

How do Growing Projects Work?

Field Crop Model



Growing Hope Globally gives US communities the opportunity to respond to global hunger from right where you are through our unique Growing Project model. Growing Projects leverage local assets and create space for learning, spiritual growth, and community building.

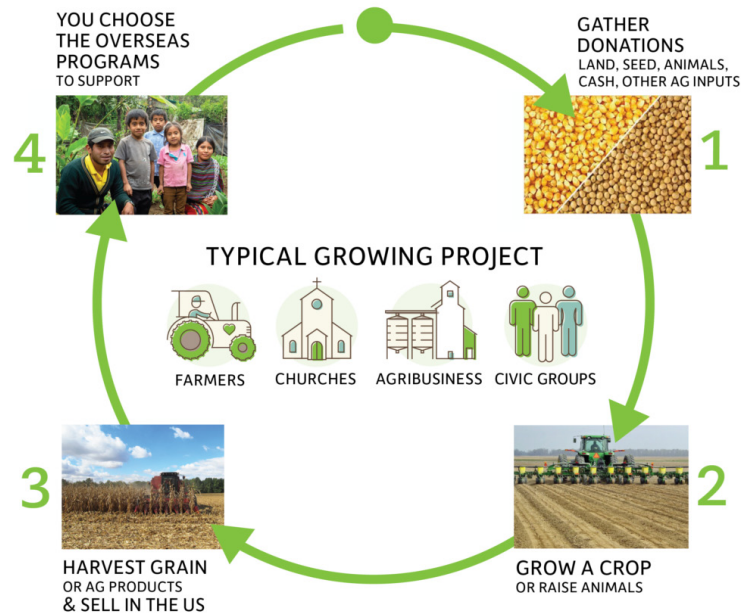
Gathering Donations: Most crop-based Growing Projects begin with the donation of the use of a piece of land and the commitment of one or more farmers to grow a crop. The field may be owned by a farmer, landowner, or a local business. It is important to know the number of acres being farmed and what inputs are required so that others in the community can be invited to participate. Inputs might include seed, fertilizer, spraying services, grain hauling, drying, and more. Donations can be in-kind or cash. Churches, civic groups, and agribusinesses are usually happy to help when they know what is needed.

Growing a Crop: The farmers in the project coordinate with the landowners to grow and care for the crop. If multiple fields are being farmed, it is a good idea to hold a pre-planting meeting to determine who will care for each field. Some groups hold an event or worship service in the spring to pray for farmers and for a bountiful crop.

Harvest: Farmers harvest the crop and may work with others to haul, dry and sell it. Coordination is particularly important if there are multiple fields. The local grain handling facility may be willing to contribute by waiving drying or storage fees or offering a premium price. Some groups hold a harvest celebration. It can be a good opportunity to raise community awareness of the project, and encourage non-farmers to learn more about agriculture. It is also a great way to thank donors and members of the community that supported the project.

Choose the Overseas Program to Support: Visit GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs for a list of all of the overseas programs currently in need of funding. You decide how your donations are used. Donations can be given to support specific programs or church related partners, or the overall work of Growing Hope Globally. It is important to let supporters know how their donations made an impact through e-mails, thank you notes, or newsletters.

If you are interested in making a lasting difference for people suffering from hunger, please contact us. We want to welcome you and provide you with support to help your project be as successful as possible. Together we are living out our faith, loving our neighbors, and growing lasting solutions to hunger.



Huron County MI Growing Project

Field Crop Model Example

In Pigeon, MI, a group of 18 farmers works together to grow crops on 350 acres of farmland. By working together and each person doing their part, this group has been able to raise more than \$1.8 Million in support of Growing Hope Globally!

The group got started in 2003 with 32 acres that the Laker High School FFA used as a land lab. They decided that the Growing Project team would plant and harvest the crop, and the FFA Chapter could still use it as a learning opportunity. Now, the Growing Project markets the crop and uses the proceeds to fund Growing Hope's mission, minus a rental payment to offset the income loss for FFA.

The group has since expanded their efforts to do these kinds of small-parcel projects throughout the county. They farm municipal property that is not being utilized, other property is donated by businesses, churches, agribusiness, and even the hospital, which is holding land for an expansion. Most of the parcels are 7 to 15 acres and are farmed rent-free. The owners don't have to worry about weeds and the farmers care for the land just like they would their own ground. Several different churches support the cause. Their goal has always been to have all the seed, fertilizer, chemicals, labor and land donated. Each spring the Growing Project team meets to decide what is being planted where and who is farming each piece of ground. They meet again in fall to coordinate harvest. Each person does their part and the results are truly inspiring!



