efforts.

2. “A Global Partnership to Amplify Peasant and Family Farm Agro-Ecology as Part of Food Sovereignty”

A project led by La Via Campesina in partnership with GRAIN and ETC Group

Geographic Focus: International

Primary Issue Area: Public Policy/Advocacy

The Fund awarded La Via Campesina (LVC) and its two partner organizations \$300,000 to address the linked problems of rising food prices and climate change that result from industrial farming. The partnership seeks to build the capacity of grassroots organizations and to mobilize campaigns to create a policy environment that recognizes agroecology as a viable alternative to industrial farming. To build the capacity of on-the-ground organizations, LVC will provide advocacy trainings and mobilization support. In an effort to amplify the movement’s voice on the global policy front, LVC and its partners will generate reports on agroecological practices, offer communications trainings to members of LVC’s network of 150 farmer organizations, and prepare



LVC delegates who are speaking at international forums by educating them on agroecological successes and policy positions. By strengthening its supporters' advocacy capabilities, this project will raise awareness of agroecology and influence international policy in its favor.

3. “Scaling Farmer-led Agro-Ecology in West Africa”

A project led by Groundswell International in partnership with Food First, ILEIA, Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Development, Sahel Eco, and Association Nourrir San Détruire

Geographic Focus: West Africa

Primary Issue Area: Network Capacity Building/Advocacy

The Fund awarded Groundswell International, in collaboration with five partner organizations, \$200,000 to strengthen and amplify existing farmer- and women-led initiatives and organizations in Mali, Burkina Faso, and northern Ghana. Their goal is to spread agroecological farming systems, reinforce movements for food sovereignty, and advocate for supportive policies. These organizations will raise awareness, build capacity, and document and disseminate the practices and successes of agroecological methods of farming. Their efforts include conducting small-scale experimentation of agroecological farming practices and disseminating information on agroecological farming systems by increasing coverage on local radio and hosting conferences on agroecology advocacy for women and indigenous farmers. By developing and sharpening local farmers' practices while also raising awareness on multiple levels, this project supports shifts in the language and direction of local, regional, and international agricultural policies in favor of environmentally responsible systems and will give women and indigenous farmers a more influential voice.

4. “Strengthening and Expanding Agro-Ecological Systems for Food Sovereignty & Local Leadership in Chiapas”

A project led by Desarrollo Socio Económico para los Mexicanos Indígenas

Geographic Focus: Chiapas, Mexico

Primary Issue Area: Farmer Learning Groups/Practice Refinement

The Fund awarded Desarrollo Socio Económico para los Mexicanos Indígenas (DESMI) \$100,000 to strengthen agroecological systems that promote food sovereignty, local leadership, and the sharing of knowledge and practices among small-scale, rural, indigenous, and women farmers around the Chiapas region of Mexico. This initiative will encourage community leadership and protect community food sovereignty by providing agroecology promoters in Chiapas with capacity-building support for community organizing, resource management, and technical knowledge exchange. DESMI will provide workshops focused on strengthening agroecological farming practices as well as technical assistance, including skills training, monitoring, and evaluation. DESMI will also host and facilitate peer learning exchanges on food sovereignty and climate change among local and regional organizations. By bolstering agroecological practices in the region while also empowering women and indigenous farmers, this project provides the capacity-building tools and regional linkages that are critical to amplifying traditional and sustainable agricultural practices across Chiapas.



5. “Save Our Seeds (SOS) - Legal Challenges to Seed Intellectual Property Rights & Seed Patent Regimes”

A project led by the Center for Food Safety in partnership with the African Centre for Biosafety

Geographic Focus: Africa

Primary Issue Area: Legal Advocacy

The Fund awarded the Center for Food Safety and its partner, the African Centre for Biosafety, \$50,000 to preserve the livelihood of small-scale farmers in the Global South and strengthen their rights under domestic and international law to counter the growing problem of seed commercialization. The partners will advance the principle that seeds are a public good to be protected through legal research and action. Together they will pursue a biopiracy case involving a patent obtained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas A&M University for a Tanzanian sorghum gene. These parties are in the process of licensing the seed commercially for private profit. As sorghum is a traditional crop critical for food stability in Africa, this patent could cause high levels of hunger and malnutrition. The project will have two phases: exploratory research to build the legal challenge, followed by filing administrative charges and a public awareness campaign. If the legal challenge is successful, it would set a critical precedent by returning this seed to the small-scale farmers currently cultivating sorghum. By providing an influential example to other countries, this project could help lead to a shift toward supporting more agroecological farming methods that would preserve traditional and indigenous farming knowledge.

