

DIG (Developments in Gardening)

Location: Senegal, Uganda and Kenya

Grant: \$150,000 to strengthen systems and expand programming

This past year was one of extraordinary progress for DIG, made possible in large part through Montview's partnership. With your support, we sustained programs during a time of global funding cuts and took bold steps toward resilience and growth.

We advanced our long-awaited process of transforming into a global network of locally governed chapters. In Kenya, we registered as an NGO and recruited a Kenyan board. In Uganda, we registered as a Company

Limited by Guarantee, the first step toward NGO status, and began recruiting a Ugandan board. With legal guidance, we also developed affiliate and grant agreements to govern relationships between DIG Global and country chapters. These steps laid the groundwork for future registration in Senegal.

Montview's support significantly strengthened our in-country teams and global networks. DIG Uganda received the FAO Farmer Field School Global Innovation Award, and Montview funds made it possible for DIG Uganda Director Gloria Mushabe to travel to Rome to accept it and participate in the World Food Forum. DIG Kenya Director, Olivia Nyaidho, attended a monitoring and evaluation workshop in Malawi, and both she and Gloria participated in the Women's Impact Alliance coaching program and represented DIG at the East Africa Agroecology Conference in Nairobi. In Senegal, Director Seckou Badji represented DIG at national events while Program Officer Andre Sadio completed advanced data analysis training. All country teams also joined intensive trainings on topics ranging from agroecology to maternal and child health. These opportunities expanded our teams' expertise and increased DIG's visibility in networks of international development.

Building on this momentum, Montview's support allowed DIG to invest in new talents to both grow and sustain our impact. We hired a Donor Engagement and Partnership Growth Manager, Lauren Alexander, as well as new Program Officers in Uganda and Kenya and a facilitator in Senegal.

Perhaps most importantly, Montview's partnership ensured our programs could expand during a period of financial uncertainty. Despite the loss of more than \$250k in U.S. government grants, we trained over 2,000 individuals across three countries. In Kenya, this support was lifesaving as our Priority Household Program provided care for malnourished children when hospitals ran out of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food. At the same time, our teams engaged in strategic planning to chart clear growth plans for the years ahead.

With Montview's support, DIG directly trained more than 2,000 people across Senegal, Uganda, and Kenya through our Farmer Field School and Priority Household Programs. We intentionally target communities that are often excluded from other agricultural opportunities, including people with disabilities, people living with HIV, widows, internally displaced persons, individuals living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day, and the Batwa, an indigenous minority group in Uganda. At the start of our programs, baseline surveys show that roughly 80 percent of participants are experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, which drops to 40 percent or less by endline.

While DIG trains individuals, the benefits ripple outward to entire households, as improved nutrition, income, and climate resilience affect family well-being. In addition, each DIG graduate goes on to train an average of four others in their community. By this measure, at least 8,000 people ultimately benefited from Montview's support during the grant period.

This grant period marked a turning point for DIG as we began transforming from a traditionally-structured NGO to a network of locally governed chapters. Together, our teams engaged in deep reflection about how to preserve the integrity of DIG's mission while decentralizing. We asked what elements of our model are essential and non-negotiable across all contexts, and which aspects should be adapted to local realities. These conversations informed legal agreements and fostered a shared vision for DIG's future.

Registering as a Kenyan NGO provided practical lessons about navigating administrative hurdles, recruiting strong board members, and strengthening our internal systems. These experiences accelerated our registration process in Uganda and have already opened new doors for partnership. DIG Kenya, for instance, was recently accepted into the Dovetail Accelerator program, which supports African-led NGOs with funding and mentorship. DIG's investment in professional development also had a profound effect on staff confidence and leadership. Our teams not only gained new technical skills but reported feeling more recognized and valued.

Finally, the establishment of a standardized monitoring and evaluation system provided us with a wealth of new insights. It confirmed the strength of our model while highlighting areas where we can continue to innovate. This ensures that as DIG moves toward greater local autonomy, we do so with a strong foundation of evidence and a shared commitment to impact. Here are some key findings from recent assessments:

- DIG farmers adopt an average of 7 different agroecology practices.
- DIG farmers consistently report that they feel more equipped to handle environmental shocks and stresses such as drought, flooding, and pests, compared to before the program.

