

# International Giving

The recipient organizations of our international giving vary somewhat from year to year. The general rule is that one or more Seekers are personally involved in these organizations in



some way. Recipients are chosen by consensus among the congregation at the start of every year.

## International Giving 2023



Despite challenging times, Seekers Church continues to support many missions and ministries in other countries. Once again, this year the amount budgeted for international giving is nearly 19% of what we expect to receive in offerings over the

course of the year.

Once our budget for the year was approved by the Stewards, including the amount available for international giving, all Seekers were invited to submit requests for support of missions or ministries where they are personally involved. After worship on March 19<sup>th</sup> the community met online to determine how our international giving will be distributed. We affirmed support for 10 international missions and ministries listed here.

## **Middle East**

[New Story Leadership – Israel/Palestine](#)

## **Africa**

[Bokamoso Youth Foundation – South Africa](#)

[Philakade Care Home – South Africa](#)

[Save Ankole's Environment Community-Based Organization – Uganda](#)

[YMCA of Uganda](#)

## **Central America**

[Center for Development in Central America / Los Leones – Nicaragua](#)

[PAVA \(Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano\) – Guatemala](#)

[San Lucas Toliman Reforestation Project – Guatemala](#)

[Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods \(SOIL\) – Haiti](#)

Here is a brief description of each organization and the connection to Seekers Church. To visit their web sites, click on the name of the organization.

## MIDDLE EAST

### [New Story Leadership – Israel/Palestine](#)

NSL uses the power of stories for peacemaking to help Palestinians and Israelis end their old stories of war, mistrust and hatred, by inviting them to step away from their defended positions and ideological fortresses to listen to the stories of the other.

This year NSL is also working to expand support provided to alumni of the program, expanding the alumni network and involving alumni in recruitment and selection of the current applicants. However, the recent election in Israel and the sharp polarization that is resulting have presented new challenges for both Palestinian and Israeli NSL alumni. Being known for affiliation with efforts for dialogue has exposed several alumni to discrimination and threats from members of their own community. (Starting in Fall of 2022, NSL staff and board have removed name references and blurred identities of alumni on the NSL website and NSL references on other related sites.)

Despite these challenges, NSL is interviewing 30 applicants interested in the in-person program for Summer, 2023. At the same time, the executive director is reaching out to Members of Congress and political action groups to arrange internships.

The work of NSL is in keeping with Seekers' commitment to work to end all war, violence and discord. Seekers has been pleased to host the US office of NSL in our building. For more than a decade the Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group of Seekers has maintained an active partnership with NSL and currently has two members serving on the NSL board of directors.

<https://www.newstoryleadership.org/stories-matter->

## AFRICA

## **Bokamoso Youth Foundation – Winterveldt, Gauteng, South Africa**

The Bokamoso (“Future” in Tswana) Youth Foundation was founded in 1999. in the sprawling rural township of Winterveldt, South Africa. Winterveldt, with more than 128,000 people, has an unemployment rate of 50 percent, crime, abusive relationships, drugs, and overcrowded substandard schools. HIV/AIDS has orphaned a large segment of the community’s youth and closely touches the lives of about 25 percent of Winterveldt’s population.

The Bokamoso Life Centre helps at-risk youth ages 17 to 25, providing counseling services, health education, life skills training and support for self-improvement through its various programs including the Youth Development Program (YDP) formerly known as ADP, drama, choral, youth mentoring, sports, and a computer lab and creative writing.

For a number of years Seekers has had a connection through Roy Barber. When the Bokamoso theater group came to the DC area they provided a Sunday worship service, and Seekers provided them with a career workshop and one-day visits to work environments in the DC area that were of interest to the Bokamoso young adults. <https://bokamosoyouth.org/>

## **Philakade Care Home – South Africa**

The Philakade Care Home, near Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal, provides care for vulnerable and abandoned people in the community, especially those who are unhoused, have disabilities or are frail or elderly. Seekers’ contribution will help with operational costs including utilities, food, medicine and medical supplies, adult diapers, patient activity supplies and consumables, maintenance and repairs.

