

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a man in a blue polo shirt and tan trousers, smiling as he works in a field. He is holding a long wooden handle, likely for a hoe, and is surrounded by lush green plants. In the background, there are rolling green hills under a cloudy sky.

— 2024 IMPACT REPORT —

EMPOWERING PEOPLE, NURTURING LIVELIHOODS, TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES





Contents

Dedication.....	4
Welcome	6
Who We Are	12
2024 Impact Highlights.....	14
Livelihoods.....	16
Selected Projects and Impacts.....	22
2024 Financial Report.....	41
Institutional Partners.....	44
Individual Supporters.....	45
Board of Directors.....	46
Offices and Contact Information.....	47

Dedication

As a global development organization focused on empowering rural communities, IIRR's work in 2024 reflects our ongoing commitment to climate resilience, food systems strengthening, inclusive education, disaster preparedness, and sustainable livelihoods. This report shares key updates on our regional operations and cross-cutting initiatives, guided by the principle of locally-led development.

This 2024 Impact Report is more than a summary of accomplishments; it is a tribute to the strength, resilience, and leadership of the rural communities we serve.

To the farmers in Ethiopia transforming drylands into thriving ecosystems and youth in the Philippines championing climate education in their schools and barangays: your determination shapes the future we all share.

To every village health worker, seed saver, women's cooperative, and local leader who stood up for food security, climate resilience, inclusive education, and livelihood restoration in 2024: this report is dedicated to you.

To the women farmers of Cambodia and Myanmar, who show that sustainable agriculture and economic empowerment go hand in hand;

To our partners and collaborators across Africa and Asia, who believe in the power of locally-led development and walk with us on this journey of reconstruction, empowerment, and equity;

And to our financial supporters and champions around the world, your steadfast commitment to rural transformation makes everything we do possible.

With humility and hope,

— The IIRR Leadership Team



In Memoriam: Jane Boorstein (1927–2024)

In 2024, IIRR celebrated the life and mourned the passing of Jane Boorstein, a longtime trustee and a pioneering voice in rural development whose work has left a lasting mark on communities worldwide.

Jane dedicated her life to placing rural people – especially women – at the center of their own development. She believed deeply in dialogue as a driver of change, creating Learning Our Way Out (LOWO), a participatory methodology that empowers communities to identify challenges, examine root causes, and design their own solutions. Her approach has strengthened rural families' ability to build sustainable livelihoods, expand educational opportunities, and elevate women's voices in decision-making.

As a member of IIRR's Board of Trustees for 25 years, Jane's wisdom, commitment, and generosity shaped the direction of the organization. Her leadership extended beyond governance: through her partnership with IIRR, LOWO was introduced and scaled in Ethiopia, eventually reaching tens of thousands of people. Independent evaluations documented not only improved education, health, and economic outcomes, but also transformative shifts in women's agency and leadership. Jane's thought leadership continues to influence IIRR's programming today, where community conversation remains a cornerstone of our work in gender equity, health, and climate resilience.

We at IIRR are profoundly grateful for Jane's vision and for her unwavering dedication to the belief that lasting development comes from listening, respect, and local leadership. Her contributions to IIRR and to rural development at large will continue to inspire our mission, and her legacy lives on in the communities that carry forward the conversations she began.





From the President

2024 was a defining year for rural development. Across the Global South, rural communities, home to more than 3.4 billion people and accounting for 80% of those living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2023), bore the brunt of converging crises. Shrinking development assistance, rising input costs, erratic climate patterns, and global supply chain disruptions compounded existing vulnerabilities. At the same time, rural economies hold untapped potential: over 70% of the food consumed in Africa and Asia is produced by smallholder farmers, yet many live on less than \$2 per day.

At IIRR, we saw firsthand both the fragility and the promise of rural systems. These communities are not just stewards of natural resources; they are engines of resilience and economic opportunity when supported to lead their own development. In 2024, we chose to meet uncertainty not with rigidity, but with reflection. We paused our strategic planning, not out of hesitation, but out of respect for the moment. That pause allowed us to ask harder questions and adapt in ways that kept our mission relevant and deeply aligned with community priorities.

Our work remains grounded in five interconnected pillars related to education, food systems, health and nutrition, climate resilience, and, most critically this year, resilient livelihoods. Every school garden, women's savings group, and climate-smart training is more than a standalone intervention. It is a building block for economic empowerment: boosting income, improving nutrition, supporting youth, and expanding choices for women and families.

A farmer who adopts improved practices doesn't just increase yields; she lifts her family and community toward greater self-reliance.

In 2024, we strengthened over 5.7 million livelihoods across East Africa and Southeast Asia, expanded access to local capital for rural entrepreneurs, and worked with communities to co-create solutions that enhance income stability, productivity, and dignity. These are not isolated gains; they are ripple effects: healthier children, stronger local markets, and the confidence to plan for an uncertain tomorrow.

IIRR's impact is a reflection of the people we serve and the values we hold: humility, innovation, and unwavering partnership. As we resume our forward-looking strategy in 2025, we carry with us the lessons of a year that challenged us to listen deeper and act bolder.

To our partners and supporters, thank you. Your trust allows us to walk alongside rural communities, not as leaders of their journey, but as true partners in their pursuit of lasting and self-determined progress. Together, we continue to show that with the right investments, rural transformation is not only possible but inevitable.

Sincerely,

Peter Williams
President



From the Board Chair

As we reflect on 2024, it's clear that the world continues to grapple with climate shocks, widening inequality, food insecurity, and economic disruptions, pressing challenges that disproportionately impact the most vulnerable. For NGOs like IIRR, these realities are a call to deepen our resolve and sharpen our focus.

At IIRR, we remain committed to grassroots solutions that build resilience where it matters most: in rural communities. Across Asia and Africa, our community-led livelihood programs continue to deliver a tangible and lasting impact. Over the years, we've consistently seen rural households report significant improvements in food security, income stability, and market access, often within the first year of engaging with IIRR.

These changes go beyond economic metrics. They mean more children staying in school, fewer families falling into debt during climate shocks, and more women stepping into leadership roles in local enterprises. Whether it's savings groups in Ethiopia, agroecological farming in the Philippines, or sustainable fishing in Cambodia, time and again we see that when people are trusted and equipped with the right tools, they lead their own transformation with confidence, dignity, and hope.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of visiting fisherfolk in Cambodia. In the middle of the bay, surrounded by dense mangroves, I sat in a small boat and watched the men cast their nets. I was struck by a quiet sense of freedom and dignity, and the realization that our work is not just about economic returns—it's also about autonomy and opportunity for people often left behind by mainstream development.

Despite the global uncertainties of 2024, IIRR has continued to grow its reach, deepen its partnerships, and amplify the voice of rural communities. This is possible because of the strength of our team, the trust of our partners, and the courage of the communities we walk alongside.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Emily Cheng".

Emily Cheng
Chair, IIRR Board of Directors



At IIRR, we remain committed to grassroots solutions that build resilience where it matters most: in rural communities. Across Asia and Africa, our community-led livelihood programs continue to deliver a tangible and lasting impact.