- DIG farmers grow an average of 11 different vegetables.
56% average increase in food security, as measured by the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). Over 80% of farmers report increased income as a result of DIG program/methods.
- DIG farmers more than double their average monthly savings.
- DIG farmers feel significantly more confident in their ability to provide for their households after the program.
- By the end of the program, DIG farmers are more likely to provide for others and identify as leaders in their communities.
- DIG farmers consistently report feeling more valued and connected to their community compared to the beginning of the program.

Montview's financial support was truly transformational, and we are deeply grateful. Looking ahead, Montview can continue to walk alongside us by helping to connect our local and global stories through food. In the past, we have shared meals, hosted Sunday school discussions, and convened salons that inspired reflection and connection around DIG's work. We would also love for Montview to continue sharing DIG's mission with the broader congregation, inviting others to learn about and support our programs. By lifting up our stories and encouraging gifts directly to DIG, Montview can help ensure this life-changing work reaches even more families and communities.

Another powerful way to strengthen our partnership is through direct engagement in the field. We warmly invite members of Montview to visit DIG farmers and facilitators in Kenya, Uganda, or Senegal. Such exchanges create lasting bonds and bring our shared commitment to food justice and community resilience to life.

IPODERAC

Location: Atlixco, Mexico

Grant: \$100,000 to purchase new equipment for the school's cheese factory

The Villa Nolasco cheese production and sales team at IPODERAC has purchased the new equipment for the new cheese factory. They also finalized plans and managed the construction to move the cheese factory from the small production plant on the east side of the boy's campus to a space in the unused carpentry shop on the west side of the campus. This new space is three times larger than the old space and will allow them to significantly increase production efficiency and scale.

In 2023, Costco in Mexico informed IPODERAC of its decision to place Villa Nolasco cheese in 13 of its flagship stores, as the first step toward rolling out IPODERAC's product to all of its 41 retail stores in Mexico. As part of the process, Costco analyzed IPODERAC's production capacity and found it to be insufficient. They determined a complete roll-out of the cheese would not be possible until IPODERAC significantly increased its production capacity. IPODERAC also needed to make improvements to be able to pass stringent Food Safety certifications required to participate in the larger market. Moving the cheese factory to the larger space with the new equipment will make it possible for IPODERAC to fulfill the requirements set by Costco. The Villa Nolasco team has installed the new equipment in the new factory space. They are now working on testing and calibrating the equipment to prepare it for production.

IPODERAC was able to leverage the Montview grant to apply for additional grants from other organizations. The combined grants allowed IPODERAC to complete a larger upgrade than it had originally planned. The new cheese factory was initially expected to begin producing cheese by the end of October 2025. Because of the additional upgrade, the grand opening has been delayed by several months. ICF will send a letter to Montview Presbyterian when the factory is up and running and producing cheese.

Villa Nolasco staff have also been working to reconnect with prior cheese customers and to build relationships with new distributors. The upgraded cheese factory will be able to support the Costco business, and other large-scale buyers, as well as the growing local demand for their cheeses.

Thank you for the gift of this cheese facility. With the net revenue from cheese that will be forthcoming, Montview is ensuring that IPODERAC can continue its important work to provide food, shelter, clothing, healthcare assistance, and emotional support to children living on the street in Mexico.

IPODERAC is located in Atlixco, Mexico and has been working with youth since 1966. IPODERAC's mission is: "Ensuring help and education for homeless and abandoned boys and girls by supporting them and institutions and organizations with a similar mission to reduce the amount of boys and girls in this situation and promote self-sustainability so that together, we can create a better future." IPODERAC serves street- living youth in Mexico, including those who are orphaned and those who are abandoned. Because Mexico is an emerging economy with a large economic underclass, because the country generally has a temperate climate without harsh winters, and because child protective services provided by local governments is often lacking, orphaned and abandoned children commonly live independently on the street without housing, adult supervision, medical care, education, or assured food.

The age of residents who arrive at IPODERAC varies significantly. Some are as young as six, many are preteens, and some are already in high school. Most come from the state of Puebla or neighboring states, including Oaxaca, Tabasco, and Veracruz. Others come from neighboring countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. In recent years IPODERAC has seen an increased need to support the migrant community.

