

A vibrant photograph of a woven basket filled with fresh vegetables. In the foreground, there are several bright orange carrots, a large red bell pepper, and a green apple. Behind them are several ripe red tomatoes and a head of green lettuce. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor garden setting.

Report: Global Innovation Challenge to Expand Food Security

June 2026

Citi Foundation

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Letter from the President of the Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation has long believed in the power of philanthropy to seed new ways of addressing community challenges. We are often willing to be a first-mover, investing early dollars in novel ideas. In 2023, we launched a new flagship initiative called the Global Innovation Challenge (the Challenge) to bring this approach to life and elevate game-changing solutions to pressing social and economic issues.

We designed the Challenge as a model of catalytic funding. Local organizations can use grants to take risks and pilot or scale bold approaches in their communities. Our ambition was to create momentum and begin moving the needle from talking about persistent global issues to implementing groundbreaking solutions that can build community resilience.

For the inaugural Challenge, we tackled a pervasive global issue: food insecurity. The Citi Foundation committed a collective \$25 million to [50 community organizations](#) around the globe working to expand food security, a pillar of physical and financial well-being. Citi Institute published a [report](#) in 2022 highlighting that a staggering one in 10 people worldwide were undernourished. We recognized that improving access to and availability of affordable, nutritious food was important to furthering the Citi Foundation’s mission of advancing economic opportunity in the communities we serve.

As the cohort’s two-year programming period comes to a close, we are proud to showcase the incredible work of our grantees. During this time, they have collectively impacted more than 30 million individuals globally. It is their transformative programs that help farmers in the Philippines access new technologies that fortify crops against pests and adverse weather; train indigenous women in Mexico to diversify food production and earn an income; and rescue surplus produce in the U.K., which become meals for those in need.

The Citi Foundation applied our core “more than philanthropy” approach to the Challenge, incorporating beyond-the-grant support. The cohort had access to a unique learning community platform, where they could join expert-led webinars, connect with fellow grantees and receive financial assistance to attend international conferences. We further leveraged Citi’s vast reach to support these organizations, with colleagues around the world volunteering with grantees and Citi executives passionately championing the grantees in their countries.

Looking ahead, the Challenge continues to grow and address new frontiers. In 2024, we focused the Challenge on addressing the complex issue of homelessness, and our most recent iteration in 2025 is dedicated to accelerating innovative employment solutions for low-income youth. As I reflect on our first cohort and the evolution of the Challenge, I am inspired by the dedication of our grantees and the fortitude of the individuals and families they serve. Their strength and tireless efforts remind us that for innovators, the work does not end at a single discovery — instead, it energizes the next great achievement. I hope that for all of us in the community development field, this idea can be a driving force as we continue working together for a more prosperous future.

Sincerely,

Brandee McHale
President of the Citi Foundation and
Head of Community Investing and Development at Citi



The Global Issue of Food Insecurity

As [reported](#) by Citi Institute in 2022, while the number of people experiencing hunger fell for many years in the early 2000s, rates had been on the rise since 2018 and accelerated with the long-term impact of global social, political and economic challenges. These challenges included shifts in energy and grain prices that intersected with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on income, employment and inflation.

Food insecurity has disproportionately burdened low-income communities, and far too many individuals and families face the daily struggle of not knowing when and where their next meal will come from.

Impacts of Food Insecurity



Prevalence

1/3

of the global population was moderately or severely food insecure.

1 out of 10

people globally were undernourished.



Economic effects

\$3.5 trillion/year

The economic cost of malnutrition.

~\$10.5 trillion/year

Estimated benefits brought on by improving food security.

"Food Security: Tackling the Current Crisis and Building Future Resilience," Citi GPS (November 2022) <https://www.citigroup.com/global/insights/citigps/food-security>

The Global Innovation Challenge Model

The Citi Foundation launched the Global Innovation Challenge in 2023 to provide philanthropic support to community organizations that are developing innovative solutions to social and economic challenges facing low-income communities around the world.

How the Challenge Works

Catalytic Funding

The Challenge supports organizations as they take risks and help put game-changing solutions on the map. The Citi Foundation seeks to position our grantees to sustain and grow their impact — enabling them to forge new partnerships, attract new funders and elevate themselves as thought leaders.

The Learning Community

During the two-year programming period and as alumni, Challenge recipients have access to a learning community of fellow grantees. This unique platform serves as a hub for community leaders and their peers around the world, so that they can share learnings and best practices. The learning community also offers expert resources, including webinars and toolkits and provides a stipend to participate in conferences.

Read more about the learning community on page 18.



Impact By the Numbers*

During the two years of programming through the Global Innovation Challenge, grantees have....



Directly impacted
over **30MM**
individuals



Trained or supported over
10,000
organizations



delivered over
200K tons
of food and over
200MM
meals to communities



Helped
over **6,000**
individuals obtain
employment



Over
97,000
individuals reported
improved financial
knowledge and skills



Helped create or
improve over
20,000
micro or small
businesses



*Impact data throughout this report is based on data that is self-reported by grantees, as of May 2026, and is not independently verified or audited by Citi.

Impact Around the World

The Citi Foundation recognizes the remarkable work of our grantees across over 40 countries and territories as they make positive changes in the lives and livelihoods of their communities.

