

A Story of Compassion

USDA Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Northwest Medical Teams

Burkina Faso

Portland, Oregon

In 2002, USDA awarded Northwest Medical Teams (NWMT) a Food for Progress grant that provided 4,220 metric tons of soybean oil for use in Burkina Faso. Northwest Medical Teams sold the donated commodity in Burkina Faso and used the proceeds from the sale to carryout agricultural development projects, small business and women's group development projects, and public health activities over the course of three years.

The USDA Farmer Group Program was dedicated to the establishment of farmer groups who could share cultivation equipment resources and increase the amount of land they farm. Oxen and plows were supplied to the groups, who not only used them for cultivating their own land, but also made their services available to other farmers who were interested in hiring someone to prepare their land.

Drinking wells were installed, and each of the USDA-sponsored wells is 30-60 feet deep and has walls of reinforced concrete. Communities dug out the wells and provided sand for the concrete and are responsible for maintaining them. Prior to the wells being installed, villagers used the same muddy water for their livestock as they did for their households.

NWMT uses funds from the donation of USDA commodities to establish women's groups and train the members in

marketing, product development, presentation & hygiene, basic economics, retail skills and small business management.

Most of the members of the Bobo women's group of 20 women are market vendors. Before they joined the ACCEDES program, many of the women had never had access to monetary assistance. The women's group buys their products in bulk and resells them to make a profit.



Before Bérénice Sanuo received assistance, she and her family lived in the slum area of Dédougou and did not work. Since her participation in the women's group, Bérénice has been able to buy food in order to cook and sell it and to rent space for a restaurant. She hopes to buy space for her restaurant soon. Bérénice is the main breadwinner for her family of six children and husband. With USDA's assistance, Bérénice's children attend school and have food every day, and Berenice can afford to pay their school fees and healthcare expenses. In addition, each day, Bérénice is able to set aside a profit of approximately \$2/day. With this



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money, her family will be able to buy a plot of land to build a house. Bérénice is proud of herself for being able to provide for her family.

How the Initiative is Helping

Northwest Medical Teams is one of the faith-based private voluntary organizations that has directly benefited from USDA's participation in the Faith Based and Community Initiative program. Since 2002, Northwest Medical Teams has been awarded and successfully carried out two international food aid programs with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). The staff at Northwest Medical Teams has worked closely with FAS to learn the intricacies of USDA's Food for Progress program process and the people of Burkina Faso and Uzbekistan have experienced the very positive fruits of their labor.

About the Organization

Northwest Medical Teams is a non-profit humanitarian aid organization working to reduce suffering around the world and in the Pacific Northwest. They represent a special partnership of volunteers, partner agencies, and donors committed to helping people in need. They endeavor to help desperate people of all faiths while upholding Christian values. Northwest Medical Teams has helped meet the physical and spiritual needs of devastated people in countries like Cambodia, Mexico, Honduras, Romania, Albania, and many others. More than 1,000 international volunteer teams have brought desperately

needed care and hope to millions of people in crisis.

In 1979 businessman Ron Post watched the evening news in his living room. A picture of a dying Cambodian refugee girl



The woman sitting behind the table in the photo above earned the equivalent of approximately \$.50/day before she participated in the women's group. Since then, she has been earning about \$2/day, enabling her to pay for food, school fees, school supplies, clothes, and medicine.

filled his television screen. Looking at his own daughter asleep on the couch, Post thought, "What if that refugee were my own child?" He fell to his knees and asked God to help him make a difference for those suffering in Cambodia. A few weeks later, Post led a group of 28 medical volunteers to care for the survivors of Cambodia's Killing Fields. This compassionate response by people in the Pacific Northwest has occurred over and over again since then. Teams of dedicated volunteers have traveled to Ethiopia, Rwanda, Honduras, Kosovo and many other troubled parts of our world and in the United States...even New York City.

Working in some of the most challenging circumstances imaginable, the volunteers



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of Northwest Medical Teams have brought physical and spiritual hope to thousands of people who had nowhere else to turn for help. They have also sent millions of dollars of medical supplies and other humanitarian relief to bring aid where all hope is lost.