From the Africa Regional Director

As we reflect on 2024, I am inspired by the resilience of the communities we served and the incredible progress made across the IIRR Africa Region in 2024. This year, our work continued to put people at the center, advancing sustainable livelihoods, empowering women and youth, and strengthening climate resilience across the continent.

From the drylands of East and Southern Africa to the vibrant rural communities of Uganda and Ethiopia, our efforts in food systems transformation, value chain development, financial inclusion, and women-led economic growth brought about tangible change. Through initiatives like the Drylands Sustainable Landscape Impact Programme (DSLIP), farmers adopted climate-smart agriculture, grew their incomes, and became more resilient to climate shocks, laying the groundwork for stronger local economies.

We also deepened our work with youth, supporting entrepreneurship, agricultural innovation, and digital financial solutions that open new pathways to opportunity. Our People-Centered Food Systems (PSFSy) work influenced key policies that improve food security and nutrition outcomes.

And in Uganda and Ethiopia, programs such as the Karamoja Greenbelt Women Commercialization of Agriculture and MaYEA (Mass Youth in Apiculture), respectively, empowered young women and girls to scale their agricultural enterprises, break barriers, and create thousands of jobs.

Even in the face of complex development challenges, the impact of our work has been far-reaching, catalyzing economic development and promoting inclusion at every level. None of this would have been possible without the steadfast support of our partners. To the governments, funders, private sector, academia, and communities who walk this journey with us: thank you.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to tackling climate change, building resilient food systems, and ensuring that women, youth, and rural communities continue to lead the way toward inclusive, sustainable development.

With deep gratitude and hope,

Pamela B. Nyamutoka Katooro
Acting Africa Regional Director / Country Director, Uganda



We also deepened our work with youth, supporting entrepreneurship, agricultural innovation, and digital financial solutions that open new pathways to opportunity.



From the Asia Regional Director

Looking back on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the communities, partners, and teams that make IIRR's mission possible. Poverty remains a deep and persistent challenge across Asia, especially in Southeast and South Asia, where millions still lack access to essential services. Yet for over 60 years, IIRR has remained committed to the belief that meaningful, lasting change begins at the community level.

This belief has guided our grassroots approach to tackling poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and poor health, challenges that have only intensified amid climate change, widening inequalities, conflict, and barriers to education, healthcare, and livelihoods. In every context, we remain deeply rooted in the communities we serve, driving locally led action, generating evidence, and influencing policy to achieve sustainable impact. In 2024, our work centered on inclusive community development and environmental conservation, with gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) at the heart of our programs. By placing women and marginalized groups at the center of development efforts, we advanced more equitable, resilient outcomes. Key programs, including those supported by the Darwin Initiative, the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers through the Climate Resilience and Asian Mega-Deltas (AMD) initiatives, and the FRESH project, have clearly shown that poverty reduction can be successfully integrated with efforts to build sustainable livelihoods.

We also launched a new initiative with support from the International Development Research Centre to explore nature-based climate solutions in small-scale aquaculture—an exciting step forward in building food security, local economies, and climate resilience. Our ongoing partnerships with Columbia University and the Swiss Development Cooperation in four

countries continue to strengthen food systems by focusing on the protection of basic human and land rights. Through livelihoods support, agri-fisheries innovation, value chain development, and market linkages, IIRR reached over 15,000 farming and fishing households this year, enhancing skills, especially among women, to diversify income and adapt to climate shocks. We supported around 40 agri-livestock, fishery, and non-timber enterprises, improving food security, nutrition, and ecosystem health in target communities in the Philippines and Cambodia.

We are also proud to have developed and tested new frameworks that link environmental restoration with resilience building and poverty reduction, providing scalable models for broader development and policy action. In 2024, our collaborations with universities, local governments, and research institutions stood out as a key achievement, highlighting the effectiveness of community-driven solutions. Looking ahead, we will deepen our focus on conserving ecosystems across coastal zones, peatlands, rainfed areas, and highlands. Anchored in the right to food and a food systems approach, we will continue to champion climate-resilient, regenerative agriculture that strengthens livelihoods, empowers women, and supports planetary health. We move forward grounded in the vision of our founder, Dr. Y.C. James Yen, who taught us that where there is equity and justice, there will be peace. Thank you for standing with us in this important work.

In gratitude,

Emily Monville-Oro
Acting Director for Asia Region / Country Director,
Philippines



Our Mission

To empower rural people to build resilient communities and attain socioeconomic equity through creative, community-led action.



Our Vision

IIRR envisions an equitable world in which rural people achieve their full potential, living a life of dignity and self-reliance in harmony with the environment.

Credo

Go to the people,
Live among them,
Learn from them,
Plan with them,
Work with them.
Start with what they know,
Build on what they have.
Teach by showing,
Learn by doing.
Not a showcase,
But a pattern.
Not odds and ends,
But a system.
Not piecemeal,
but an integrated approach.
Not to conform, but to transform.
Not relief, but release.