There are currently 43 boys and 42 girls living on the IPODERAC campuses. (The number of youth on the boy's campus is temporarily low due to lack of funding. With the increased revenue from the new cheese factory, IPODERAC will be able to complete the infrastructure projects needed to bring in more youth.) In the nearly 60 years since IPODERAC was founded, more than 700 boys and girls have entered the program and successfully graduated to adulthood and independence. These young adults have become lawyers, nurses, and tradesman but most importantly happy and self-sufficient individuals. Their time at IPODERAC helped to break cycles of abuse, poverty, and crime. Many of them now give back to their own communities. In October 2025, ICF (IPODERAC's Children Fund) hosted its third annual reunion and open house in Atlixco for the people who have graduated from IPODERAC. It's an emotional day as many bring their spouses and kids with them to see their prior home.

In addition to the youth living on the campuses, IPODERAC and Villa Nolasco help the community at large by employing around 40 men and women from a variety of fields to work with the youth and run the programs.

The main lessons learned by the staff at IPODERAC have been around the installation and calibration of the new equipment. The equipment in the prior cheese factory was old and was installed a long time ago. IPODERAC needed to install, correctly situate, and calibrate the new, more technologically advanced equipment, which required a great deal of time and attention.

The Montview grant was transformational in several ways. First, the grant allowed IPODERAC to upgrade the cheese facility so it will be able to produce enough income to pay a significantly higher percentage of the expenses to run IPODERAC. Second, the trust shown by Montview allowed IPODERAC to leverage this grant and apply for and secure important additional grants. Third, IPODERAC has experienced difficult times since the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic. This grant brought hope for the boys, girls, and employees that the future of IPODERAC is secure. They are ready and equipped to continue the important work that IPODERAC has done since 1966.

We are extremely grateful for the support of the Montview Mission Life Committee. It's impactful for the IPODERAC community to know an organization in another country sees

them and cares about their lives. This impact will affect generations. The girls' and boys' campuses are dynamic places that support the lives and livelihoods of many people. All parts of the campuses experience wear and tear, so there will always be improvements that can be done on both campuses. These improvements can be made in the form of grants or, as in the soccer field built by Montview members, in the form of volunteer work.

We encourage Montview Presbyterian members to visit and see the IPODERAC community thriving thanks to your transformational grant. Montview has been providing scholarships to support students seeking higher education for many years. We welcome you to come and meet the current scholarship recipients. You have the option to take part in any of the upcoming projects that we hope to develop. For instance, the girls' campus currently doesn't have a water well. We are working on the permitting that's hindering the process and hope to secure the water well soon. We invite a team from Montview to visit the girls' campus and help plant trees for shade and green spaces for the girls to gather. Green spaces are so important for mental health. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to showing IPODERAC to you again in the future.

Nepal Youth Foundation (NYF)

Location: Saptari District of Eastern Nepal

Grant: \$150,000 to build 3 Community Learning Centers for the Caste Equality Project

NYF is pleased to report that construction of all three new Community Learning Centers (CLCs) funded by Montview Church has been successfully completed. Thanks to your generous support, these vibrant spaces are nearly ready to welcome children, youth, and families for a range of educational and community programs in the coming months.

Our team is now equipping the CLCs—setting up classrooms and activity spaces indoors and creating recreational areas and playgrounds outdoors. While we had hoped to begin programming this month, the sudden Gen-Z protests on September 8–9 and the resulting socio-political uncertainty prompted us to postpone the launch. In addition, Nepal's two largest festivals—Dashain and Tihar—take place in late September and October. These are important periods of celebration for the communities we serve, and activities typically pause during this time.

Taking these factors into account, we plan to officially launch programming in all three CLCs by November 2025, after the festival season concludes and the environment stabilizes.

The new CLCs were constructed on public land allocated by the Tirhut Rural Municipality, following formal requests from local community committees. The success of our first two CLCs has already inspired other communities to seek NYF's support—an encouraging sign of growing momentum and trust.

The CLCs will serve as the foundation and hub for NYF's holistic Caste Equality Project programming, including:

Early Childhood Care Programs for children aged 3.5 years and below; After-School Support Programs for public school students; Back-to-School Bridging Courses for teenagers who wish to reenroll; Adult Literacy Classes for women under age 40.

