

SOW Much Love

Small family farmers feed the world



CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR
**Development
and Peace**



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Sow Much Love



There are more hungry people in the world than the combined populations of Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

At DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, we believe that there is room at the table for all. However, 1 billion people are still suffering from hunger – that's 1 in 8 people of the entire human family.

The majority of the world's poor people support themselves and their families by farming. On small lots, they grow grains, vegetables and fruit, and raise small animals, in order to feed themselves and their families. These small family farmers sell the surplus in order to send their children to school, get medical care, and improve their living conditions.

By doing the painstaking work of planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting, small family farmers feed over half of the world's population. However, these farmers and peasants are faced with an increasing number of challenges, such as climate change and loss of their land, and they are the first to go hungry as a result. One of the biggest threats to farmers is losing access to their seeds. And without seeds, they can't grow food.

Family farming feeds 70% of the world population. Three billion people worldwide live and depend on this model of food production. DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE projects support this sustainable, proven model.

Stewards of our seeds

Our food system is based on thousands of years of knowledge and innovation by farmers and peasants. They are local experts who work to ensure that the seeds they plant have everything they need to thrive. They closely observe which plants are most successful and conserve the seeds for their next harvest. The local crop varieties that they have nurtured are affordable, often nutritionally superior, and better adapted to challenging growing conditions than varieties not native to a region. These farmers' seeds are the heritage and future of the small family farmers and peasants who use them to feed their families, their communities, and the world.



Over the past few decades, multinational corporations have taken increasing control over seeds. Their seeds must not only be purchased and require expensive fertilizers and pesticides to grow, they can't be re-used. This means that farmers have to re-purchase seeds each year, placing them in a cycle of dependence on the company. Farmers can incur massive debts that only continue

to rise, especially if their crops fail. Corporations are patenting more and more seeds, which makes it increasingly difficult for farmers to access seeds. What was once the shared heritage of all farmers and part of the common good is gradually being privatized. As a result, farmers' rights are eroding, and seed diversity is disappearing at a rapid rate.

60% of Canadians agree that the Government of Canada should guarantee access to seeds for farmers in developing countries.

(Source: -Ipsos-Reid—DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE 2014 survey)

Without local, appropriate seeds, rural families' livelihoods are threatened. Whoever controls seeds, controls the future of farming and our food system. We are at a very crucial moment. We need to listen to the people who are feeding us now and will feed us in the future, and ensure that their right to sow, conserve, sell, and exchange seeds is respected.

What happened to our seeds?

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 75% of biodiversity has been lost because of the profound transformation of world food production. The corporate agriculture industry has begun to replace the immense diversity of farmers' seeds with industrial varieties, which is creating highly homogeneous crops. This only increases the threat of hunger because it reduces the number of seeds that can resist disease and climate change. The gradual disappearance of seed diversity is a fundamental threat to the survival of small family farming and peasant agriculture, as practiced for millennia.

Without family farmers and peasants doing the labour-intensive work of preserving our seeds, the biodiversity of our food supply, and the future of our food is at stake.



Care of creation: seeds should not be controlled by corporations

The Earth's abundant variety of foods has been built up over thousands of years through the knowledge of farmers, public research, and through farmers having access to seeds to naturally breed new varieties. In recent years, the development and distribution of seeds is increasingly being privatized through different types of intellectual property rights (IP). Companies are patenting seeds, which are life forms, and using IP laws to acquire a monopoly on them. This is gradually eliminating biodiversity and the right of farmers to save, use and exchange seeds. With the ratification by many countries of the most recent version of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV '91), the traditional farming activity of saving seeds for the next harvest has even become, in some cases, an illegal act, which is punishable by law. Seed corporations are increasingly turning towards the Global South as a new market, and bilateral free-trade agreements between countries in the North and those in the Global South are facilitating the entry of these companies by requiring the adoption of UPOV '91 and imposing restrictions on how local farmers can use seeds.

Global resistance to the privatization of seeds

Many of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE's partner organizations are helping family farmers to protect their right to save and use seeds to feed their families and communities, and maintain the planet's rich biodiversity.



Colombia

A nationwide farmers' strike broke out in 2013 in Colombia when Law 970 made it illegal for peasant farmers to save their seeds. This law was a condition for the signing of a free-trade agreement between the United States and Colombia, and paved the way for multinational seed companies to have a monopoly on certain seeds. It also granted the Colombian Institute of Agriculture the right to seize and destroy peasant seeds. The months of demonstrations paid off and there is now a moratorium on the proposed law. Partners such as the Antioquia Peasant Association (ACA) are supporting Colombian peasants in learning about their rights, helping them to mobilize to resist laws that criminalize their work, and asking for legislative changes that will support them in producing 70% of the country's food supply.



Zambia

Zambians have long resisted the introduction of genetically-modified seeds into their country. In 2002, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE partner the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) and other local organizations successfully convinced the Zambian government to prohibit the entry of GM maize into the country. The ban holds to this day despite increasing pressure from the international community to lift it.

Brazil

The planting of genetically-modified (GM) soybeans by multinational corporations is widespread in Brazil, especially in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. The Landless Workers Movement (MST) has been working for years to defend the rights of peasants by denouncing GM crops and the corporate-control of agriculture, and by promoting organic seeds. As part of this work, the MST created Bionatur in 1997. This organic seed cooperative has 156 member families, and is now the largest agro-ecological seed producer in Latin America.



Haiti

Following the 2010 earthquake, agricultural giant Monsanto offered to donate seeds to help re-launch agricultural activities in the country. Unfortunately, this donation would have pushed farmers into a cycle of dependence on the company and threatened the country's native seeds. DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE's partner the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP) organized a march of 10,000 people to protest this menace to small family farming.





Women farmers are the key to fighting hunger

In rural areas, it is mainly women who sow the seeds, and do the diligent daily work of weeding and cultivating. After harvesting the crops, they go to the market to sell the surplus. However, their essential role in producing the world's food is not recognized, and they receive only a small fraction of the land, credit, seeds, fertilizer, and training that their male counterparts receive.

“Support for rural women farmers is the best strategy in the fight against hunger and poverty in the world”

Source : FAO

JOIN THE SOW MUCH LOVE CAMPAIGN!

What commitment will you make to support small family farmers, the guardians of the world's seed biodiversity?

Take action today!

Sign the **DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE** petition to the federal government to ensure that the right of family farmers around the world to use seeds is respected!

devp.org/sowmuchlove

Eat locally, impact globally!

Together, we can build a more just and sustainable food system for our human family. By choosing local, sustainably-grown food grown from farmers' seeds, you are supporting the biodiversity of our food supply, and the right of farmers around the world to use their seeds. If each of us supports our local organic farmers, we stand in solidarity with women and men small family farmers around the world who produce local food for local people.



I will ask my grocer to increase the amount of **local, organic, and fair trade food** available for sale.



I will buy **local and organic fruit and vegetables** at the farmer's market or at the grocery store. For imported products like bananas, coffee, sugar, and chocolate, I will buy **fair trade and organic** products.

Signature: _____

Cut out this page and place it on your bulletin board or refrigerator to remind you of your commitment.