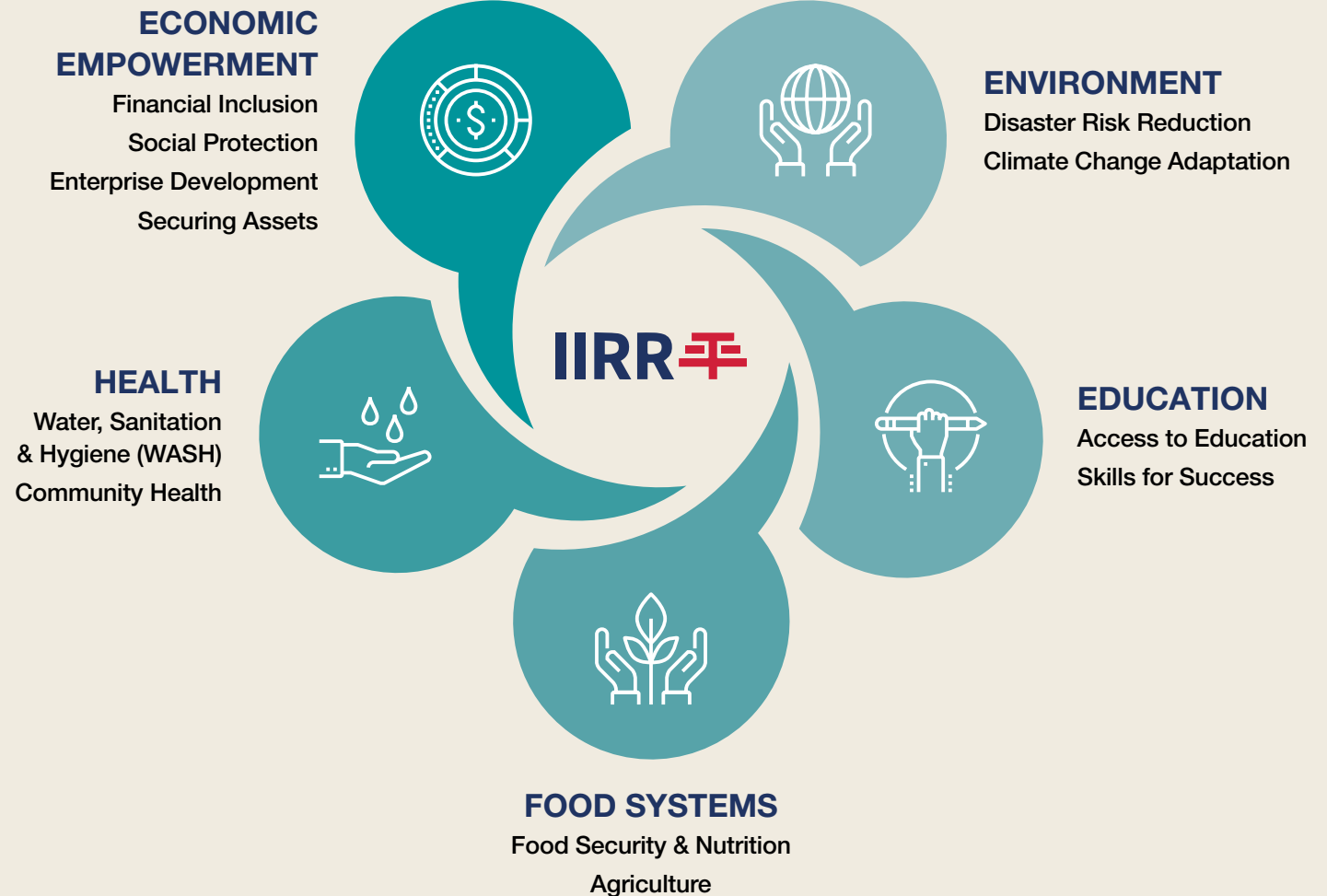


Who We Are

IIRR believes that rural people have the knowledge, strength, and vision to lead their own development and that lasting change begins at the community level. Since its founding in 1960, IIRR has worked to shift the development paradigm from top-down solutions to community-driven action. In today's world marked by climate disruptions, growing inequalities, and fragile food systems, we remain grounded in the belief that empowering rural communities is key to building a more equitable future.

IIRR stands alongside rural people as partners, not beneficiaries - supporting grassroots leadership, amplifying local voices, and co-creating solutions that are practical, inclusive, and sustainable. Because when communities lead, development is not only more effective, it endures.

Our Focus



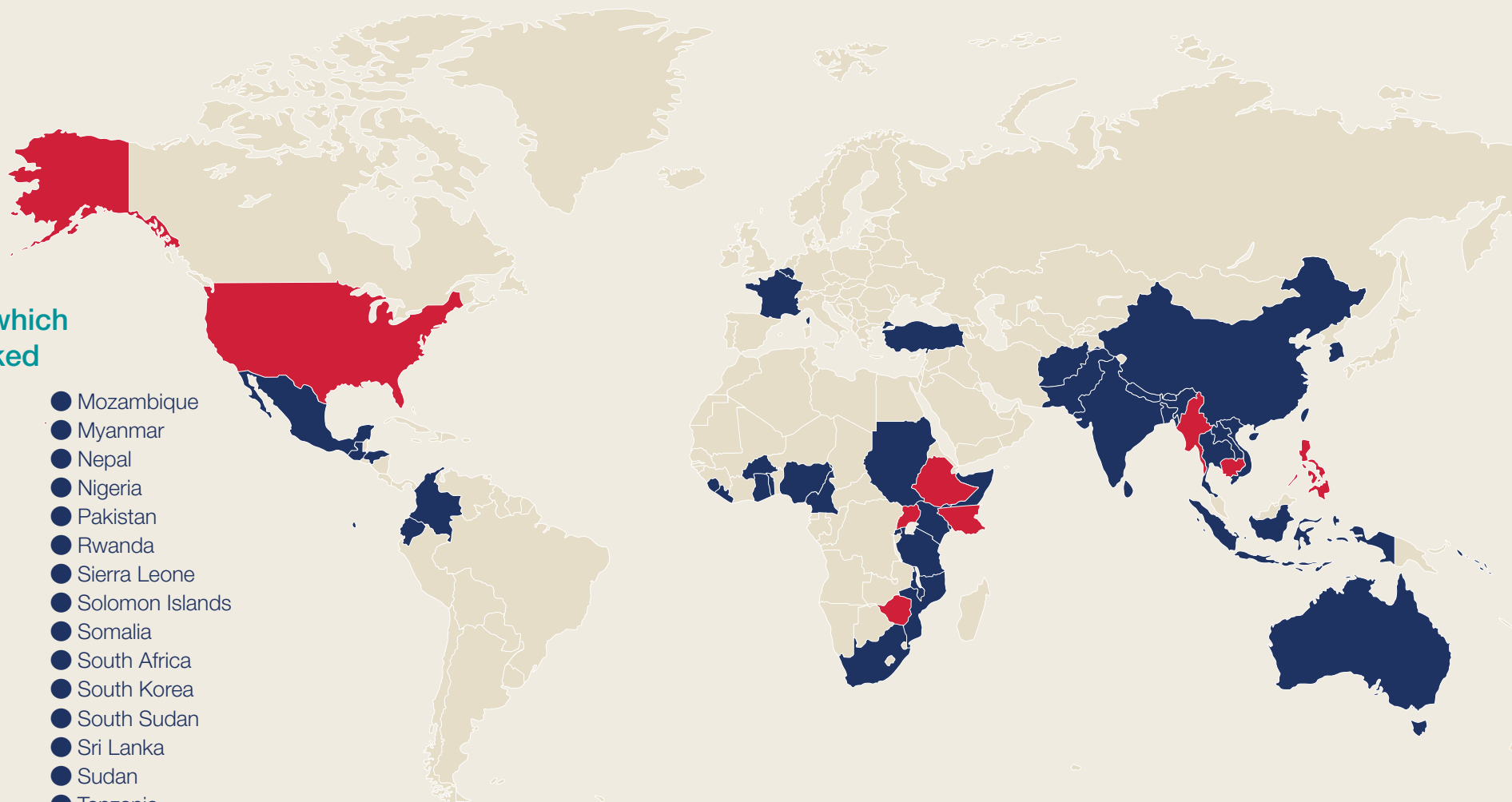
Where We Work

Current IIRR offices

- Cambodia
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Philippines
- Uganda
- United States

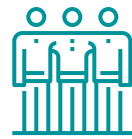
Countries in which IIRR has worked

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| ● Afghanistan | ● Mozambique |
| ● Australia | ● Myanmar |
| ● Bangladesh | ● Nepal |
| ● Belgium | ● Nigeria |
| ● Bhutan | ● Pakistan |
| ● Burkina Faso | ● Rwanda |
| ● Cameroon | ● Sierra Leone |
| ● China | ● Solomon Islands |
| ● Colombia | ● Somalia |
| ● Ecuador | ● South Africa |
| ● France | ● South Korea |
| ● Ghana | ● South Sudan |
| ● Guatemala | ● Sri Lanka |
| ● Honduras | ● Sudan |
| ● India | ● Tanzania |
| ● Indonesia | ● Thailand |
| ● Laos | ● Timor-Leste |
| ● Liberia | ● Turkey |
| ● Malawi | ● Vietnam |
| ● Mexico | ● Zimbabwe |