Philakade was envisioned and started by Mary Ann and Steve Carpenter, gifted and committed health care professionals who provided Seekers with our first connection to South Africa and also were the founders of the Bokamoso Life Centre. Paul

Holmes provides periodic updates, including photos.

## [Save Ankole's Environment Community-Based Organisation \(SAECBO\) – Uganda](#)

SAECBO protects and improves local environments and threatened tree species and deforested areas through education, distribution of tree seedlings and construction of fuel-efficient cook stoves. Uganda has been experiencing deforestation and greater numbers of endangered indigenous species of trees at an alarming rate. (At the 2018 rate of destruction, there may no longer be forests in 40 years.) The main reason is that 41% of the population lives in poverty on less than \$2 per day and 89% of people rely on gathering firewood to cook on open fires, or on charcoal, lacking fuel efficient cook stoves..

Seekers' funds support creation of tree seedling nurseries in yet unreached areas; train volunteers to go to forests and sustainably gather desired tree seeds and small seedlings, help plant and pot seedlings; provide small payments to a few people to keep seedlings weeded and watered; conduct education and training events at which seedlings are distributed; build fuel efficient cook stoves for families); and monitor some of the trees and stoves from prior years' projects.

Diantha Hodges started this initiative in 2020 with Sergio, a botanist with great love for his local environment and a dream of planting 10,000 trees for his people.

In 2022 18,457 seedlings were distributed to 906 families and more than 38 stoves were constructed. Additional funding helped the project draft a website and engage consultants to plan expansion of the project into the Kyenjojo district.

In 2023 the project will work in cooperation with the Ugandan National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and their local district environmental officers as well as local leaders, including them in implementation planning and

training. The project goals include:

- Creating at least 4 tree seedling nurseries in yet unreached areas;
- Distributing at least 12,000 seedlings of a variety of species appropriate to the size and type of land available to the recipient;
- Training volunteers to sustainably gather desired tree seeds and small seedlings from local forests, plant and pot them, with small payments to a few people to keep seedlings weeded and watered;
- Educating communities on conservation of their environment, indigenous, endangered and threatened trees, benefits for soil, water supply, carbon sequestration, uses for people for medicine and food, and how to care for trees and seedlings, including local trees which have traditional cultural values, specific to clans;
- Building 2-pot and 1-pot fuel efficient cook stoves for at least 25 families;
- Exploring making portable stoves for people who are too poor to have an outdoor kitchen hut.

The project will be led by a trained engineer who will also train an additional minimum of 4 women to support the project, and monitor and evaluate some of the trees and stoves from last year's project in Rwampara District.

<https://www.facebook.com/saveAnkolesEnvironmentCommunityBasedOrganisation>.

### **Y.M.C.A. Uganda**

Y.M.C.A. Uganda is a Christian organization formed in 1961 as a self-sustaining institution that focuses on effective leadership, promoting full development of humanity in body, spirit and mind, for the youth and other vulnerable groups. YMCA Uganda nurtures young people to live within Christian principles, demonstrated by Christian character. Activities

include Christian training workshops, retreats, and camping, with continuous provision of vocational training programs for skills development in tailoring, computer repairs and maintenance, catering, cosmetology, and animal husbandry along with recreational activities such as sports, games, music dance and drama.

In 2022, Y.M.C.A Uganda used funds from Seekers Church -to purchase 10 sewing machines and training materials for the students studying tailoring, and supported training of 15 other students in various skills for self-sustenance. With additional funding, Y.M.C.A. Uganda hopes to expand training to 50 students and purchase additional furniture and materials.