Getting Started

1. Reach out to us at Info@GrowingHopeGlobally.org to get connected with a local staff person. You can also find upcoming opportunities to learn more at GrowingHopeGlobally.org/events
2. Brainstorm a list of names of other people in your community that might be willing to be part of your Growing Project Team. Farmers are critical to the success of a project, but so are people that can manage outreach efforts, track receipts, seek donations, or coordinate events like harvest celebrations. Get together and see what ideas you can develop.
3. Once you have a plan for field(s) you are going to plant, and have a list of the necessary inputs for your crop, reach out to community members for support. Churches, local agribusinesses, agricultural associations and civic groups are all good places to start.
4. Most importantly, get a crop planted this year. Nothing creates excitement like a plan that is in motion, especially when it is going to support a great cause.

FFA Chapter Resources

Getting Started Checklist

We've found that it's best to start a new Growing Project at the beginning of the second semester of the school year. Create a calendar of when you want to complete the following:

- Complete activities A1 - A6 in the International Agricultural Development SAE for All Career Kit to familiarize yourselves with terminology, career paths, and the challenges farmers face around the world.
- Visit GrowingHopeGlobally.org. Watch a webinar under the "Get Involved" tab to get inspired about the kind of programs your Growing Project could support. Read about our overseas programs under the "Support a Program" tab.
- Work as a chapter to write down your "why". Supporters will be excited to help if they know why your chapter wants to respond to world hunger.
- Brainstorm about people in the community that might want to participate in a Growing Project. Are there farmers, grain elevators, seed dealers, co-ops, churches, agricultural associations or other organizations that might be supportive?
- Create a list of all the inputs you will need for this year's crop and then match each need with a potential supporter.
- Make sure everyone in your chapter has a role to play in the project. Form committees that are responsible for Marketing and Communications, Record Keeping, and External Relations. Sample committee descriptions are available on the following page.
- Begin outreach efforts. Prepare a presentation, brochure or letter to share with potential supporters. Be ready to ask for the inputs you need from them. Your presentation and letter should include: why your chapter is starting a Growing Project, an overview of your project, what you are asking them to donate, how their donation will be utilized, and how funds raised in the project will be used.
- Communicate with farmers to see how they'd like your chapter to work with them on the Growing Project throughout the year. Opportunities for hands-on work could include choosing the seed variety, helping to fill planter boxes, riding along in the planter or combine, helping to scout fields or preparing for harvest.
- Plan and host a harvest celebration event. Invite supporters to join you for an event where you thank them for their support and update them on how the funds raised will be used. If your chapter plans to continue your project next year, let them know.
- Choose the overseas program(s) you want to support with your Growing Project proceeds. Visit GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs for a list of programs that need funding. Once you have made your decision, fill in a Growing Project Designation Form and send it to Growing Hope along with your proceeds.
- Create a report on your project. An end of year report can be helpful for students that do the project in the future.

FFA Chapter Resources

Sample Committee Role Descriptions

We've found that Growing Projects are most successful when everyone has a clear job to do. Planning well and assigning responsibilities enables the project to run smoothly and keeps supporters engaged throughout the year. You may need to create additional committees or assign additional tasks to complete everything your chapter wants to accomplish in your Growing Project.

External Relations Committee:

- With the rest of the chapter, brainstorm a list of businesses, organizations and individuals that can be asked to support the Growing Project with in-kind or cash donations. Develop a calendar that assigns responsibility to specific committee members for contacting each potential donor.
- Develop a plan for following up with each supporter. Do you want to send letters, emails, or make phone calls to update them on the project during the growing season?
- With the marketing and communications team, develop a presentation to share with potential supporters that explains your Growing Project and your chapter's goals.
- Create a list of tasks that the Growing Project farmers want assistance with and make a sign-up sheet for dates when students can volunteer to help.

Record Keeping Committee:

- Create a budget for the project and a plan for tracking gifts, income, and expenses.
- Track the hours spent by each committee on the project.
- Work with your local grain handling facility to market the crop and maximize profits.
- Fill out the Growing Project Designation Form and send it along with your proceeds to Growing Hope Globally once you have chosen which program(s) to support.

Marketing and Communications Committee:

- Develop a marketing plan and calendar. Think through the marketing resources your group might need (brochures, news articles, social media posts, etc.), and determine when they will be needed. Assign each item to a specific committee member.
- Ask the external relations team what they will need for reaching out to the community
- Consider which events in the Growing Project might be newsworthy (planting, harvest or making your donation, for example) and spread the word by doing social media posts and sending a press release to your local media outlets in advance so they will consider covering it.
- Find ways to publicly thank the supporters of your Growing Project
- Do you want to post a Growing Hope Globally field sign to spread the word about your Growing Project? Growing Hope can provide you with a logo sign if you are interested.

Other possible Committees:

- Education and Events Committee: Plans and manages the Harvest Celebration and other community events to raise awareness of hunger or the importance of agriculture, etc.
- Farming Committee: With larger projects, assigning a dedicated team to work with farmers might make sense.