This section highlights several innovative projects supported by the 2023 Challenge and their impact. You'll find stories of how new agricultural approaches are advancing food resilience in Indonesia, how rescued surplus food is feeding thousands in the U.K., how small-scale farmers in South Africa are learning new farmings techniques and more. You'll also hear directly from community organizations and those they serve.

Focus Areas of Work



Access

Support efforts that increase access to affordable and healthy food.



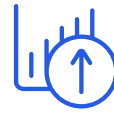
Affordability

Improve food affordability through community finance efforts that help reduce the financial burden placed on low-income communities.



Availability

Develop solutions for the food supply chain that lead to positive community benefits, such as the creation of new jobs and businesses.



Resilience

Increase the number of available resources that enable communities to more effectively prepare for and respond to disruptions in food security during crises.

Asia Pacific

Enabling Resilient Food Systems*

Yayasan Kopernik (Kopernik) is working with smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs in West Timor, Indonesia, a region where food insecurity is exacerbated by extreme weather events that can lead to crop failures. Kopernik works with communities in several ways: by promoting indigenous farming practices to increase sustainable access to local foods, testing new drying technologies to preserve food; and providing capacity-building support for micro-agribusinesses.

Over two years, Kopernik's programming has included workshops on indigenous farming approaches like crop rotation, seed saving and regenerative agroforestry—a technique that integrates crops, trees and livestock to support the broader ecosystem, biodiversity and soil health. The knowledge from these workshops has reached over 1,100 farmers throughout the course of the grant period.

A particularly innovative approach by Kopernik has been piloting food-drying technologies, such as solar dryers, that help farmers dry their crops more efficiently and safely. Kopernik is also testing the use of Black Soldier Fly larvae, an insect common in tropical regions, to convert organic and food waste into animal feed and compost.

The organization reports it has supported over 50 local micro-agribusinesses, helping them with business planning, financial literacy, product development and marketing.

“In my small business, I process local foods such as moringa, sorghum and boscia into flour, biscuits, bread and other products, using a solar dryer supported by Kopernik. Through this partnership [with Kopernik], I have gained many valuable opportunities: business capital support, capacity-building and assistance in obtaining certifications. At first, my business was operating at a basic level, but after joining Kopernik, I have felt tremendous support to improve it. This guidance has not only helped my products improve but also given me new confidence and motivation to keep growing.”

Debora
Micro-agribusiness owner,
Program participant
Indonesia





“Our family faced serious financial difficulties, and I was forced to work far away from my children. This was my greatest fear, especially since all of them were still studying and there was no one left to take care of them. Then Project AID came and helped organize us into a legally recognized association in our community. We were given capacity-building support and assisted in establishing an agri-store, along with agricultural inputs to help us get started. Today, I am earning a daily income and no longer need to work far from home.”

Liesel
Agripreneur Program participant
Philippines

Building Capacity for Entrepreneurship and New Technologies*

World Vision Development Foundation (World Vision) is equipping low-income farmers in the Philippines with financial and agricultural knowledge to grow profitable farming businesses and implement technology-forward agricultural practices. The organization’s Project AID (Agricultural Innovation Development) operates two capacity-building programs for farmers: the Agripreneur Program and the Smart Farming Technology Program.

The Agripreneur Program reports engaging over 2,000 farmers, establishing over 30 active entrepreneur and farmers groups and providing agricultural inputs and livestock as starting business capital. Participants also complete the Agripreneur training, which provides resources for starting or scaling-up small agribusinesses. This includes best practices for cultivating various local crops, how to manage livestock and how to take their products to market. Additionally, the organization reports that over 300 participants are involved in group-managed “agristoryes”, which generate income and create employment opportunities.

World Vision reports that through the Smart Farming Technology Program it has trained over 1,200 farmers in innovative techniques. This includes automation for tasks such as seeding, spraying and waste management, as well as a Smart Greenhouse, which is solar-powered and enables year-round crop growth, safe from adverse weather and pest infestations. Farmers also learn digital skills, including smartphone use, internet safety, social media marketing, e-commerce platforms and digital transactions.

Europe

Transforming Farm Surplus*

Felix**, a U.K.-based therapy rescues and redistributes surplus food to over 1,200 community organizations and primary schools across London. Its Farm to Freezer program diverts surplus farm produce and delivers these nutritious foods to local partner organizations.

For the program, Felix built relationships with local farmers to rescue their surplus and invested in the infrastructure to get this produce from farms to those in need. Part of this infrastructure included developing a volunteer program to collect fruit at local farms—thousands of people, including many Citi volunteers, donated their time to this program. Felix also invested in innovative processes that turned apples that were deemed not suitable for eating into juice, further reducing potential waste. By the end of 2025, the Farm to Freezer program reports rescuing over 503,000 kilograms (kg) of food, which is enough for nearly 400,000 meals.

After Felix launched the Farm to Freezer pilot with the Challenge grant, it was able to secure additional investments from other funders and has served as a pioneer for other food rescue programs in the U.K.

“We’ve noticed more families are using our food aid service, and they particularly love receiving fruit and veg from Felix. They’re so excited to have lovely fresh apple juice to give their children, as sadly fresh juice can feel like an unaffordable luxury, so this will be an amazing treat for the kids.”

Representative from Laurence’s Larder
Local food distributor
U.K.