6. “Women's Networks for Biodiversity and Agro-Ecology”

A project led by Navdanya

Geographic Focus: India and Nepal

Primary Issue Area: Network Capacity Building/Advocacy

The Fund awarded Navdanya \$50,000 to amplify the knowledge and practices of women farmers, including indigenous individuals working throughout the Himalayas, to address the problems of poverty, malnutrition, and climate vulnerability in the region. This initiative will build a vocal movement by documenting and disseminating the knowledge and practices of women farmers and creating local and regional networks to exchange this knowledge. Navdanya will hold a series of workshops that bring together a diverse audience of farmers, scientists, think tanks, and policymakers to discuss integrating agroecological practices into food and agriculture policies. Navdanya will also coordinate two large-scale events—an international conference and a regional food festival—to increase awareness of food sovereignty and climate change. This project aims to build a movement by simultaneously establishing strong grassroots networks and building partnerships among farmers, researchers, and policymakers working at national and regional levels.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on becoming a donor partner to the Fund, please contact info@agroecologyfund.org



UNFUNDED GRANT REQUESTS

The Fund received two high-quality grant requests in August 2012 that were not ultimately chosen for funding due to limited resources. Prospective donor partners may be interested in supporting these projects. Descriptions of each are below.

“Enhancing Agro-Ecology in Africa through Strengthening Communities and Networks”

A project led by the African Biodiversity Network in partnership with MELCA-Ethiopia, the Mupo Foundation, Rural Initiatives for Development Program-Kenya, Institute for Culture and Ecology-Kenya, Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Association, Africa Friends of the Earth, Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage, and COMPAS

Geographic Focus: Africa

Primary Issue Area: Network Capacity Building/Advocacy

The African Biodiversity Network (ABN) and its eight partner organizations requested \$200,000 to address hunger in Africa. ABN and its partners proposed to accomplish this goal by preserving African seed diversity and traditional farming knowledge as an alternative to ecologically harmful farming practices. The partners would pursue a series of activities to document and raise awareness of agroecological farming practices, including regional training workshops, community learning exchanges, research groups to collect data, and ongoing dialogues and festivals. ABN also proposed partnering with four regional networks to build a national and regional campaign to raise awareness and further policy change on agroecology and food sovereignty. The coalitions would hold annual network meetings, develop written briefs and joint statements, and organize meetings with members of the government. Though this project was ultimately not funded, it demonstrates promise for future Fund efforts by seeking to develop a cohesive movement to shift the language and direction of African agricultural policies while simultaneously honing traditional practices.

“Strengthening Agro-Ecological Solutions for Food Sovereignty and Resilience to Climate Change”

A project led by the Gaia Foundation in partnership with the Deccan Development Society, Foundation FIELD Indonesia, and ANDES

Geographic Focus: International, with targeted activities in Peru, India, and Indonesia

Primary Issue Area: Farmer Learning Groups/Practice Refinement



The Gaia Foundation and its three partner organizations requested approximately \$300,000 to address the growing dependence of marginalized farming communities, especially women and children, on imported foodstuffs by supporting the communities to gain greater control of local food production and distribution. The partners sought to work on both international and national levels in Peru, India, and Indonesia to address the increase of input-intensive farming practices that damage the environment and contribute to climate change. To implement their goals, the Gaia Foundation and its partners would facilitate learning exchanges, create women- and indigenous-led networks, and launch training programs in order to encourage a horizontal farmer-to-farmer spread of innovation in agroecology and food sovereignty. On a global level, the partnership proposed activities to engage policymakers and media in an effort to secure policy reforms that help combat climate change and promote national food sovereignty. In line with the core goals of the Fund, this project explicitly focused on bringing marginalized groups, including women farmers and indigenous populations, into the work of developing and implementing agroecological solutions that build on the skills and practices of local communities.