

The field is the world
and the good seed are
the children of the kingdom.

MATTHEW 13:38a

This special offering of the Presbytery of Des Moines has been serving rural churches and communities here in Iowa since 1987 when the farm crisis compelled Presbyterians to include a local focus for the existing **Harvest Offering**. For nearly four decades the Presbytery has answered the call of rural neighbors with support for programs and projects designed to meet their specific needs. One half of the **Harvest Offering** continues to serve rural Iowans.

In 2016 a second grant was made to the South Central Iowa Community Action Program (SCICAP) and its Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program. The program recognizes that at-risk families face many issues and respond well to long term, intense personal interaction with trained staff to move to emotional and economic independence. FaDSS develops a system of support services for each family that promotes, empowers, and nurtures the family to self-sufficiency.

One of these services is the “family store”. A family is provided a point book to document such things as keeping appointments, completing job applications, attending parenting programs, being involved in their child’s school activities, getting a driver’s license, vehicle maintenance, participation on community boards or councils, completing an assessment with specialist, attending health appointments, completing goals, personal wellness activities, and increasing their education level. Points are used to purchase items from the “store”. This **Harvest Offering** grant has been used to expand the available options to include baby and personal hygiene products.

Gifts to the **Harvest Offering** have provided emergency assistance in the eleventh hour for families and communities on the brink of disaster; have encouraged ordinary people who care about their community to develop ministries of sharing and development; and have demonstrated that we stand together with our brothers and sisters right next door and just down the road.

The field is the world
and the good seed are
the children of the kingdom.

MATTHEW 13:38a

Although women farmers produce more than half of the food grown in the world—and roughly 1.6 billion women depend on agriculture for their livelihoods—they are often not able to benefit from general agriculture funding because of the institutional and cultural barriers they face, including lack of access to land, lack of access to credit, and lack of access to education. Women receive only about 5% of agriculture extension services and own about 2% of land worldwide.

But research has shown that when women's incomes are improved, when they have better access to resources like education, infrastructure, credit, and health care, they tend to invest more in the nutrition, education, and health of their families, causing a ripple effect of benefits that can extend to the entire community,

Since 1978, the **Harvest Offering** has helped to provide assistance to rural people in less developed countries around the world. In 2017 one half of the offering is designated for programs and projects directed toward women in agriculture.

A 2016 **Harvest Offering** grant was made to Action for Rural Women Empowerment (ARUWE) in Uganda. The project goal is to build the capacity of communities to ensure a long-term and sustainable pro-poor policy. Initially ARUWE engaged 900 rural women farmers, 100 males, and 70 land actors with information on policies and laws and community structures put in place by the government to ensure peaceful co-existence on the land. Engaging the land actors ensures that when women who hold land rights need to deal with a violation, proper legal redress and access to justice are available.

Your gifts to the **Harvest Offering** will have a lasting impact for women in agriculture around the globe—reducing hunger and poverty in their communities. God is at work in the world, and this is one way for us to join in!