U.K. Grantees Work Together to Tackle Hunger

In the U.K., Global Innovation Challenge grantees Felix and Trussell (an anti-poverty charity supporting a community of food banks) are focused on supporting people facing hunger. Food banks in the Trussell community provide those facing hunger and hardship with both food and practical support, such as access to financial advice, and work together with the goal of ending the need for food banks in the country. In 2025, Felix distributed 860 kg of pumpkins and over five tons of fruit, all from its farm food rescue efforts, to 11 Trussell sites across London, expanding food access to those facing hunger.

**Felix was founded in 2026 following the merger of FareShare and The Felix Project. The Felix Project received the Citi Foundation grant in 2023.



“The support from Citi Foundation has been really important for us. It has allowed us to move significantly more surplus food through FoodCloud’s platform and to fund a dedicated local resource that supports our food bank, donors, and — most importantly — charities. This means charities can access more surplus food more efficiently and get it to the people who need it most.”

Rostislav

Project Manager, Czech Federation of Food Banks
Czech Republic

Connecting Food Producers with Community Organizations*

FoodCloud, through its app Foodiverse, directly connects producers and businesses with surplus food to community organizations. This innovative technology significantly reduces collection time and cost, rescues more food, serves more people and allows groups like food banks to create direct relationships with donors. Simultaneously, the platform supports companies in reducing their food waste.

FoodCloud is expanding the reach of Foodiverse, operating across several countries in Europe and piloting in Kenya and Indonesia. There are ongoing improvements to the app, such as advancing the functionality for central food banks overseeing networks of charities in different markets, developing new integrations for donation efficiency and traceability and adding reporting capabilities. These improvements aim to promote greater reach of the app and increase the amount of food redistributed into the community.

Over the two years of the Challenge, FoodCloud in Europe reports directly impacting 1.5 million individuals annually, delivering over 68,000 tons of food to its communities.

Latin America

Promoting Locally Led Development in Indigenous Communities*

The Hunger Project is helping rural and indigenous communities in southern Mexico expand their access to nutritious foods and build their financial health. Recognizing that these communities spend nearly half their income on food, The Hunger Project scaled an initiative focused on leadership, entrepreneurship and technical skills.

The Hunger Project's initiative features a leadership school where participants learn about decision-making and planning for their households; entrepreneurship training to develop business skills; and technical training on food production and management, in order to scale food access and generate income. For example, participants learned how to make totopos (tortilla chips), and how to maintain tilapia ponds. They are also actively managing over 30 community gardens. This initiative also includes recruiting local community members, many of them women, as Catalysts. These Catalysts receive trainings, and then pass on their knowledge to communities, cultivating trust and long-term resilience. Over the two-year grant period, The Hunger Project estimates it has trained over 460 Catalysts.

This initiative has boosted food availability and local food systems. Community gardens expanded from eight crop varieties to over 20, which has enhanced the stability, nutritional value and resilience of local food production. Communities have also enhanced their economic resilience through improved business models, strategic planning and savings practices.

“Thanks to The Hunger Project, we’ve learned in the garden how to plant our own vegetables, how to harvest them, and how to earn a little extra income for our household. Before, we didn’t have that kind of training or guidance but with the support of The Hunger Project’s staff, we started learning new skills. Now, there has been a lot of progress in my life and in my family, because I involve my children and my husband. I know how to do more things now—things I never thought I would be capable of. For example, I now know how to sell a product. When I make my garnachas, I know how to offer them and how to earn income to help support my home.”

Edith
Program participant
Mexico





“As an agronomist, I decided to dedicate myself to producing healthy, safe and affordable food. We show that an ecological production system can work in family farming and be sustainable and profitable. This helps farmers seek fair markets, improve income and quality of life, and protect the environment and consumers’ health. That is why we sell directly in local eco-fairs, and why I want to start working with children and young people in our community.”

Mercedes
Program participant
Peru

Fostering Healthy and Sustainable Nutrition*

Welthungerlife (WHH) is strengthening local farming and promoting healthier diets in rural Peru. WHH saw that family farmers, who provide the majority of food in Peru, but in poverty and hunger, needed support for increasing production and commercialization.

WHH’s project provides technical training to build the capacity of small family farms and runs campaigns in schools to promote healthy diets and local, nutritious produce. WHH is also helping school food programs procure from local farms, expanding both children’s nutrition and the farmers’ commercial distribution.

Over two years, the project has held technical trainings for over 200 farmers on topics like sustainable small livestock husbandry, organic fertilizer production and efficient seed and water resource management. These farmers also received entrepreneurship support, such as capacity-building for sales strategies, information on digital marketing and on establishing formal business associations.

WHH also engaged with seven local schools, promoting healthy eating through interactive activities, school gardens and creative student presentations. As an entrepreneurship simulation, the students marketed and sold the produce from their school gardens at school fairs.

Middle East and Africa

Reducing Food Loss Through Solar Drying*

Misr El Kheir (MEK) is supporting food security and rural livelihoods in Egypt by reducing post-harvest food loss. The organization recognized that while Egypt is a top tomato-producing country, there are substantial losses due to high perishability and limited access to affordable preservation methods.

