

Classis Niagara Report – autumn, 2021

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Canadian Director of Church and Community Engagement

Thank you to the churches of Classis Niagara. Because of your support, World Renew has been able to work



PLEASE PRAY:

We thank God for communities that demonstrate how to better love our neighbours and pray for their continued success.

with local churches and partners to address hunger through peace-building work in Nigeria, “Cash for work programs in The Philippines, tilapia ponds in Nicaragua, land rights advocacy in Laos, Timothy Leadership Training in Senegal, encouraging a Biblical understanding and lifestyle in families, disaster response in India, where families are able to buy food and regain both dignity and hope, “Grace Savings Group” (a Village Saving and Loans (VSL) group) in Zambia ; this is a partnership among the

reformed Church in Zambia, The River Community Church, and World Renew, and so much more. Our heavenly Father, inspiring your incredible gifts of \$193,544 through this past fiscal year (ending June 30) have helped to make all this happen.

Please continue to join us in ministry by participating in this year’s World Hunger Campaign, culminating in World Hunger Sunday (Nov. 7).

Resources are available [here](https://worldrenew.ca/world-hunger-church-resources), at worldrenew.ca/world-hunger-church-resources.

A. General Updates:

We are grateful that the Global Affairs Canada-CFGB Grant Agreement has been signed (4:1 funds). The new grant agreement is for three years and included a narrower focus on humanitarian contexts. It also includes a considerable increase in expectations around the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Upcoming this autumn: Four 45-minute global anti-racism and decolonization sessions, recorded and available as congregational study sessions. Please contact pbulthuis@worldrenew.ca; I’ll be glad to send them to you.

B. Upcoming Synodically-Designated Church Offerings:

October 11: Thanksgiving: Thanksgiving – Offering for World Renew’s *Free A Family*® program. Bulletin inserts will be sent to churches. The *Free A Family*® program is an alternative to sponsorship based on community development.

Nov. 7: World Hunger Sunday: HUNGER FOR GOOD.

November – December: Gift Catalogue Campaign.

Dec. 25: World Renew offering opportunity

All the church-based resources for all these campaigns can be found [here](https://worldrenew.ca/resources) (<https://worldrenew.ca/resources>)

C. Community Development:

In March, 2019, Cyclone Idai devastated communities in the southern part of Malawi. Houses collapsed, people lost their lives, fields and household items washed away. World Renew’s partnership with *Help a Child* helped the most vulnerable households to not only rebuild their lives and be better prepared for



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- Loveness Chisbisa, farmer

future natural disasters, but also encouraged communities to collaborate to address their long-term challenges.

Most community members are subsistence farmers and due to poor soil, erosion, and changing weather patterns, people harvest less and less. We trained the community on basic watershed management and sustainable agriculture. They experimented growing more indigenous edible plants that were more suitable for the hotter climate and by planting more diverse crops, families now have access to fresh vegetables year round.

Loveness Chibisa of Saindi village is one of those farmers. She and her husband plant vegetable seeds provided by the project. Loveness says, "Through this project, I have learned a lot of things. I used to have a garden but never harvested all year round. Now, I sell a minimum of K4,000 (\$5 USD) of vegetables per day and manage to pay school fees for my 3 children." The Chibisa family also bought a treadle pump to irrigate their garden. This year, they managed to harvest thirty 50kg bags of maize. They plan to sell the maize during lean season to have money during the hunger season.

There are dozens of stories like this one that churches and donors in Canada and the US have helped to facilitate. **THANK YOU, Classis Niagara.**

D. International Disaster Response (IDR)

On Saturday, August 14 at 8:29 AM local time, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit southern Haiti. The epicenter was located in the Nippes department, 150 km southwest of Port-au-Prince. This earthquake comes on the heels of many months of civil unrest, violence at the hands of gangs, and President Moïse's assassination. This is yet another major setback for the impoverished and long-suffering country.

This is a story of World Renew's continuing response; as soon as it's written, it's out of date. I want to highlight that world Renew swung into action with one hour of the earthquake; right away, it was two-pronged:

1. Disaster response work on the ground, working in collaboration with other agencies,
2. Information distribution for learning and fundraising. Within a day and a half, 14 pieces of communication went out to donors and churches.

World Renew, with its partners, immediately began to meet urgent needs. This included providing tarps for shelter and non-food item (NFI) kits that included household and personal care items for families who have lost their homes. At the same time, we were taking part in assessment efforts to determine medium-term needs. The response is now moving into that phase.

Donations can be made to support the work of our partners in the region for this critical response using the **fund code 210232: IDR-Haiti Earthquake 2021**. Donations can be mailed in or made online.



E. Refugee Settlement Activities:

Between January 1, 2021 and July 28 2021, 23 refugee sponsorship applications were submitted to IRCC for a total of 38 refugees.

Between January 1, 2021 and July 28 2021, 25 refugees arrived to Canada through World Renew sponsorships with the top three countries of origin being Syria, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. 96 churches are currently engaged in refugee sponsorship and resettlement (refers to churches waiting for an arrival, currently settling a family or submitting a sponsorship application for 2021) of which 68 are CRCs and 28 are BCRCs.

F. What else can the people and the churches of Classis Niagara do?

Encourage your church to partner with a church or community outside North America. Call the office.

Contact Peter Bulthuis (pbulthuis@worldrenew.ca ; 800-730-3490, ext. 4237) for more ideas on how we can help you achieve your ministry objectives. To learn more about World Renew's ministry and/or to sign up for our regular newsletter, please visit www.worldrenew.ca.

Please continue to pray for the world. May the God of peace grant wisdom and healing to the nations.

Blessings,



Peter Bulthuis, Director, Church and Community Engagement Canada