Impact Highlights

Empowering communities through sustainable development



5.7 million

LIVELIHOODS IMPACTED

Livelihoods & Rural Economy



5,506

FARMERS' GROUPS AND
VILLAGE ASSOCIATIONS
SUPPORTED

Health & Emergency Response



160

HEALTH WORKERS
TRAINED AND SUPPLIED

Education & Local Leadership



7,611

EDUCATORS TRAINED



2,273

LEADERS ENGAGED
FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT



21,935

CHILDREN (UNDER 5
YEARS) VACCINATED



124

FIREFIGHTERS AND
AMBULANCE CREWS
TRAINED

Climate Resilience

**219 km**OF RIVERBANKS
RESTORED**110 ha**OF WETLANDS
RESTORED**500 ha**OF TREES PLANTED
AND GROWN

Inclusion & Access to Services

**62,778**PARTICIPANTS SECURED
IDENTITY REGISTRATION**43,601**PEOPLE ESTABLISHED A
TELEPHONE LINE**56,247**PEOPLE ESTABLISHED A
BANK ACCOUNT

Building Resilient Futures: How IIRR Improves Livelihoods in Rural Communities

Building on more than a century of rural reconstruction knowledge, IIRR has worked hand in hand with rural communities across the globe to tackle poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation for over six decades. IIRR's model is built on the principle that the people who live in rural communities – farmers, women, children, and youth – are not passive recipients of aid but active agents of change. Through practical training, knowledge sharing, and sustainable development initiatives, IIRR strengthens local capacity to respond to challenges and create opportunities for more secure, dignified lives.

IIRR's approach is guided by five interconnected thematic pillars: **Economic Empowerment, Education, Environment, Food Systems, and Health**. Each pillar reflects a core area of rural life where gaps in opportunity and access perpetuate cycles of poverty. When addressed together, these pillars create pathways for communities to build livelihoods in ways that are socially just, environmentally sustainable, and resilient to crises.

Economic Empowerment

- Women in rural areas are 20% less likely than men to hold a bank account. (World Bank)
- In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 70% of youth are underemployed or in vulnerable work. (ILO)
- Smallholder farmers earn, on average, less than \$2 per day. (FAO)



In many rural regions, limited access to markets, credit, and financial literacy constrains household income and keeps families trapped in poverty. Women and smallholder farmers in particular face barriers to earning and managing money. Youth in rural communities also encounter limited employment opportunities, contributing to migration to urban areas or informal, low-paying work.

IIRR strengthens livelihoods by equipping people with tools to build income and financial resilience. Programs introduce women's savings and loan groups, which allow women to pool money, extend credit to one another, and collectively invest in small businesses. Farmers are trained in entrepreneurship and market linkages, helping them move beyond subsistence farming into more profitable ventures. Youth receive vocational training that opens pathways to local employment, reducing the need to migrate.

When rural families gain reliable incomes, they can afford school fees, purchase healthier foods, and invest in improved farming technologies. For women, access to savings and income often translates into greater household decision-making power, which benefits children's nutrition, education, and wellbeing.



Education

- Rural children are twice as likely to be out of school compared to urban children. (UNESCO)
- One in five rural girls in sub-Saharan Africa does not transition from primary to secondary school. (UNICEF)
- Globally, 60% of youth lacking basic literacy live in rural areas. (UNESCO)

Access to quality education is one of the most powerful levers for breaking cycles of rural poverty, yet children in remote villages face persistent disadvantages. Girls are at particular risk of dropping out due to household labor demands, early marriage, or unsafe school environments.

IIRR works with local governments, schools, and families to remove barriers that prevent children from learning. Teacher training programs equip educators with participatory methods that keep children engaged, while investments in infrastructure – such as safe classrooms, sanitation facilities, and solar-powered lighting – make learning environments more inclusive. Girls' education programs involve parents and leaders to shift cultural norms, while tutoring and school feeding programs ensure that children stay enrolled and nourished.

The impact of education extends across generations. Educated girls are more likely to delay marriage, have fewer and healthier children, and earn higher incomes. Youth who complete secondary or vocational education are better positioned to secure employment and contribute to their communities.



Environment

- Over 70% of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia depend on rain-fed agriculture. (World Bank)
- Land degradation affects the livelihoods of nearly 3 billion people worldwide. (UNCCD)
- Climate-related disasters affect 23 million people annually in Africa and Asia. (UNDRR)

Rural communities are deeply dependent on natural resources, yet they are often the most vulnerable to environmental shocks. Deforestation, soil erosion, and water scarcity undermine agricultural productivity, while climate change is intensifying droughts, floods, and unpredictable rainfall. Women and children often bear the brunt of these stresses, with increased burdens of water and firewood collection.

IIRR promotes community-led natural resource management that balances livelihoods with conservation. Programs train farmers in climate-smart agriculture techniques such as agroforestry, terracing, and soil restoration, which reduce erosion while improving yields. Watershed management ensures reliable water access, while tree planting campaigns provide both ecological benefits and income opportunities. Communities also receive training in disaster preparedness and climate resilience to minimize disruptions to livelihoods due to changes in the natural environment.

These efforts lead to healthier ecosystems and more resilient communities. Improved soils mean better harvests, regenerated forests reduce women's workloads, and collective water management reduces conflict.





Food Systems

- 80% of chronically hungry people live in rural areas. (FAO)
- One in three children in sub-Saharan Africa is stunted due to malnutrition. (UNICEF)
- Post-harvest losses can consume up to 30% of smallholder farmers' crops. (World Bank)

Food insecurity remains a defining challenge in rural areas. Despite producing much of the world's food, smallholder farmers often struggle to feed their own families. Malnutrition is widespread among women and children, with long-lasting effects on health, growth, and learning.

IIRR strengthens food systems by promoting diversified, sustainable farming practices. Farmers are trained to grow a variety of nutritious crops – including legumes, vegetables, and fruits – alongside staple grains and native food sources. Post-harvest technologies such as improved storage help to reduce food waste, while value-chain interventions help farmers earn fairer prices. School gardens and nutrition education programs ensure that children access healthy meals and gain lifelong skills in food production and preparation.

The benefits of stronger food systems ripple outward: families who grow diverse crops are more resilient to shocks, children who eat balanced diets are healthier and more focused in school, and women farmers gain recognition and income through improved access to markets.



Health

- Rural populations are nearly twice as likely to lack essential health services compared to urban areas. (WHO)
- Maternal mortality is 40% higher in rural areas than urban areas. (World Bank)
- One in four rural households lacks access to safe drinking water. (UNICEF)

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Bringing It All Together

The five thematic pillars of IIRR's work – Economic Empowerment, Education, Environment, Food Systems, and Health – are deeply interconnected. Education helps families adopt sustainable farming practices, while health ensures children can attend school and adults can work productively. Stronger food systems reduce malnutrition, boosting children's ability to learn. Economic empowerment enables families to invest in education and healthcare, while environmental stewardship ensures the natural resource base for all livelihoods.

Through this holistic approach, IIRR helps rural communities break cycles of poverty and vulnerability. Women gain agency and dignity, children grow up healthier and better educated, and farmers build resilient livelihoods. The ripple effects extend beyond individual households to entire communities, creating a future where rural people are not defined by their challenges but empowered by their capacities.



