



GC45 The United Church of Canada and The Canadian Foodgrains Bank Report for Summer 2025

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Background and Global Context

Food insecurity remains one of the most pressing global challenges, deeply affecting health, education, and economic development. In 2024, 304 million people faced acute food insecurity according to the UN World Food Programme, with the number of people experiencing severe hunger globally rising to 783 million—an increase of 122 million since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The main drivers include conflict, climate-related disasters (such as El Niño and La Niña), and economic shocks like sanctions and hyperinflation. These factors have intensified, particularly in countries already vulnerable due to prolonged wars and successive natural disasters.

Simultaneously, there has been a trend toward rising nationalism and a retreat from international aid commitments in several countries, including significant cuts to USAID. This has further strained the global response to hunger and underlines the critical importance of ecumenical and multi-sectoral cooperation.

Mission and Approach of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies, including The United Church of Canada, working collaboratively to end

global hunger. CFGB's approach integrates:

- Emergency food assistance during crises
- Long-term development through sustainable agriculture and livelihoods
- Advocacy and public engagement to address the root causes of hunger and influence policy

This multi-pronged strategy is grounded in justice, human rights, and the principle of mutual radical accompaniment, as articulated in the United Church's strategic vision and frameworks such as "Mending the World" and "Towards Food Sovereignty for All".

Key Achievements and Impact (2023–2025)

Reach and Results

- Assisted 974,683 people in 35 countries in 2023–242
- Provided emergency food and nutrition support in response to conflict, climate events, and economic instability
- Supported long-term development through sustainable agriculture, rebuilding livelihoods, and community resilience
- Focused on the most vulnerable, especially women and children, with targeted nutrition programs

Strategic Partnerships and Funding

- Maintained a \$75 million, three-year grant with the Government of Canada for food assistance in hunger hotspots
- Secured a \$35.5 million "Nature+" grant for landscape restoration and food systems in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (targeting 75,000 rural residents)
- Completed major grants for drought relief and humanitarian programming in the Horn of Africa, supporting 138,000 people in eight countries
- Collaborated with the Humanitarian Coalition, receiving over \$4.4 million in additional funding for emergency responses in regions like East Africa, Gaza, and after the Türkiye/Syria earthquake.

Nexus Programming

CFGBC adopted a “nexus approach,” blending emergency aid, long-term development, and nutritional support to address the cyclical and interconnected nature of hunger. In 2023–24, this approach benefited 117,634 people in 10 countries.

United Church’s Distinct Role

The United Church of Canada, as a founding CFGBC member, brings a unique perspective rooted in justice, gender equality, and decolonizing partnership. Its engagement is reflected in its 2022–2025 Strategic Plan, emphasizing:

- Deepening mutual engagement and advocacy with partners
- Inviting the broader church into justice-seeking activities
- Facilitating accountable, decolonizing collaboration with global partners

Program Highlights and Global Engagement

Direct Programming and Partnerships

United Church directly accompanies global partners such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) in four major projects:

- **Conservation Agriculture in Kenya:** Training 4,875 households (19,500 individuals) in sustainable agriculture (2023–2027, \$2.91M budget)
- **Climate Change Adaptation in Kenya:** Engaging 3,200 participants (11,200 people) in climate-resilient livelihoods and biodiversity management (2024–2026, \$2.47M budget)
- **Resilience in Zimbabwe:** Supporting 1,376 households (6,880 participants) with disaster-risk management, gender-sensitive agriculture, and community asset building (2025–2027, \$1.5M budget)
- **Emergency Food Assistance in Zimbabwe:** Providing food to 2,400 households (12,000 participants) affected by drought and El Niño (2025, \$1.28M budget)

Broader Collaboration and Resource Sharing

The United Church contributed \$846,000 in equity and \$250,000 in allocations in 2024–25, supporting 27 projects in 17 countries and collaborating with seven CFGB members. This included responses to underfunded crises in Afghanistan, DRC, Gaza, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, Syria, and Lebanon.

Capacity Development and Learning

- **Agriculture and Livelihoods Capacity Development Program:** Strengthens partner skills in conservation agriculture, value addition, and savings programs, fostering South-South learning and knowledge exchange
- **Learning Tours:** Annual opportunities for United Church members to visit CFGB projects globally, deepening understanding and engagement (e.g., 2025 delegation to Zimbabwe)

Advocacy and Leadership

- **Hunger on the Hill:** Advocacy initiative engaging Canadians and policymakers, including youth and young adults, to raise awareness and develop leadership on food security and climate justice
- **Governance:** United Church staff and non-staff serve on CFGB's Board and Council, shaping strategic direction and stewardship.

Summary and Outlook

In a world where inward-looking policies and threats to justice are increasing, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank-through the leadership and partnership of the United Church-demonstrates the power of ecumenical collaboration. Together, they are making a tangible impact on global hunger through direct aid, sustainable development, advocacy, and capacity building. The commitment to justice, partnership, and innovation remains central as they respond to evolving challenges and opportunities in the fight against hunger.

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