

# 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 2021



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 just over 20% 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 21<sup>st</sup> the community met online to determine how our international giving will be distributed. We affirmed support for 13 international missions and ministries listed here.

## **Southeast Asia**

[Photovoices Desa Ban – Indonesia](#)

## **Middle East**

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

## **Africa**

[Africa Education& Leadership \(Africa ELI\) Uganda & South Sudan](#)

[Bokamoso Youth Foundation – South Africa](#)

[Philakade Care Home – South Africa](#)

[Programme Nutrition & Eye Care \(PRONEC\) – Uganda](#)

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

## **Central America**

**Asociacion Iglesia Luterana Costaricense – Costa Rica**

[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.

### **SOUTHEAST ASIA**

#### [Photovoices Desa Ban – Indonesia](#)

Photovoices Desa Ban (Voices of Youth from the Slopes of a Volcano) is a project in East Bali, Karangasem, Indonesia. Photovoices International, founded by Ann McBride Norton, is a nonprofit organization that empowers under-represented communities through photography, and brings community voices into decision-making. It trains community members to use visuals and storytelling to influence people and policies and to advocate for positive change. Claire McBride, who has worked with Photovoices in the areas of development and research and has visited the project in Bali several times, is our ongoing contact.

Photovoices began in China and expanded into Indonesia, where it has partnered with the East Bali Poverty Project to empower youth in this particular region of Bali.

### **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 and to listen to each others' stories. In 2021, NSL will expand to provide leadership training from 10 Palestinians and Israelis to 45 changemakers from Palestine, Israel, Ireland, and the United States through expanded digital advocacy, women's leadership, and video production.

#SheLeads is a digital leadership program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy to train 20 women from Israel and Palestine who are committed to becoming leaders in their respective fields and are interested in building an allyship with each other. Participants will learn skills in storytelling, negotiation, gender lens investments, and diplomacy. The goal is to "form a strong coalition of female millennial leaders from Israel and Palestine to build a future where women's voices are front and center in the political discourse."

#OurVoice is a digital advocacy project sponsored by the Irish government that will bring together 15 Palestinian, Israeli, and Irish alumni of New Story Leadership and the Washington Ireland Program for training on storytelling in digital advocacy. Participants will then collaborate to produce three digital advocacy videos concerning Ireland's 2030 developmental goals: gender equality, environmental sustainability, and peace and security.

NSL's work is in keeping with Seekers' commitment to work to end 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 a member serving on the NSL board of directors.

## **AFRICA**

[Africa Education & Leadership \(Africa ELI\) Uganda & South Sudan](#)

Even before South Sudan's independence, Africa ELI provided academic, financial, and social support to South Sudanese girls, preparing them to be leaders, earn an income, counteract inequalities, improve health practices, and work toward improving society. Prior to civil war in 2014, ELI provided scholarships to over 2,770 students and gave special assistance directly to schools, as well as teacher and student leader training.

Now most of the students have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Uganda. During the Covid lockdown ELI initiated "Teen Voice," an interactive platform accessed by phone, internet and radio, giving any teen access to voice their concerns and challenges as they experience poverty, stress, trauma, and pressures for early marriage or pregnancy. Teens are paired with counselors and mentors when possible. It also began "Wellness Clubs" to promote spiritual, physical and psychological wellbeing and a curriculum through a U.S. partner school.

Currently Africa ELI provides scholarships for 15-20 secondary school girls, as schools in Uganda re-open after closure for Covid. ELI is monitoring and supporting these girls as they wait in refugee camps and will provide additional counseling (especially for post-traumatic stress), clubs and activities to develop leadership and wellbeing, including Reproductive Health, and Go Green Environmental Club.

Diantha Hodges was a United Methodist Missionary in Yei, South Sudan, where Africa ELI was centered and did occasional volunteer activities and some advisory work, collaborating on projects with their staff. When she moved to Uganda, she met a key staff person, and very close friend. Diantha keeps in close touch with and recently became a member of Africa ELI's Advisory Board.

