



GROW FURTHER

Connecting people and ideas for a food-secure future

[Press Release]

Groundbreaking Food Security Non-Profit Announces Nearly \$200,000 in Grants to Reach 480,000 Smallholder Farmers

Seattle-based Grow Further will direct funds from individual donors and other sources to support innovative agricultural research in Ghana and Tanzania. The winning projects will benefit small-scale farmers while enhancing food security and nutrition.

For the first time ever, Grow Further is connecting individual donors to developing world agricultural scientists. After vetting by Grow Further, individual member donors selected two winning entries among the more than 700 proposals received from throughout the world.

Grow Further and its first grantees will be featured at the Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, Iowa on October 25 during the awarding of the World Food Prize.

For immediate release

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, Seattle, WA – Grow Further (growfurther.org), a collaborative non-profit “connecting people and ideas for a food-secure future”, is pleased to announce its first-ever grant awards in support of smallholder farmers. **\$196,000 in grants will support two innovative food security research endeavors in sub-Saharan Africa over three years.**

This milestone marks the beginning of Grow Further’s mission to revolutionize and expand funding for developing-world agricultural research, currently dominated by governments and major foundations. “Never before has there been a good answer to the simple question, ‘I want to support the future of food security. How do I get involved?’”, said Grow Further’s founder and CEO Peter Kelly.

Aiming to be a “March of Dimes for Food”, **Grow Further takes its strength from the power of individual donors.** Unique in agricultural research philanthropy, Grow Further’s member donors not only fund winning project proposals, but also actively participate in assisting staff in selecting and monitoring these unique and innovative research ideas. The focus is on smallholder agricultural innovation.

\$133,000 of the total grant funding has been awarded to the CSIR-Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) in Tamale, Ghana to develop the first commercial variety of Bambara groundnut. The award will support three years of studying the needs of farmers, breeding, agronomic research, and partnerships to ensure wide adoption.





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A further \$63,000 has been awarded to the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in Arusha, Tanzania. The funds will help cover two years of **research and development for a new mobile phone app that will enable smallholder farmers to quickly identify diseases threatening staple crops.**

Food security advocates and members of the media can learn more about Grow Further and its first grantees at the Borlaug Dialogue during a side panel discussion on how innovative financing can accelerate agricultural research and development. The panel talk will occur on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 7 am to 9 am Central.

In Ghana, SARI will work to breed Bambara groundnuts that are high yielding and have traits farmers want. Bambara groundnut is a traditional crop that's loaded with nutrients, highly valued in the market, and able to grow under adverse environmental conditions, making it adaptable to climate change. However, yields remain low, in large part due to a lack of research. With Grow Further's support, SARI hopes to fundamentally change this. Working closely with women farmers and other stakeholders, the project aims to breed the first commercial variety of Bambara groundnut, optimized for on-farm and domestic consumption or the growing export market for nut milk.

CSIR-SARI's goal is to reach at least 80,000 farmers with its improved Bambara groundnut varieties, similar to the population reached by breeding efforts for other crops at the institute. "Ghana is a food insecure country, particularly rural communities compared to urban centres," said SARI's research scientist Alhassan Nuhu Jinbaani. "So far, there haven't been any improved varieties of Bambara groundnuts. This despite the important nutritional value of the Bambara groundnut. It is highly nutritious. It is also very favorable to be grown in unfavorable and dry conditions."

Scientists at NM-AIST will harness Grow Further's grant to develop a machine learning-driven smartphone application aimed at smallholder farmers. With the app, developed with the direct input of smallholder farmers through focus groups, farmers will be able to take pictures of the leaves and stems of crops. The app will then tell them if the plants show early signs of disease attacks, buying farmers time to stop the threats and save their crops.

"We are working on detecting diseases in maize and common beans," said NM-AIST research scientist and lecturer Neema Mduma. "For maize, our target is maize lethal necrosis and streak virus, and for beans, our focus is on bean rust and bean anthracnose."





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“This project aims to reach 400 farmers this year,” Grow Further CEO Kelly explained. “By 2025, that goes up to 45,000 farmers. And 400,000 by 2030. And these are just the first of our projects, with many more to come. The long-term goal is to inspire a whole sector of agricultural research charities to support the future of food security, just like there’s a whole category of medical research organizations where folks can easily get involved.”

In addition to active individual donors and members, Grow Further grants are made possible through the generous support of select corporate and foundation partners.

Contacts

To learn more or for questions, journalists are invited to contact Grow Further founder and CEO Peter Kelly at +1 206-390-6744 or peter@growfurther.org.

For the CSIR-Savanna Agricultural Research Institute in Ghana, please contact monitoring and evaluation and gender specialist and Principal Investigator Alhassan Nuhu Jinbaani at +233 (0) 24 280 2784 or alhassanjinbaani@gmail.com.

Journalists wishing to connect with the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in Tanzania can reach data scientist and Principal Investigator Neema Mduma at neema.mduma@nm-aist.ac.tz.

The Grow Further management consultant, Altruist Partners, is also available to the media. Please contact Donald Summers at donald@altruistpartners.com.

For photos to use with this story, please contact Iquo Essien at iquo@growfurther.org.

About Grow Further

At Grow Further (growfurther.org), we engage farmers, scientists, and individuals in participatory innovation for global food security and sustainable agriculture. Our members come from different backgrounds, but we all come eager to learn from each other, invest in the future of food, support scientists with overlooked ideas, and help small-scale farmers. Learn more at <https://www.growfurther.org/why-we-exist/>.

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