Climate Resilience

Mission Net Zero

IIRR's Mission Net Zero (MNZ) initiative is a holistic, community-driven approach to climate action that places rural people at the center of environmental sustainability. Recognizing that the most climate-vulnerable populations are often the least responsible for global emissions, MNZ empowers rural communities to become active stewards of natural resources while strengthening their livelihoods. Through integrated, place-based strategies, the initiative works across diverse ecosystems and agricultural landscapes to restore degraded environments, promote economic empowerment and social inclusion, and build climate resilience from the ground up.

The five focus areas of MNZ — Regenerative Agriculture, Agroforestry, Rural Energy, Mangrove Reforestation, and Peatland Conservation — are both environmental interventions and livelihood strategies. **Regenerative agriculture** revitalizes soil health, boosts crop yields, and reduces reliance on synthetic inputs, improving food security for smallholders and their communities. **Agroforestry** systems offer environmental services and economic diversification, enabling farmers to grow timber, fruits, and other products alongside staple crops. Clean **rural energy** solutions reduce deforestation, lower household costs, and free up time — especially for women — to pursue education, income-generating activities, or community leadership roles.

Meanwhile, coastal and wetland ecosystems are restored and protected through **mangrove reforestation** and **peatland conservation**, which offer both climate mitigation and livelihood benefits. Community members are engaged in seedling nurseries, biodiversity monitoring, ecotourism, and sustainable harvesting practices that generate income while safeguarding high-carbon ecosystems.



Across all five focus areas, MNZ emphasizes inclusive participation, especially of women and youth, ensuring that climate solutions are equitable, locally owned, and sustainable. The result is a replicable model for climate action that delivers both environmental and socioeconomic impact to the rural communities where it is most needed.

The five focus areas of MNZ

- 1 Regenerative Agriculture
- 2 Agroforestry
- 3 Rural Energy
- 4 Mangrove Reforestation
- 5 Peatland Conservation





Climate-Smart Villages

Alongside MNZ, IIRR implements its Climate-Smart Villages (CSV) initiative, a complementary model that delivers a community-driven, integrated approach to building climate resilience in rural areas. CSVs bring together farmers, local governments, researchers, and NGOs to co-design and test practical, scalable solutions that address the specific climate risks faced by vulnerable agricultural communities. Grounded in participatory planning and localized data, the CSV model integrates indigenous knowledge with climate science to strengthen adaptive capacity, improve food security, and reduce environmental degradation.

At the core of the CSV model is the promotion of climate-smart agriculture, which includes practices such as drought-tolerant crop varieties, nutrition-sensitive farming, water-saving irrigation techniques, and integrated pest management. These interventions are tailored to each village's agro-ecological context and socio-economic conditions, ensuring relevance and ownership. The model also strengthens early warning systems, diversifies livelihoods through off-farm and non-farm opportunities, and enhances local governance by building the capacity of village institutions to plan and respond to climate risks.

As with the MNZ initiative, IIRR's CSV model prioritizes inclusivity and gender equity, recognizing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women, youth, and traditionally marginalized groups. Through targeted training, knowledge sharing, and leadership development, the model empowers these groups to participate in decision-making and benefit from resilience-building interventions.

Together, Mission Net Zero and Climate-Smart Villages reflect IIRR's integrated approach to climate action, linking mitigation and adaptation through grounded, community-centered solutions that promote equity, resilience, and sustainability.





Mass Youth in Apiculture (MaYEA)

The Mass Youth in Apiculture (MaYEA) program, launched in November 2023, is a five-year initiative led by IIRR Ethiopia in partnership with Mastercard Foundation, ORDA Ethiopia, and icipe, with implementing partners SOS Sahel Ethiopia and MELCA Ethiopia. Its goal is to create dignified employment for over one million youth – particularly women and vulnerable groups – and to triple honey production by 2028.

In its first year, MaYEA has already begun reshaping rural livelihoods through training, financial inclusion, and community engagement. As MaYEA moves into its second year, it continues to scale a youth-led, gender-inclusive approach to rural employment, using apiculture as a pathway to sustainable livelihoods and economic transformation.

Key Achievements:



65,000

youth (84% of them women) trained in soft and hard skills, including beekeeping, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy



48,497

youth have transitioned into employment or entrepreneurship



2,621

Village Economic and Social Associations were strengthened, mobilizing

\$142,105

USD in savings and enhancing local financial resilience

“Now I’m Growing Honey And A Future For My Family”

In the highland communities of Sidama in southern Ethiopia, where girls are rarely encouraged to dream beyond household chores, Genet’s journey began in hardship and uncertainty. Orphaned at just eight years old, she was raised by her uncle in an already crowded household. At 18, she dropped out of school after Grade 7 to marry. Her husband, despite completing Grade 12, couldn’t find steady work. Life revolved around a small inherited plot, growing corn and enset (false banana), barely enough to survive.

“I never imagined doing more than cooking and caring for the house,” Genet recalled. “No one expected anything different from women here.”

That changed when Genet was selected for a 14-day MaYEA training tailored for women. Supported by SOS Sahel and local agricultural officers, she took her first bold steps to implement the lessons she learned about beekeeping and small business development.

“I built 10 transitional beehives using local materials and planted bee forage on five plots,” she explained. “Planting forage near hives is new in our area. It reduces how far bees need to fly, so honey production improves. I even received seeds and technical guidance from MaYEA officers.”

Before joining MaYEA, Genet had just three traditional hives and harvested around 9 kilos of honey - barely enough to support her family. Today, she sells not only honey but also forage seedlings to other local beekeepers.

“It wasn’t easy,” she said. “Women are judged when they attend training or meetings. My husband doubted it too, saying women shouldn’t earn an income. But I wasn’t discouraged. I knew I had to try.”

Now, Genet is a leader. She’s part of a 390-member Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), and leads a group of five women in her neighborhood.

“With the skills I’ve gained, I’m ready to grow my honey business and increase our income,” she said proudly. “We support one another and solve problems together. My next goal is to build a proper home for my family. Right now, we still live in a rundown hut.”

Genet is no longer just a homemaker; she’s an entrepreneur, a mentor, and a model of resilience. Through MaYEA, she’s turning a few hives and hope into a thriving future for her family and community.



“Right after receiving a 14-half day training program that covered beekeeping, sheep and goat fattening, and developing small and medium businesses, I made my first two beehives from locally available materials... I now believe there are effective ways to tackle our challenges”

Zemecha, participant in the MaYEA project





ICORE

From 2021 to 2024, the ICORE (Improving Coastal Resilience and Ecosystem through Biodiversity Restoration) project transformed coastal communities in Guinayangan, Philippines, through nature-based solutions. With support from the Darwin Initiative and CGIAR's Climber Project, and in partnership with the Zoological Society of London and the Municipal Government of Guinayangan, the project

integrated mangrove restoration, regenerative agriculture, and community-led conservation to enhance biodiversity, food security, and sustainable livelihoods. This integrated approach positioned livelihoods and environmental resilience as mutually reinforcing, helping Guinayangan's most vulnerable communities adapt to climate change while protecting their natural ecosystems.