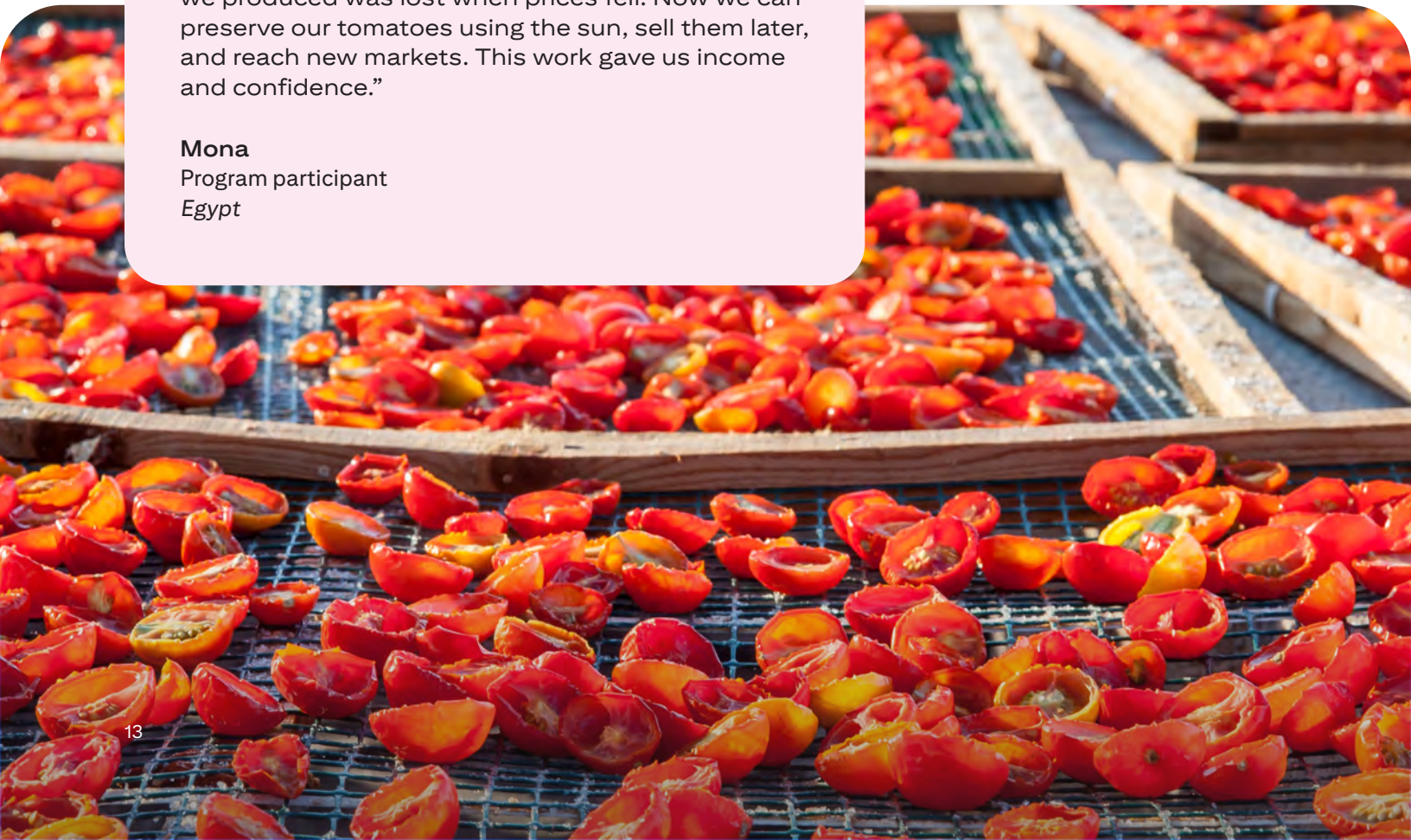
MEK launched a program that focuses on improving the value of crops after the harvest. It trains participants in the entire tomato-drying process, enabling them to transform surplus fresh tomatoes into shelf-stable, higher-value products and a reliable source of income. Participants also learn about calculating costs, pricing and profit margins for dried products.

