



PROBUS Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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November 15 Presentation



SeedChange

SeedChange was founded in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (USC Canada).

Our founder Dr. Lotta Hitchmanova inspired countless Canadians through her tireless dedication to making the world "a better, kinder place".



Letitia Ama Daewuo, Executive Director spoke to us about “SeedChange Canada” (SC). This organization was founded over 75 years ago by Dr. Lotta Hitchmanova. At the time it was known as Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (USC Canada).

SC works in 12 different countries across the globe. SeedChange partners with local organizations to support local initiatives, and civil society by using a framework of food sovereignty and solidarity. The support is available; in 5 ways:

- as trainers, facilitators
- sharing knowledge and connecting people
- funders for partners' work
- incubators for spread of ideas
- influencers through policy advocacy

Seeds of Survival

Our Seeds of Survival approach was born in Ethiopia during the 1980s. A global hot spot of seed diversity, Ethiopia was facing famine and seed loss caused by war and drought.

SeedChange worked with farmers and the national gene bank to rescue varieties, increase quantity and quality, and distribute seeds to farmers across the country.



Why a seed focus? It began with a request for support for Ethiopia in 1980 to help address the famine. SC learned that seeds are essential for food security. As a result, it developed methodologies to support farmers and their local varieties, using agroecological approaches. One issue she spoke about was identifying what approaches will work, for example a big western tractor would not help because it could not be maintained. A first

step was helping establish seed banks for local food plants. Other steps include look at water, markets and organizing coops, etc.

SC established a “Canadian seed security system” to promote food security. They work with farmers to enhance seed diversity and community seed banks. This means organizing farmer training to increase on-farm seed production and variety improvement. They also work through Canadian Universities in seed management. To help farmers they have, amongst other initiatives, established

Why partnership principles?

Ideally, a partnership is a collaboration grounded in

Rural Women Cultivating Change (2021-2026)

- Focuses on the intersection of women's rights, agroecology and climate adaptation, to support rural women's empowerment and gender transformative change in rural communities.
- Will be implemented in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania with 7 leading local NGO partners.

\$14.8M
budget

6
years

3
countries

32,500
Rural farmers

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Ultimate Aim: Support women to take control of their own lives and futures, advocate for their rights, and take leadership within their communities and advocacy spaces related to women's and farmers rights.

Strengthened women's public leadership and decision making influence

Strengthened prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence by individuals and state/civil society actors

Enhanced Support and benefits for rural women within climate resilient local food systems

SeedChange

A significant program for SC is "Rural Women Cultivating Change" established in east Africa. SC is working with up to 8 organizations to implement this program. Why does it make sense to work with women in contexts of food management. In fact, many the rural farmers in east Africa are women. Thus, the need to focus on them and in doing so to help with empowering them and to mitigate violence against them.

Included in this article are images extracted from her presentation. We appreciated the information shared; it gave us an understanding of the vital work of SeedChange. She then went on to deal with a great many questions from the audience. We thank Ama for her excellent presentation.

November 26 Tour

We toured the "Indigenous Peoples Experience" at Forts Edmonton Park. Upon entering the building, you step on a high-level view of the North Saskatchewan River valley. This is a living display, it shows the changes in the river valley over the centuries. First you see a herd of buffalo moving across the landscape with geese flying over, it moves forward in time to the present day, where one sees Edmonton. This display established the theme of the exhibit...the "River Valley". As one walks through the exhibit it is trip along the river. The exhibits themselves are led to the Metis exhibit are housed in stylized Teepees. Various tribes are represented, as are the importance of buffalo to the people living in the area. We also see the changes brought on by the European immigrants. The following pictures will give an impression of the many displays set up in the building:



Our Guide Shani Gwin



This is typical of the displays for each tribe.



Boat beached on a rock



Buffalo Hunt Display



Start of the Metis exhibit
Inside of the stylized Metis building



We greatly appreciate Shani's assistance in our understanding of the exhibits, the people, and the challenges they faced as Europeans and others flooded in. Viewing this exhibit is highly recommended.