[Bokamoso Youth Foundation](#) – Winterveldt, Gauteng, South Africa

Founded in 1999 the Bokamoso Life Centre helps at-risk youth ages 17 to 25 in the sprawling rural township of Winterveldt, South Africa (SA). 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 Centre provides counseling services, health education, life skills training and support for self-improvement through its various programs, including the Youth Development Program (formerly known as ADP), drama and choral programs, youth mentoring, sports, computer lab, and creative writing. Seekers' 2021 funds will be used to upgrade the Centre's digital capacity to access the internet and improve communications, purchase a high resolution TV for the YDP, upgrade and expand wired security to the office building and large hall, purchase art materials for the art therapy program, and hire human resource services to meet SA-nongovernmental organization (NGO) labor practice, which will allow the Centre to apply for South African corporate and philanthropic funding.

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 we can implement our 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 people near Durban who are homeless, disabled, abandoned, and elderly, especially those who have disabilities and are homeless. Funds will be used to help complete Phase II construction, including residential rooms, clinic space and a separate storage building, enabling Philakade to admit its full complement of 112 patients. Seekers' contribution will also 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.

### **Programme Nutrition & Eye Care (PRONEC) – Uganda**

Programme Nutrition & Eye Care (PRONEC) is a not-for-profit organization in the rural districts of Pallisa and Jinja, Uganda, helping the elderly and vulnerable children. It provides eye health care and nutrition through community based educational programs and this year will be providing canned food, food nutrients and school supplies to thousands of children that have been severely affected by COVID-19 and are still affected by the prolonged government lock-down.

PRONEC arose out of the gap for lack of optical, dental, nutritional services in the health facilities of surrounding areas and communities. Private clinics were and are still too expensive for ordinary people to afford and eye care, dental services, and nutrition education are not a priority in the formal public health settings. This situation predominantly affects poor people who cannot afford to travel to town centers to access needed services.

David Dongo and Damalie Mirembie are contact persons here in the United States, having known PRONEC's work for over 15 years.

### [Save Ankole's Environment Community-Based Organization \(SAECBO\) – 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 causes are that 89% of people rely on gathering firewood to cook on open fires, or on charcoal, lacking fuel-efficient cook stoves.

SACEBO stoves are made from local materials, allowing a meal to be cooked with only a few sticks of wood. They also remove smoke from cooking shelters, improve respiratory health, and reduce children's burns from open fires. Seekers' funds will create 4 tree seedling nurseries in 4 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 12 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.

Diantha Hodges started this project in 2020 with Sergio, a Ugandan botanist with great love for his environment and a dream of planting 10,000 trees for his people. Last year they planted over 13,000 seedlings to almost 2,000 families and built fuel-efficient cook stoves for 16 families, leading to requests from other poor families for a trees to reforest



their small areas. The local governmental authority wrote a very strong letter in appreciation and encouragement for this project. Diantha maintains the contact for Seekers Church.

## **CENTRAL AMERICA**

### **Asociacion Iglesia Luterana Costarricense – Costa Rica**

Seekers Church is supporting the Lutheran Church of Costa Rica (Iglesia Luterana Costarricense (ILCO)), incorporated in Costa Rica as “Asociacion Iglesia Luterana Costarricense” (civic association) to assist Nicaraguan refugees who have fled to Costa Rica.

In 2020 Seekers’ funds helped maintain and improve the two-story building which houses 30+ refugee families for one to two months and food kits for the refugees. The COVID-19 emergency is so acute that the present need is primarily for food, especially food for children. Other services to help refugees get work and housing as well as emotional supports will be provided as funds are available. ( Many of the places that provide refugee support have closed down during the pandemic.)

Will and Teresa Ramsey are maintaining our link with ILCO, working to build relationships that can grow again after the pandemic. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Pastor Gilberto Quesada Moro of ILCO brought the Word during worship at Seekers Church. [Here is a link to his sermon.](#)

[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. It will use Seekers funds to provide mental/physical health awareness and vocational training, including health promotion (learning to inject, to take temperature and blood pressure, weigh people etc), caja (learning basic math skills for venta), karate, cooking (in our new kitchen!), etc. 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 and 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, serves on SOIL's leadership team.