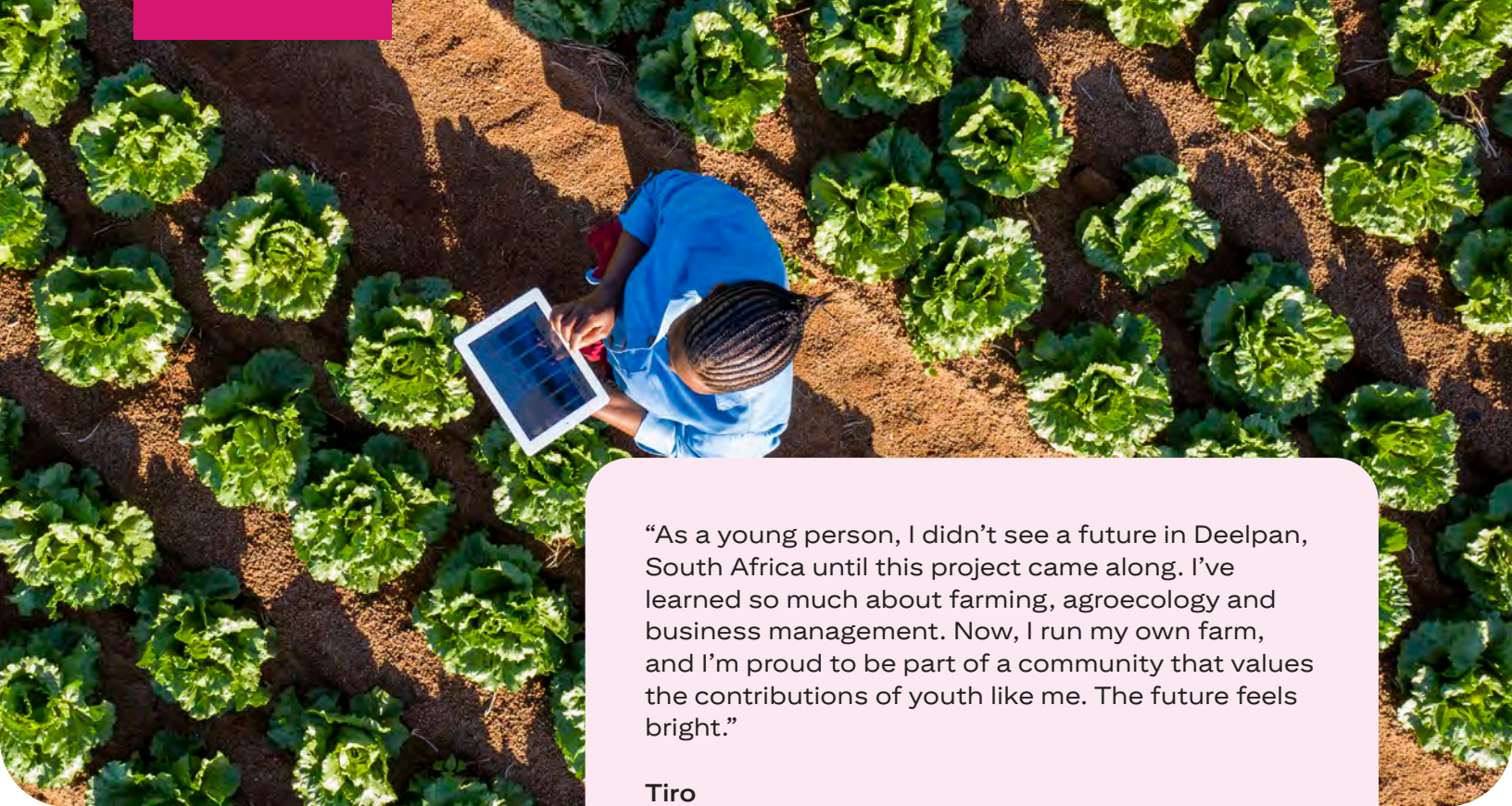
A key element of this program is the use of solar energy, which is abundant year-round in Upper Egypt. This approach avoids dependence on costly or complex technologies and ensures that the drying model is accessible, low-cost and easily replicable.

Through this program, MEK has trained over 300 individuals over two years. It reports a 65% reduction in post-harvest losses among participating farmers and a 25% increase in average income from the dried products.

“Before learning how to dry tomatoes, much of what we produced was lost when prices fell. Now we can preserve our tomatoes using the sun, sell them later, and reach new markets. This work gave us income and confidence.”

Mona
Program participant
Egypt





“As a young person, I didn’t see a future in Deelpan, South Africa until this project came along. I’ve learned so much about farming, agroecology and business management. Now, I run my own farm, and I’m proud to be part of a community that values the contributions of youth like me. The future feels bright.”

Tiro
Small-scale farmer
South Africa

Supporting Farmers with Community Hubs*

In 2023, Seriti Institute launched a flagship program to support small-scale farmers in South Africa.

Seriti Institute’s Multifunctional Agri-Nodes (MFAN) project includes community-based hubs that offer resources and training to help build sustainable farming communities, which then provide local residents with access to sustainable and healthy food. Farmers learn techniques to improve soil health, reduce dependence on external inputs and diversify income streams with capacity-building support on business planning and enterprise development. Since its launch, the project has supported over 300 smallholder farmers and over 40 enterprises.

In addition, Seriti Institute developed an app called Community Fresh, designed to help agribusinesses thrive by improving farmers’ financial knowledge and skills and creating virtual market links between farmers and consumers. The app has so far supported over 300 farmers by improving market access and linkages to buyers and reports supporting over 290 job opportunities through expanded agricultural production and enterprise activity. Seriti Institute has also prioritized planning and stakeholder engagement with local and regional actors, including retailers, to ensure effective collaboration and increased market access for farmers.

United States and Canada

Increasing Dignified Access to Local Foods*

The Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre (QCFC) is responding to the challenge of food insecurity facing communities in Canada's Arctic territory, where a combination of low incomes, a high cost of living and lack of infrastructure challenge access to healthy and affordable food.

QCFC launched a project called the Qinnirvik Country Food & Bulk Store, that offers locally sourced Inuit food such as Arctic char and caribou (also known as country food) alongside affordable bulk groceries. Sourcing from local Inuit hunters and harvesters reduces the need for imported food and increases community access to culturally relevant options. Country food is offered at subsidized prices.

As of October 2025, the store estimates distributing over 5,500 kg of country food to the community. This project is part of QCFC's broader work to create long-term impact by supporting a local, country food economy as the community experiences increased food insecurity and rising demand for meal assistance and food bank programs.

