

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 2022



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 over 18% of what we expect to receive in offerings over the course of the year.

Once our budget for the year was approved, including the amount available for international giving, by the Stewards, all Seekers were invited to submit requests for support of missions or ministries where they are personally involved.

After worship on March 15th the community met online to determine how our international giving will be distributed. We affirmed support for 12 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](#)

[Nectandra Institute – Costa Rica](#)

[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

New Story Leadership (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.

In 2021 the digital leadership programs (#SheLeads and #OurVoice) were both successful in reaching out and training new leaders. #SheLeads is a digital leadership program sponsored by the United States Embassy in Jerusalem to train women from Israel and Palestine who are committed to becoming leaders in their respective fields and are interested in building alliances with each other. Participants learn skills in storytelling, negotiation, gender lens investments, and diplomacy. #OurVoice is a digital advocacy project sponsored by the Irish government that brings together Palestinian, Israeli, and Irish Alumni of New Story Leadership and the Washington Ireland Program for training on storytelling in digital advocacy.

In 2022 there will be some activities to complete the initial expectations for both programs – a virtual summit for the #SheLeads, and compilation and release of the digital videos associated with #OurVoice. The initial funders of these programs remain interested in continuing the operations and the Canadian government has also expressed interest in expanding these efforts. NSL is interviewing 25 applicants interested in the in-person program for this summer. The new executive director of NSL is reaching out to Members of Congress and other political leaders to arrange internships. 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..

The work of NSL is in keeping with Seekers' commitment to work

to send all war, violence and discord. Seekers is 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.

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 Centre, 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 and creative writing programs, youth mentoring, sports, and a computer lab. Support from Seekers Church will be used for several important projects:

- Upgrade the financial management software and staff training on new systems;
- Support greatly increased travel to job site visits, youth participation in arts events and performance competitions;
- Support the various traditional community celebration days on which the Centre invites the community, business leaders, private and governmental institutions, and artists to the Centre to engage with the youth; and

- Improve the computer capacity at the Centre.

Seekers Church's connection with Bokamoso goes back many years, supporting development of the Centre in Winterveldt, and the Bokamoso Youth Foundation in the U.S. to coordinate support. Many Seekers are actively involved with Bokamoso. During the youths' annual visits to the U.S. (suspended in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic), Seekers has sponsored a career workshop to help Bokamoso members plan for future employment and has provided support and training for the YDP staff. These activities are another way Seekers can implement the commitment to being creative and inclusive as we work for peace and justice. Roy Barber and Else Sizemore have been central links in the long-term relationship.

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. Sallie and Paul Holmes maintain contact from Seekers.

Save Ankole's Environment Community-Based Organization (SAECBO) – Uganda

Save Ankole's Environment Community Based Organisation (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 will create 4 tree seedling nurseries in 4 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 two training events, at which 12,000 seedlings will be distributed; build fuel efficient cook stoves for 40 families (the number of stoves which can be made per truckload of bricks and sand); and monitor some of the trees and stoves from last year's project. In 2021 SAECBO distributed an average of 34 seedlings per household.

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.

Y.M.C.A. Uganda

YMCA Uganda is a Christian organization, formed in 1961. Their mission is to maintain a transformed, self-sustaining institution that focuses on effective leadership, and promotes full employment of humanity. Their vision is to support 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 characters. They are committed to the provision of program activities for the wholesome development of human being including body, mind and spirit. Their core values are

caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

The planned activities for 2022 are to implement initiatives in the field of developing Christian character, through Christian training workshops, retreats, and camping for the young people. There will be continuous provision of vocational training programs for skills development in tailoring, computer repairs and maintenance, catering, cosmetology, animal husbandry. They will also have recreational activities such as sports, games, music, dance and drama, for the young people.

The connection of Seekers Church is through Damalie Mirembe, whose sister volunteers for the YMCA ICT program, facilitating holiday camps for the youth during school recess.

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. 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 also ensures they receive regular medical attention. In four years, the program has nearly doubled in size to serving 40 boys. Rebecca Wheaton is our link to CDCA and Los Leones.

[Nectandra Institute](#) – Costa Rica

The Nectandra Institute is a U.S. 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1999 and registered in Costa Rica to

carry out education, scientific research and community outreach programs to promote the conservation of cloud forests and stewardship of watershed ecosystems in northern Costa Rica.

The Institute provides no-interest “eco-loans” and technical assistance to municipalities to reforest part of their communities, preserve biodiversity in a biologically significant “biodiversity corridor” in the area, and protect community drinking water supplies; the only “interest” paid by the municipalities is the work undertaken to reforest (and maintain) these lands. It supports scientific research to inventory the plants, animals, and fungi on the Nectandra Cloud Forest Gardens reserve, and on the physiology and function of organisms on the reserve. The Nectandra Institute also conducts public education on the importance of cloud forests.

Seekers funds will support continued work on a macrofungi survey of the reserve and the eco-loan program. Marcia Sprague and David Novello are volunteering at the reserve to help catalog the fungi.

[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, Guatemala to achieve long-term sustainable development through community-based projects and programs. A small, full-time staff based in Antigua manages PAVA’s programs, providing technical expertise and coordination for community learning centers (comunitecas) that serve as libraries and learning centers in three model highland communities, scholarship programs which allow rural Guatemalan children to finish high school, and a professional development program for teachers to improve the quality of education in primary schools.

Between 2002 and 2015, Marjory and Peter Bankson led 15 work pilgrimages, including more than 25 different Seekers, to build primary schools and 3 community centers in the Chimaltenango District of Guatemala for villages decimated by the 30-year civil war. PAVA is now seeking funding for scholarships for the most able students to get secondary schooling and, in some cases, support for college. The Banksons maintain the link between PAVA and Seekers Church.

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

From 2002 through 2015, the Guatemala Pilgrimages led by Marjory and Peter Bankson 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, encourage environmental sensitivity, and search for healthy responses to the serious effects of climate change on the Guatemalan biosphere. 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 9,000 people in Cap Haitien and produces more than 80 tons of nutrient-packed compost annually.

Seekers' contribution enables SOIL to quickly respond to changing conditions on the ground in the communities it serves. Seekers funds will be used to expand SOIL's services to more neighborhoods in Cap Haitien. 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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