

Foodgrains Bank - *Climate Adaptation Fund*

Tool at a glance

Title: Climate Adaptation Fund

Addresses: Tracks organizational carbon emissions and contributes to a project helping those facing the impacts. Others are encouraged to get engaged and contribute.

Pertains to greening: Operations and Communications



Overview

Canadian Foodgrains Bank (Foodgrains Bank) is a partnership of 15 churches and church-based agencies working together to end hunger. In conjunction with its members and their partners around the world, the Foodgrains Bank works to end global hunger by:

- supporting international programs to meet immediate food needs, reduce malnutrition, and achieve sustainable food security;
- influencing improvements in national and international policies that contribute to ending global hunger; and
- increasing and deepening the engagement of Canadians in efforts to end global hunger.

Two of the core values of the organization are justice and compassion. Therefore, Foodgrains Bank recognizes that its work can have an impact on the environment which contributes to climate change and wants to take responsibility for this by supporting those who are dealing with the impacts. Foodgrains Bank tracks its carbon emissions for staff travel, mileage, paper use, accommodations and utilities. Based on the amount of total CO₂ emissions, it makes a contribution to its Climate Adaptation Fund. This fund goes to support member projects which help people in developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Taking responsibility for organizational environmental impacts

The problem

In 2012, the Foodgrains Bank engaged an independent auditor to assess the impact of its operations on the environment in an attempt to find ways to reduce the organization's environmental impact. While it adopted several changes in practices to reduce emissions as an outcome of this audit, the organization also realized that the nature of its work in international cooperation continues to have an environmental impact to some extent. For example, the organization's work involves travel required to assess programs, meet with parliamentarians, or attend workshops and functions. Though the organization has tried to reduce paper use and use recycled paper for print, physical printing is still required for office operations, and the organization receives some publications in print. Office space houses staff, which comes with basic utility use.

Moving towards a solution

In recognition that the Foodgrains Bank's work required some operations that have an environmental impact, the organization sought to find a way to acknowledge this impact and compensate for its impacts by contributing to positive environmental benefits. It launched a Climate Adaptation Fund. Every year the organization tracks carbon emissions and contributes an amount based on those emissions to this fund. Likewise, every year a project from one of the Foodgrains Bank's members that has strong climate adaptation components is selected to receive the contribution, in an effort to build a healthier environment and support those most effected by climate change. The fund was launched on Earth Day, to celebrate the effort and encourage members and supporters to get involved. In addition, the organization has an environmental committee made up of staff from all departments that meets regularly to examine how to improve environmental practices.

Climate Adaptation Fund

The Foodgrains Bank's Climate Adaptation Fund, is a way for the organization to account for the environmental impacts its operations have, which cannot otherwise be avoided. The organization has set up a number of processes to track its emissions.

- **Emissions from travel:** Staff must calculate the emissions created by their flight and record it in their official travel request. Emissions from mileage compensation and accommodations are also monitored.
- **Operations, including printing and utilities:** Foodgrains Bank administrative staff monitor and calculate the impacts of office paper printed in addition to magazine and newspaper subscriptions. Monthly utility use is also examined.

Once a month, the administrative department tabulates the organization's environmental impact based on carbon emissions from travel, paper printing and use and utilities. These are tallied together annually, to determine the total contribution to the Climate Adaptation Fund based on a \$25/tonne dollar of emissions as established by the environmental auditor.

The Foodgrains Bank has a Climate Adaptation Fund Committee, which includes members of its environmental committee. This group meets regularly to determine which project to contribute the Climate Adaptation Fund to that year. This is based on projects with strong adaptation components which are early on in the project lifecycle, while seeking variety in regions and Foodgrains Bank members. Projects that have received funding to date include those that seek to improve water management and irrigation, land restoration, agroforestry, biodiversity and soil health in communities affected by drought, flooding, and/or erratic rainfall.

Results

Since the Climate Adaptation Fund was launched in 2013, seven projects helping communities adapt to the impacts of climate change have been supported. The Fund has also garnered support from independent annual donors and various Foodgrains Bank members.

Next Steps

The Foodgrains Bank continually seeks to improve the Climate Adaptation Fund. Staff are looking at a more integrated, multi-year program that could be supported with this fund, including more intentional objectives to achieve adaptation outcomes. Additionally, the organization is investing in new ways to market and promote the fund and attract new donors. The environmental committee is regularly updating its environmental policies and attempting to ensure the Foodgrains Bank's contributions to the fund based on the organization's emissions are fair, and adequately account for its impacts on the environment.

As COVID-19 has changed the nature of Foodgrains Bank operations, at least for the short term, contributions to the fund will be much lower with little to no travel occurring and less paper and utility use with the majority of staff continuing to work from home. While this is great news in terms of reducing the organization's emissions, CFGB will seek new sources of funding and donations to sustain the Climate Adaptation Fund.

Insights and Lessons Learned

- Such funding mechanisms require a solid quantity of funds to ensure engagement by members and member interest in influencing programming.
- Marketing, promotion and creativity are vital to ensuring the sustainability of this fund. Such initiatives require contributions from the organizer (in this case, Foodgrains Bank) but also concerted efforts to bring in other supporters.
- Having representatives of various departments on the Climate Adaptation Fund Committee is beneficial to enabling broad ownership of the fund and engaging several skillsets (public engagement, donor relations, programming, etc.) necessary to make it effective.

Sources

Foodgrains Bank Climate Fund

<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

<http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home>