Key Achievements:



2,200

farmers (58% of them women) adopted regenerative practice, diversifying crops and increasing productivity by 30%, strengthening both food security and income stability



1,000

households diversified livelihoods through sustainable activities like stingless beekeeping, weaving, and home gardening



400

hectares of mangrove forests were protected and restored, enhancing coastal resilience and securing long-term environmental and economic benefits



Duck Raising Boosts Livelihoods and Nutrition in the Philippines



In the coastal barangays of Quezon Province, where fishing is a way of life and land is limited, families are discovering a new livelihood right in their backyards: duck raising. With support from IIRR and Cavite State University, farmers like Kagawad Rene Porlay are raising native ducks using simple, sustainable methods.

“It’s not difficult to take care of them,” says Porlay, who feeds his ducks with chopped banana, cassava, and kitchen scraps. He collects five eggs a day, sold at 10 pesos each, and has already sold ducks at 150 pesos per kilo. Ducks raised in freshwater thrive with minimal disease and lower costs, offering both income and food security.

Women are leading the way, integrating duck care into their daily routines. “It’s easy to manage even while my husband is out fishing,” shared one farmer. Their ducks are raised in semi-confined housing built from local materials like nipa and buli, lowering temperatures naturally and reducing environmental impact.

This low-cost, low-carbon approach is creating real change: better nutrition, empowered women, and growing interest in products like salted eggs. For many, duck raising is more than a side activity: it’s a step toward resilient, community-rooted food systems.

AQUADAPT

The AQUADAPT-PhilCam project, funded by IDRC, is led by IIRR in partnership with the National Aquaculture Research and Development Institute (NARDI), the Marine Aquaculture Research and Development Center (MARDeC), and the fisheries cantonments of Kampong Thom and Koh Kong.

Since 2023, the project has supported the integration of nature-based climate solutions (NbCS) into small-scale aquaculture in the Philippines and Cambodia.

Through five pilot sites across freshwater, brackish water, peatland, and mangrove ecosystems, the project supports inclusive, sustainable aquaculture practices that enhance climate resilience, improve rural livelihoods, and empower marginalized groups, particularly women. Its three-part strategy combines hands-on research, capacity building, and knowledge sharing, while emphasizing gender equality, locally adapted low-cost solutions, and supportive policies and markets.



Key Achievements:



107

small-scale fish farmers trained on nature-based climate solutions, improving knowledge in oyster farming, aquashade gardening, and sustainable aquaculture techniques



277

households benefited from upgraded aquaculture infrastructure, including pond rehabilitation and hatchery support, leading to higher fish survival rates and increased incomes



6

barangays engaged and 123 farmers supported through inclusive polyculture systems in peatlands, strengthening women's roles and diversifying livelihoods in aquaculture

Improving Livelihoods Through Polyculture

In the quiet coastal village of Peam Krasaop in Koh Kong province, where salt-laced winds sweep through and freshwater is scarce, Socorro tends to her small farm with care and determination. A local farmer, she once struggled to raise fish in an area better known for its brackish tides than inland aquaculture. She had the will, but not the know-how, until the Aquadapt project stepped in.

With guidance from the Aquadapt team, Socorro received two plastic tanks and 800 climbing perch fingerlings, resilient fish that can survive in low-water environments. She learned how to care for them: how to monitor water levels, how much to feed, when to change the water, and even how to use that nutrient-rich water to nourish the vegetables growing beside the tanks.

Each month, a field researcher checked in, not just to troubleshoot, but to build skills and confidence. After four months, her efforts paid off. She harvested 150 kg of fish, earning \$3 US per kilo at the local market, and kept 30 kg to feed her family. The vegetables, lush and thriving, brought in another \$500 US. Cucumber, water spinach, gourd, and lettuce are all sold fresh, all grown with care.

"I can get twice the income from fish and vegetables at the same time," she proudly shared.

What began as an effort to raise fish has grown into a thriving, climate-smart, integrated farm that is both sustainable and profitable. In a region where freshwater is scarce and farming is challenging, Socorro is showing what is possible. Her success is inspiring others in the community to explore new possibilities, proving that innovation, when made accessible, can transform lives.

"I can earn twice as much by producing fish and vegetables at the same time"

Socorro, participant in the AQUADAPT project





Karamoja Greenbelt Women-Led Large-Scale Farming of Cereals, Legumes and Oil Seeds

The Karamoja Greenbelt project is a transformative initiative combating chronic food insecurity in Uganda's Karamoja region. By empowering 420 women across Nakapiripirit, Nabilatuk, Napak, and Moroto districts, the project promotes climate-resilient, large-scale agriculture rooted in community leadership. Women-led cooperatives manage five nucleus farms, cultivating 917 acres with staple and high-value crops such as sorghum, maize, green gram, sunflower, and cashew nuts.

The project's livelihood impact is significant, enhancing food and nutrition security, boosting household incomes, and increasing women's economic agency. Despite challenges like flooding and limited post-harvest infrastructure, this initiative represents a replicable model of sustainable rural development and women's empowerment.



Key Achievements:



243

farmers trained on best practice in agronomy to improve crop productivity, soil management, and land use



420

women organized into 10 clusters across 5 locations to lead and manage collective farming activities



1,000

acres of land allocated, with 917 acres already cultivated across 5 project districts

From Savings to Sunflowers: The Rise of the Namalu Women's Cooperative

In the arid plains of Namalu in the Karamoja region of Uganda, a small group of women farmers came together in 2020 with a simple idea: to save and support one another. They formed a Village Savings and Loan Association, pooling resources to lift each other up. But their journey didn't stop there.

With support from IIRR, the women received training in food and market systems. What began as a savings group quickly grew into a farming collective with a shared vision for economic independence. IIRR provided them with a milling machine and trained them in cereal value addition, giving them the tools to tap into local agricultural markets.

By 2023, the group had grown into a registered farmer institution, bringing together three smaller groups: Nawada Women's Group, Adonyo Women's Group, and Lomorunyanga Farmers Group. Through the IBSA project led by UNDP and supported by IIRR, they embraced commercial agriculture, planting on block farms and harvesting maize, green gram, and sunflower at scale.

Their results have been remarkable. In just one season, they cultivated 60 acres of maize, 40 acres of sorghum, 100 acres of

green gram, and 250 acres of sunflower, yielding over 40 tons in total. With sales amounting to over 25.9 million Ugandan shillings, and more still in progress, they reinvested earnings into a women-owned commercial farm.

Today, the Namalu Women Produce and Marketing Cooperative owns a storage hub and holds both a cooperative and registration certificate. They have stockpiled over 100 bags of sunflower, 46 bags of maize, and 43 bags of green gram. The Cooperative is also in the process of securing their own grinding mill and tractor with the support of the project. More importantly, they have a long-term strategy to enter into contract farming with Nile Breweries, expand processing and packaging operations, recruit staff, and promote SACCOs and market linkages.

From a simple savings group to a thriving, women-led agricultural enterprise, the Namalu cooperative is proof that with the right support, local knowledge, and bold determination, communities can transform their futures.