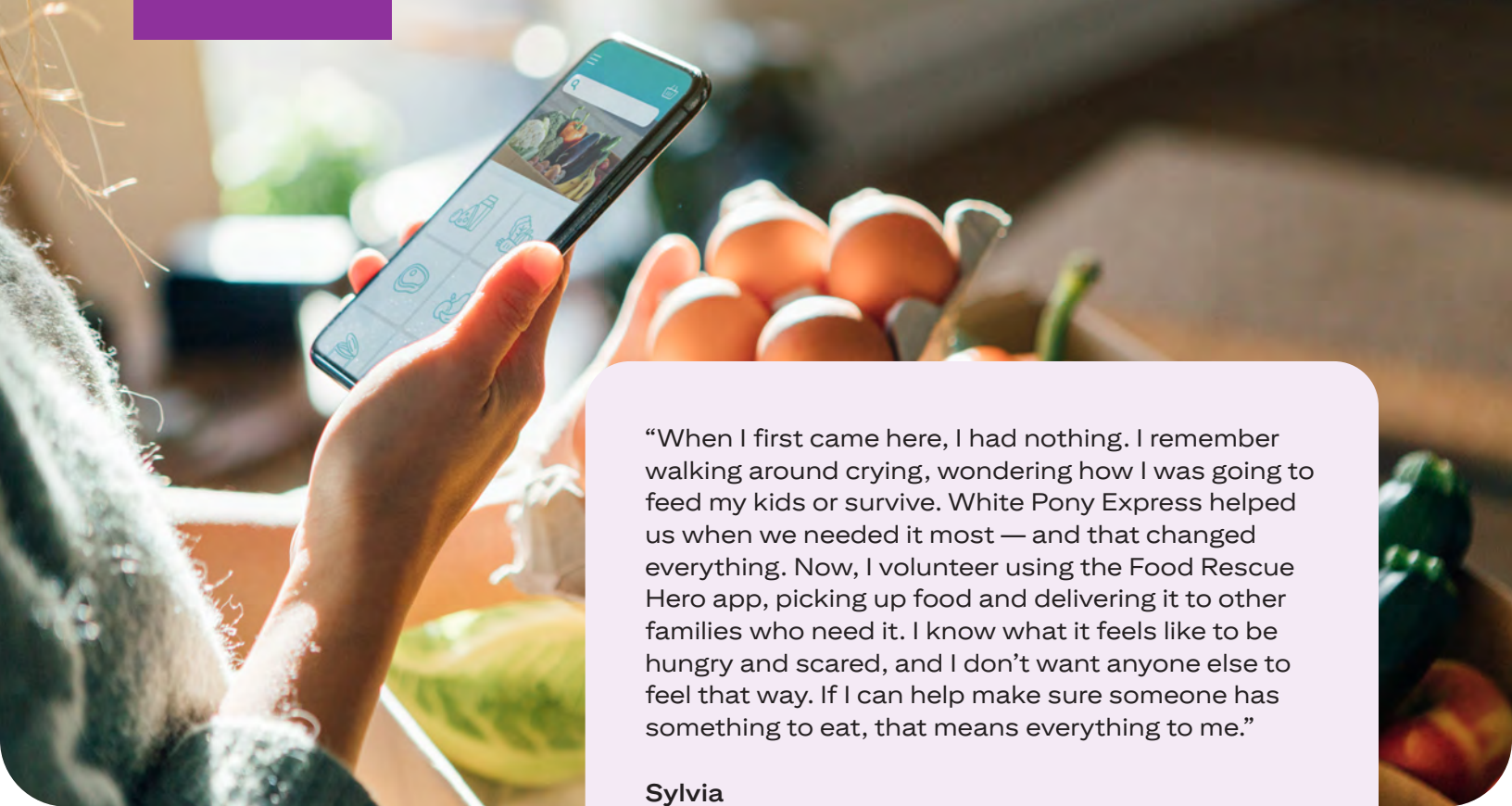
QCFC has also created local employment and training opportunities through the country food store, hiring several staff members and working with approximately a dozen Inuit hunters via local partners.

"It is hard to overstate how remarkable this little store is when you look at it from a national context. To my knowledge it is the only retail establishment [in Canada] that is run by indigenous people and that is functionally supporting an indigenous food system – from the harvesters who can earn a livelihood serving fellow Inuit, it to the Inuit (and non-Inuit) families who are able to buy the food that nourishes their culture."

Will

Project Nunavut, a local partner of QCFC
Canada





“When I first came here, I had nothing. I remember walking around crying, wondering how I was going to feed my kids or survive. White Pony Express helped us when we needed it most — and that changed everything. Now, I volunteer using the Food Rescue Hero app, picking up food and delivering it to other families who need it. I know what it feels like to be hungry and scared, and I don’t want anyone else to feel that way. If I can help make sure someone has something to eat, that means everything to me.”

Sylvia
Food Rescue Hero volunteer
U.S.

Turning Surplus Into Sustenance with a Mobile App*

For over a decade in California, White Pony Express has been rescuing surplus food and delivering to organizations that directly serve communities. Over the last several years, it saw food insecurity rising and a widening gap between available resources and needs.

In response, White Pony Express launched the Food Rescue Hero Initiative, a mobile app designed to move surplus food more quickly and with greater reach. The app connects food producers and businesses with surplus directly to volunteer delivery runners and nonprofit partners. When surplus food is posted in the app, nearby volunteer runners are instantly alerted. They pick up the food and bring it to a nonprofit partner for distribution. This on-demand, hyper-local model replaces rigid delivery schedules, unlocking smaller, targeted deliveries that dramatically reduce food waste and increase access.

Throughout the two-year Challenge, White Pony Express partnered with 180 organizations, including 70 food donors and over 100 nonprofit recipients. It reports reaching more than 66,300 individuals across Contra Costa County. The organization estimates that the initiative has enabled over 8,900 food rescue deliveries, recovering over 600 tons of food—the equivalent of 1.1 million meals.