Damalie Mirembe is our contact for the Uganda YMCA.  
[www.ugandaymca.com](http://www.ugandaymca.com)

## **CENTRAL AMERICA**

### **Center for Development in Central America (CDCA)/Los Leones – Nicaragua**

The Center for Development in Central America (CDCA) funds the **Los Leones** youth program in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. The CDCA's mission is to enable communities to become self-sufficient, sustainable, democratic entities, focusing on Ciudad Sandino, the most densely populated city in Nicaragua, and one of the poorest. Many boys in Nueva Vida live in homes run by strong women – mothers, grandmothers and aunts – who look after their children with an admirable combination of protectiveness and insistence on obedience. This keeps the boys safe in a tough world, but like all kids, they begin to push back when they hit adolescence. For preteen and teenage boys, spending time in a boys-only environment run by men who will let them push boundaries gives them the space they need to discover for themselves who they are and what kind of men they want to be.

Los Leones provides boys aged 11 to 18 with exposure to positive community engagement, communication skills, and leadership. They are also involved in learning trades like baking, cell phone repair, carpentry, barbering, and piñata making. The program ensures they receive regular medical attention. In four years, the program has nearly doubled in size to serving 40 boys. CDCA is currently seeking more dedicated donations for the Leones and a girls group, Las Lobas, to help cover direct costs (class materials, snacks and stipends) and indirect costs to cover salaries for staff that work with the groups and the free family planning and medical care the boys receive as part of the program. Rebecca Wheaton has ongoing contact with the Los Leones program. [JHC-CDCA](#)

### [PAVA \(Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano\) – Chimaltenango, Guatemala](#)

PAVA(Aid Program for Highland Communities) is a Guatemalan NGO that works closely with rural communities in the Department of Chimaltenango to achieve long-term sustainable development through community-based projects and programs. Between 2002 and 2015, Marjory and Peter Bankson led 15 work pilgrimages, including more than 25 different Seekers, to help build primary schools and 3 community centers in Chimaltenango villages decimated by the 30-year civil war.

PAVA now seeks funding for scholarships for the most able students to get secondary schooling and, in some cases, support for college. PAVA is celebrating its first student to graduate from college – and she has become the education director for PAVA! <https://www.pavafoundation.org/>

### [San Lucas Toliman Reforestation Project – Solola, Guatemala](#)

From 2002 through 2015, the Guatemala Pilgrimages offered participating pilgrims the opportunity to visit several of the missions and ministries that emerged in San Lucas Toliman while Father Greg Schaffer served as priest at the Catholic



Church there. The Reforestation Project, founded and run by Toribio Chajil is one of these ministries.

Toribio rents land at a nominal cost from the Friends of San Lucas to grow seedlings for reforestation. He provides seedlings, insight and encouragement to people throughout the country to help control erosion and encourage environmental sensitivity. He conducts reforestation activities with children and adolescents and provides environmental education in local schools and shares his experience. [Click here to see a report and video of Toribio working to help children understand what they can do to care for our climate.](#)

Seekers visited this project regularly during the PAVA pilgrimages. The Banksons maintain our link with the Reforestation Project.

### **Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) – Haiti**

SOIL (Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods) expands access to safe, affordable, and restorative sanitation services in some of Haiti's most vulnerable urban communities. It produces organic, agriculture-grade compost from safely-treated human waste, creating a climate-positive solution that restores soil health, saves precious water, creates jobs, stops the spread of waterborne disease, and grows more food. SOIL currently provides lifesaving sanitation services to more than 13,500 people in Cap Haitien, produces more than 200 tons of nutrient-packed compost annually and employs more than 65 people.

Seekers' funds will be used to expand SOIL's services to more families in Cap Haitien. SOIL 2023 plans include expanding sanitation access from more than 2,200 households served today to over 2,700 households, reaching more than 16,500 people. <https://www.oursoil.org/>

Erica Lloyd, who grew up in Seekers Church and is a member, served on SOIL's leadership team for many years, and maintains

contact for Seekers.

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