Additional programs will include:

- Community town meetings;
- Nutrition-focused home cooking classes;
- Disaster preparedness;
- Peer counseling and support groups;
- Women's empowerment and cooperative groups; • Teacher training workshops.

The CLCs are built to a higher standard than most structures in the region, making them ideal as emergency gathering spaces for each village in times of crisis.

Population Served*

Describe the population(s) and geographic area(s) served by the organization with the support of this grant. Please include numbers served, if relevant and available (an estimate is acceptable).

NYF's newest and most ambitious initiative, the Caste Equality Project (CEP), is a holistic, community-based package of programs designed to empower members of Nepal's Dalit castes—historically marginalized as “untouchable.” Building on NYF's proven programs and decades of success, the CEP works to ensure Dalit communities can access opportunities to thrive, defend their human rights, build prosperity, participate fully in society, and dismantle systems of oppression. We anticipate the CEP will run for 20 years or more to build lasting, sustainable change.

In mid-2023, following four impactful Nutrition Outreach Camps in Saptari District (southeastern Nepal), NYF launched the main phase of the CEP. We began embedding in Dalit-majority villages experiencing some of Nepal's most challenging conditions to initiate long-term, community-driven empowerment. This work is currently being piloted in several villages within Tirhut Rural Municipality, Saptari District, with plans to scale gradually based on sustainability and community readiness.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, with Montview Church's support, NYF constructed three Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to anchor many CEP activities. Each CLC is built on public land allocated by the local government and serves as both a program hub and a safe communal space.

The three CLCs include:

- Lohajara (Ward 5) – 340 m² land; 130 m² building with 2 halls, kitchen, storeroom, toilets, and washroom. Serves ~80 households.
- Mayanakaderi (Ward 2) – 680 m² land; 120 m² building with hall, kitchen, storeroom, toilet, and washroom. Serves ~75 households.
- Dhanpuri (Ward 1) – 170 m² land; 120 m² building with hall, kitchen, storeroom, toilet, and washroom. Serves ~140 households.

Together, these centers will directly benefit an estimated 295 Dalit households across three villages, providing equitable access to education, literacy programs, women's empowerment activities, and community development opportunities—while laying the groundwork for future program expansion.

The generous grant from Montview Church — and the resulting capital investment in new infrastructure — marks a transformational milestone in the evolution and impact of NYF's Caste Equality Project. These newly constructed Community Learning Centers will serve as vibrant hubs of learning, empowerment, and community engagement, becoming the driving force behind the educational activities and innovative programs we have successfully piloted in our two existing CLCs. This expansion not only strengthens the project's foundation but also amplifies its reach, setting the stage for deeper and more lasting change in the communities we serve.

Operating within Nepal's complex governance landscape is not without its hurdles. Entrenched corruption among certain government and local educational officials can make it difficult for NYF to navigate the system effectively and efficiently. However, as the CLC programs continue to demonstrate tangible value and positive outcomes, our dedicated locally hired team has been steadily building trust and credibility within the communities. This trust is proving to be a powerful catalyst in overcoming systemic barriers.

At the same time, there is overwhelming community demand and enthusiasm for the educational opportunities offered through the CLCs. We believe that this growing trust, combined with sustained community interest, will pave the way for smoother collaboration with local authorities and help us scale our impact even further in the months and years ahead.

While NYF's work in Nepal is driven by the expertise and leadership of our locally hired Nepali team, we deeply value opportunities to connect friends and supporters with the impact of our programs on the ground. Although we do not operate a formal volunteer program, we warmly welcome individuals and small groups of visitors who wish to witness our initiatives firsthand. Experiencing the work up close often leaves a lasting impression, enabling visitors to become powerful ambassadors for our mission when they return home.

In this spirit, we would be delighted to explore the possibility of organizing a visit for a small group from Montview Church to the villages participating in the Caste Equality Project. With thoughtful planning, such a visit could offer meaningful opportunities for learning, cultural exchange, and deeper connection to the communities and programs Montview has so generously supported. We also look forward to collaborating on creative ways to sustain Montview members' engagement in this important work well into the future.