**All impact data across pages 7-16 have been self-reported by grantees*

Our “More than Philanthropy” Approach

Beyond grant funding, the Citi Foundation takes a “more than philanthropy” approach to provide grantees with comprehensive support that strengthens their resilience, expands their capacity and helps amplify their impactful solutions.

This approach includes a learning community, built by and for grantees, where there are opportunities to convene in-person and virtually and learn from industry experts. It also includes support from Citi executives and leaders, access to Citi’s widespread network and opportunities to engage Citi employees as volunteers.

In this section, we invite you to learn more about the learning community, hear from Citi executives and see how Citi volunteers work with grantees to give back.

“The Citi Foundation firmly believes in going beyond the dollar to help our grantees thrive, and the learning community embeds important technical assistance and capacity-building support into the Challenge model. I’m thrilled to have been a part of many dynamic conversations between grantees, both in-person and virtually, where organizations problem-solved together on common challenges, swapped strategies on shared areas of work and got to know each other on a personal level. It has been an amazing experience to hear from grantees that the learning community has been a unique space to get out of siloes and have real, open conversations with peers working all over the world.”

Rachael Barber

Director, International Community Relations, Citi



The Citi Foundation and Global Innovation Challenge grantees gathered at the 2025 AVPN Global Conference in Hong Kong

Connecting Through the Learning Community

We've heard from grantees over the years that they value opportunities to showcase their initiatives, connect with stakeholders and establish relationships with peers to learn, expand their impact and replicate models that work.

To foster these moments, the Citi Foundation curated a learning community for Challenge grantees. For the three iterations of the Challenge so far, the learning community has been facilitated by [IDEO.org](https://www.ideo.org/), a nonprofit that partners with communities and organizations to reimagine solutions, including services and strategies, for impact. For the learning community, they provide a robust range of digital sharing and learning experiences, alongside networking opportunities. They host webinars on topics like grantwriting, fundraising and and creative approaches for community engagement. IDEO.org also circulates periodic newsletters that share grantee highlights, upcoming industry events and toolkits and resources (e.g., insights on how organizations can adopt emerging technologies).

Importantly, the learning community is a platform for Challenge grantees who operate all over the world to connect both virtually and in person. There are regular virtual sessions where grantees can share wins and learnings with each other and amplify their work. The learning community offers financial assistance, through a conference stipend, for grantees to attend conferences and peer gatherings. These conferences enable grantees to build in-person connections, showcase their innovations and meet other funders and like-minded organizations globally.

As a result, grantees have forged new connections. For example, in Latin America, Nuup, The Hunger Project and CARE Guatemala leveraged the conference stipend to participate in the Latin American Forum on Innovation and Investment (FLII) in Mexico. They collaborated on a joint panel, where they shared evidence and insights from the field on investments in community-led efforts and systems for food security.



Citi Executives Champion Grantees

Canada

“At Citi, we believe that access to nutritious, affordable food is fundamental to thriving communities. Our collaboration with the Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre reflects our shared commitment to advancing food sovereignty and supporting locally led solutions that create lasting impact across Canada’s North.”

Raymond Gatcliffe

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Canada

Latin America

“Citi is proud to support the work of Gerando Falcoes, an organization that is setting up community kitchens in Brazil to combat food insecurity. These kitchens offer thousands of healthy and affordable meals each day and also train and employ local residents. These are the innovative, on-the-ground solutions that help communities thrive and build resilience.”

André Cury

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Brazil

“I want to recognize and celebrate the work of two Global Innovation Challenge grantees working in Guatemala – CARE Guatemala and Groundswell International. These organizations are combatting food insecurity in the country through innovative approaches that strengthen food security ecosystems, expand access to financial resources and build community resilience.”

Julio Álvarez

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Guatemala

Europe

“Providing safe, healthy and sufficient food for everyone is crucial to helping families and communities progress. We are thrilled that New Agriculture New Generation was one of the recipients of the Citi Foundation’s Global Innovation Challenge with their groundbreaking program in Greece, Social Farming 360°. It is perfectly aligned with the Citi Foundation’s bold initiative to enhance food security and boost the financial health of low-income families and communities worldwide.”

Emilios Kyriacou

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Greece, Cyprus, Malta

“We at Citi Spain are incredibly proud to have supported EIT Food in Madrid, and their initiative that helps entrepreneurs access tools, training and funds for their food-related businesses. We’ve witnessed firsthand the transformative power of this program, leading to tangible improvements in access to and affordability of food. The learnings from Madrid have even inspired its replication in six additional cities, amplifying the project’s reach and impact. The dedication of our Citi volunteers, who have generously offered their time and expertise, further strengthens our commitment and support for this vital work. This project stands as a testament to how collaborative efforts can create lasting economic and health benefits for our communities in Madrid.”

Pedro López-Quesada

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Spain

Middle East and Africa

“It’s been inspiring to see how the Citi Foundation’s support of Partners in Food Solutions and Concern Worldwide is making a real difference for communities across Kenya. This collaboration has positively reached over 300,000 community members, including children, providing vital nutritious food. Their initiatives have been crucial in strengthening the economic position and entrepreneurial capacity of low-income communities, enhancing food security and improving nutritional outcomes across Kenya. We are proud of the lasting positive change this work is creating.”