Drylands Sustainable Landscape Impact Programme (DSLIP)

Since 2022, the regional DSLIP project has been transforming rural livelihoods in six dryland countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe) by promoting sustainable land and forest management through hands-on, participatory learning. At its heart is the Farmer Field School model, which equips communities with practical knowledge and tools to sustainably manage their landscapes while improving agricultural productivity.

By strengthening local capacities – particularly among women, extension officers, and farmer organizations – the project builds a foundation for resilient livelihoods in vulnerable areas. The initiative has catalyzed knowledge generation, skills transfer, and institutional capacity across Malawi and Zimbabwe, while the knowledge generation process continues to progress in Tanzania. The activities of this initiative are directly empowering national trainers and thousands of farmers to drive change within their ecosystems.



Key Achievements:



72

participants in Zambia received train-the-trainer instruction, promoting a wider transfer of skills and promoting gender-inclusive leadership in sustainable agriculture and land management



17

extension professionals trained and backstopped in Malawi, enhancing local advisory services and helping farmers adopt practices that improve productivity, diversify income, and adapt to climate change



3

Integrated Capacity Development and Implementation Plans were developed for Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania, providing a roadmap for national strategies that scale up sustainable livelihoods and restore dryland ecosystems



Other stories of IIRR's impact

Enhancing Students Learning Performance in Guji Zone, Oromia Region

With the support of the Banyan Tree Foundation, IIRR has been leading this project in Ethiopia since 2023, targeting 15 second-cycle primary schools in Adola Woreda. The project aims to improve student performance in English, Mathematics, and Science through IIRR's proven remediation model, which integrates these subjects into the mainstream curriculum.

“NOW I’M LEARNING, LEADING, AND DREAMING BIGGER.”

In the rural community of Oda Buta kebele in the Oromia Region, where girls often struggle for equal access to education, Rodu, a 16-year-old girl from a poor, hand-to-mouth farming family, is rewriting her future. The third of six children, Rodu began school in 2008 at Odabuta Primary School. Like many girls in her village, balancing school and household responsibilities was not easy, and academic success often felt out of reach.

“I used to feel like I could never catch up with the boys in class,” Rodu said. “I didn’t have the confidence to speak up or believe that I could succeed.”

That changed when Rodu was selected to join the IIRR Girls’ Tutorial Program in Grade 5, a program specifically designed to support girls through extra tutoring in English, Math, and Science.

Since then, she has been attending regularly, now continuing as a Grade 7 student.

“The tutorial sessions are different from regular classes. They’re more student-friendly, and I feel encouraged to ask questions,” she said. “Since I joined, my grades have improved and I’ve become more confident. I even ranked 12th out of 65 students last semester.”

But Rodu’s growth was not only academic, it sparked a shift at home too. Her father, Mr. Dawit, was initially skeptical of the extra classes. “I didn’t understand the value of the program,” he admitted. “I used to worry when she stayed late for tutorials. But this year, I started visiting the school and speaking with her teachers. They told me how well she’s doing, and I saw her change with my own eyes.”

Now, Mr. Dawit is one of her strongest supporters. “I’m proud of her,” he said. “She’s not only improving in school, she’s setting an example for her younger siblings and other girls in the village.” Rodu’s story is a testament to the power of targeted support for girls’ education. Through IIRR’s initiative, she’s building not just academic skills, but a sense of agency, purpose, and hope. “IIRR’s support isn’t just for me,” Rodu added. “It’s for every girl in our school who dares to dream of something more.”





Project KUNA

Project KUNA (Komunidad para sa Unang isang libong araw ng Nanay at Anak) supports maternal and child health in the Philippines by equipping Barangay Health Workers with the training, tools, and confidence to deliver essential care and education during a child's first 1,000 days. Implemented by IIRR with funding from AVPN, the project strengthens frontline health services through local partnerships, ensuring mothers and children receive the support they need in this critical window for lifelong health.

The tropical climate in the Philippines can be suffocating at times. It makes working difficult, yet the village workers (Barangay Health Workers) continue to work with few complaints, ready to assist their community as needed. Prior to implementation of Project KUNA, the village workers in Barangay Kaong, Silang Cavite had to endure the heat inside their small health clinic as they provided primary health care to pregnant women and their young children. The small office barely fit the six workers, leaving little room for the community members seeking health services for themselves or their children. The clinic's assessment tools, such as scales and thermometers, were outdated and often not reliable. When it rained, the ceiling would leak and sometimes flood the clinic's floor. Some of the health workers were new to the job, having received minimal training from older and more experienced colleagues.

Despite these challenges, they remained steadfast in their duties. As part of Project KUNA, IIRR empowered these health care workers to provide quality health care to pregnant women, new mothers, and children in their communities. To help meet the needs of these vulnerable groups, IIRR trained the health care workers in important maternal and child health nutrition topics and provided them with health education materials that can be used to educate their community on these same topics. IIRR also provided the health center with equipment that previously had been lacking to allow accurate assessments and improved provision of health services to community members. The health center was also equipped with an air conditioning unit so that the mothers, children, and village health workers do not have to suffer through the heat in the small clinic area.

With the training provided by IIRR, the health workers are now able to more confidently and efficiently conduct health education sessions on maternal, child health, and nutrition topics, ensuring that they provide accurate and helpful information which will help improve the health and well-being of the mothers and their children.

People-Centered Food Systems

The People-Centered Food Systems (PCFSy) project empowers right holders – including farmers and other marginalized groups, duty bearers, and civil society leaders – to adopt inclusive people-centered policies and advocate for food systems that prioritize human rights, equity, and accountability. Through targeted training and consultations, the initiative equips both grassroots actors and policymakers with the tools to integrate rights-based approaches into food systems governance. The project is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation and implemented by IIRR in Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Uganda,

Cambodia

Building Capacity of Farmers as Stakeholders in Food Systems

In Prey Veng province, Cambodia, farmers and community leaders took part in PCFSy workshops introducing the concepts of human rights and the right to food. Many had previously viewed these terms with suspicion or misunderstanding. But through open dialogue and trust-building, perceptions began to shift.

Participants learned about the State's role in ensuring essential services like education, healthcare, and food security and began to see themselves as active stakeholders.

“Before, I just accepted government plans, even if they affected my land,” said Sopheap, a 51-year-old farmer. “Now I know that development must respect the rights of farmers and the right to food.”





Ethiopia

Cultivating the Seed of People-Centered Food Systems and Human Rights-Based Approach in Right Holders

In Arbaminch, Ethiopia, over 45 farmers from five rural zones gathered for two days of training hosted by the PCFSy project. Most had never heard of the “right to food” or the role equity plays in food systems. But by the end of the sessions, participants, many of whom are leaders of agricultural cooperatives, were confidently speaking up.

They raised real issues with regional government officials: the high cost of inputs, poor market access, limited livestock health services, and the effects of deforestation and drought. For many, it was their first opportunity to speak directly with policymakers.

“We’ve always worked hard to produce food,” one participant said. “But no one ever taught us our rights. Now we know we can be part of shaping the system.”

Uganda

Bridging the Gaps: Building Awareness and Capacities on People Centered Food Systems and Equity Principles

Before attending a training on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) and human rights in food systems, Jonathon, a policy officer with SEATINI Uganda, focused mainly on farmers’ economic rights. But his perspective shifted during a short course hosted by the PCFSy project.

“After the training, I understood how equity and human rights go hand in hand. I now intentionally integrate both into all of my research and policy work,” Jonathon shared.

Jonathon now works to support rural and peri-urban food producers by pushing for greater implementation of rights-based frameworks like UNDROP and the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN). He believes that building awareness among both right holders and duty bearers is key to advancing food justice and creating systems that truly leave no one behind.

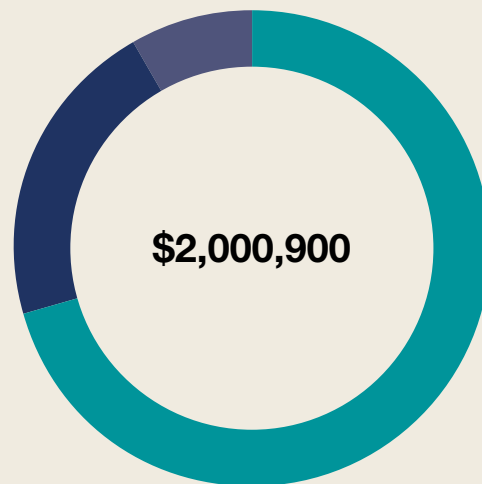


2024 Financial Report

We are sincerely thankful to our supporters, donors, partners, and volunteers for providing resources that helped us pursue our work and mission. Through your generous support, 2024 revenue reached more than \$2 million, of which \$1.4 million or 70% came from partner project funding and various other contributors supporting our programs. The remaining 29% of revenue, or \$598,000, came from offering training courses, technical assistance, and other services that augment the development funds for the communities we serve.

For the year 2024, spending was \$8.6 million; this includes expenses in implementing projects which were approved in the current year and also from previous years. Of this spending, 93% or \$8 million was used to implement our core programs on Education, Food Security and Resilient Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Climate Change Adaptation. Expenses for Management, General Operations, and Fundraising accounted for the remaining 8% or \$645,000.

We are proud to be recognized as an accountable and transparent organization receiving the highest ratings in the industry.



OPERATING REVENUES

70%

Grants & Contributions
\$1,402,974

21%

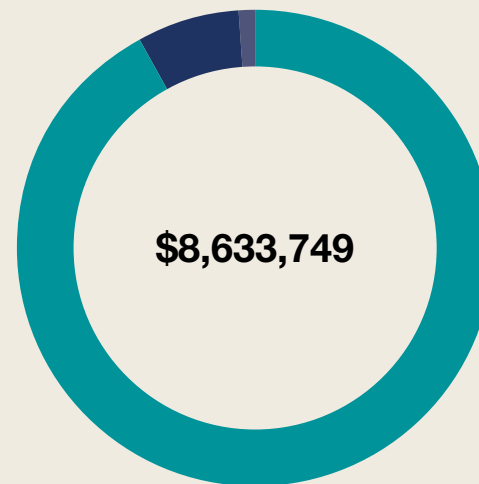
Earned Revenues
429,188

8%

Other
168,738

TOTAL

\$2,000,900



OPERATING EXPENSES

93%

Program Services
\$7,988,834

7%

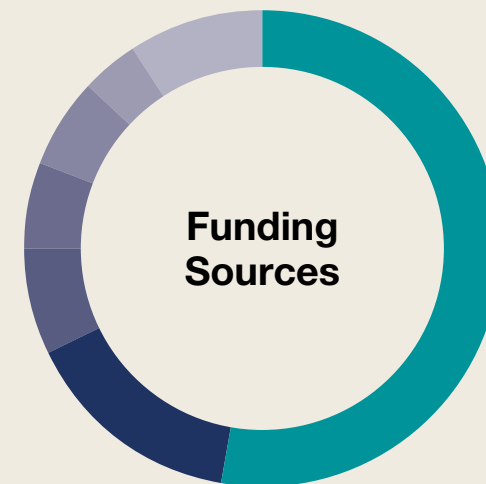
Management and General
593,322

1%

Fundraising
51,593

TOTAL

\$8,633,749



FUNDING SOURCES

53% Foundations

15% Use of campus facilities

7% Governments

6% Individuals

6% Training courses

4% Corporations

9% Other

Statement of activities and changes in net assets in US Dollars

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total 2024	Total 2023
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Operating Revenues:				
Contributions/Grants				
Foundations	\$ 16,000	\$ 1,042,690	\$ 1,058,690	\$ 10,365,681
Governments	-	135,029	135,029	318,049
Corporations	-	81,651	81,651	101,091
Individuals	97,604	30,000	127,604	208,247
Use of campus facilities	307,921	-	307,921	218,176
Training courses, study missions and technical assistance	121,232	-	121,232	152,638
Publication Sales	35	-	35	
Other Revenues	168,738	-	168,738	243,731
Total operating revenues before releases	711,530	1,289,370	2,000,900	11,607,613
Net assets released from restrictions:				
Satisfaction of program activities	7,889,072	(7,889,072)	-	-
Total operating revenues after releases	8,600,602	(6,599,702)	2,000,900	11,607,613
Operating expenses:				
Learning Community	7,897,930	-	7,897,930	3,357,105
Applied Learning	90,904	-	90,904	139,912
Management and General	593,322	-	593,322	329,501
Fundraising	51,593	-	51,593	28,650
Total operating expenses	8,633,749	-	8,633,749	3,855,168
Change in net assets from operating activities	(\$33,147)	(\$6,599,702)	(\$6,632,849)	\$7,752,445
NON-OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Interest Income	446	-	446	13,242
Translation and exchange loss	9,687	-	9,687	23,036
Loss due to change in market values of investments	93,331	-	93,331	98,043
Change in net assets from non-operating activities	103,464	-	103,464	134,321
Change in net assets	70,317	(6,599,702)	(6,529,385)	7,886,766
Net assets, beginning of the year	2,008,456	11,147,548	13,156,004	5,269,238
Net assets, end of the year	2,078,773	4,547,846	6,626,619	13,156,004

Statement of financial position in US Dollars

ASSETS	As of December 31	
	2024	2023
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$3,609,632	\$9,128,341
Investments	652,466	698,123
Contribution receivables	1,428,204	1,521,833
Other receivables	106,643	49,209
Prepayment and other current assets	53,806	82,036
Total Current Assets	5,850,750	11,479,542
Noncurrent Assets		
Noncurrent portion of contribution receivables	1,198,729	3,434,829
Property and equipment, net	976,847	172,126
Retirement benefits asset, net	81,994	85,214
Other non-current assets	11,390	58,471
Total Noncurrent Assets	2,268,961	3,750,640
	\$8,119,711	\$15,230,182
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	\$1,491,882	\$2,072,914
Non-current liabilities		
Other liabilities	1,210	1,264
Total Liabilities	1,493,092	2,074,178
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	2,078,773	2,008,456
With donor restrictions	4,547,846	11,147,548
Total Net Assets	6,626,619	13,156,004
	\$8,119,711	\$15,230,182

Institutional partners

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 Save the Children Fund
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 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
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Foundations

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