Martin Mugambi

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Kenya

“Citi Foundation’s collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) in Zambia provides livelihoods through training and increased access to financial services for women, helping them break the cycle of poverty and build a brighter future. A huge thank you to the WFP team for their commitment to the local community, and their tireless efforts in promoting financial literacy and empowerment!”

Lowani Chibesakunda

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Zambia

Asia Pacific

“Agriculture remains the backbone of Indonesia’s economy, contributing more than [14%](#) to national GDP in the third quarter of 2025—yet behind these numbers are communities whose resilience depends on sustainable solutions. Citi Indonesia and the Citi Foundation are proud to support humanitarian organizations like Yayasan Kopernik in advancing community-driven innovation that strengthen local food systems, improve livelihoods, and help build a more resilient and inclusive future for communities across Indonesia.”

Batara Sianturi

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Indonesia

“Whether it be food insecurity or homelessness, the private sector can help address some of society’s most pressing challenges. Through knowledge and skills-sharing, the Filipino farmers who participated in the Project AID program are able to grow more sustainable businesses, improve their livelihood, and make a positive impact on their communities. Initiatives like the Global Innovation Challenge take us a step closer to making progress happen.”

Paul Favila

Citi Country Officer and Banking Head,
Philippines

Citi Volunteers Around the World

Citi employees volunteer their time and talent across the world in support of Citi Foundation grantees working in food security.

In October 2024, Citi volunteers in Tunisia joined International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) at a local family farm that the organization worked with for a day of service. ICARDA's research helps farmers learn techniques and innovative solutions to adapt to dry areas, and the Tunisian farmers showcased the "permaculture" techniques for drought-resistant farming that they had adopted after working with ICARDA. Citi volunteers helped plant herbs around the farm and learned about sustainable irrigation techniques.

This was a rewarding day of supporting ICARDA and its communities and a day filled with learning and hands-on experience on sustainable farming.



Citi volunteers join ICARDA and their program participant in Tunisia to learn about the permaculture technique of arranging planting beds in a mandala design



Citi volunteers sort food for donation with Red de Bancos de Alimentos de Argentina



Julio Álvarez, Citi Country Officer and Banking Head, Guatemala, volunteering with CARE Guatemala to support rural women entrepreneurs



Citi volunteers packed and delivered food for The Food Bank Singapore (a member of the Global FoodBanking Network) during Citi Singapore's 2025 Food Drive Week



In the Philippines,
Citi volunteers

joined virtual mentoring sessions organized by World Vision, for college students to learn about budgeting, entrepreneurship, business finance and financial planning. The college students are children of farmers that are working with World Vision as part of the Challenge, and these mentoring sessions complement the agricultural and technological skills that their parents are learning.

In the U.K., Citi volunteers spent thousands of hours with Felix, packing meals at their depots and picking surplus fruit at partner farms, logging thousands of volunteer hours.



Citi volunteers sort food at Felix's depot in London



Citi volunteers join White Pony Express in their mission to nourish the communities they serve in California



Robert Szewczyk, Mayor of Olstyn (left) joins Citi volunteers for a day of service with Bank Żywności w Olsztynie (Food Bank of Olsztyn) in Poland

Evolution of the Global Innovation Challenge

Since the launch of the Global Innovation Challenge in 2023, the Citi Foundation has replicated the model in two additional iterations to date.



Housing insecurity impacts communities globally, with the United Nations estimating that **1.8 billion** people around the world lack adequate housing.

The 2024 Global Innovation Challenge supports solutions that address homelessness. Meet the 2024 grantees [here](#).



Youth unemployment is an ongoing and pervasive issue and the International Labour Organization estimates that **65 million** young people globally are unemployed.

The 2025 Global Innovation Challenge supports innovative employment solutions for low-income youth. Meet the 2025 grantees [here](#).



The Citi Foundation and Global Innovation Challenge grantees gathered at the 2025 International Journal on Homelessness (IJOH) Conference in Santiago, Chile

We have learned and evolved with each iteration of the Challenge.

For example, we heard from grantees about the value of the learning community and the conference stipend and we have continued to implement robust channels for information-sharing and networking. In 2025, we leaned into opportunities to connect in-person, [convening grantees](#) at conferences and events around the world.

Another learning is that grantees appreciate when the Foundation has a clear understanding of what is happening in the local context and can provide flexibility. Anera, one of our 2023 grantees, worked in Lebanon on rooftop gardens that help low-income families expand their household-level food production and strengthen their self-reliance. When conflict later destroyed many of these gardens, communities lost a vital source of food security. In response, the Citi Foundation supported Anera's efforts to rapidly adapt its agriculture portfolio toward emergency relief. Recognizing the urgent situation, the Citi Foundation's flexible support ensured continuity of Anera's services for evolving community needs. For us, this reinforced the importance of responding to local circumstances and staying connected with Citi colleagues who are on the ground with our grantees, so that we can best meet the moment.

Although the focus of each Challenge cohort has adapted as the world changes, the Citi Foundation's commitment to supporting innovative solutions for the communities we serve has not. We are dedicated to being a responsive funder, to constantly learning and to supporting and amplifying the work of our Challenge grantees as they create positive change for their communities.

“The Global Innovation Challenge has always been about catalyzing innovation and leveraging philanthropic dollars to pilot or expand bold solutions in low-income communities. As we look forward, we reaffirm our drive to break down siloes, build bridges and scale solutions that unlock opportunity.”

Elliot Harris

Head of International Community Relations, Citi



Citi Foundation



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