

PROGRESS!O

news views and updates

2013 issue two



Investing together in
a sustainable future



Swerves on the road

Somaliland needs a robust voter registration system to avoid problems such as multiple voting in future elections, says the report of the International Election Observer team into the 2012 local elections. *Swerves on the road*, published by Progressio in June, commended the number of young people and women campaigning and running for office, and said the election of 10 female candidates was a step forward for women's rights in Somaliland. Progressio's Dr Steve Kibble said: "We look forward to further engagement with the people of Somaliland in all the facets of building a stable, progressive democracy that reflects the views and aspirations of all citizens."

👉 read the report: search 'Swerves on the road' on our website



Environmental sustainability in Somaliland

Progressio organised a range of World Environment Day activities in Somaliland to boost environmental awareness and promote political commitment to environmental action. Activities included public lectures and collective clean-ups – pictured are our development workers Edward Musinguzi, Dr Abdurahman Abdullahi, and John Aturinde helping clean up the area around the children's ward at Hargeisa hospital. Suad Abdi, Progressio country representative, said: "Progressio plans to continue with its environmental activities in order to strengthen the capacity of civil society partners, the government, private sector organisations and communities to work towards ensuring environmental sustainability and development."

➤ Better nutrition

According to the UN, 27% of the population of Nicaragua suffer from malnutrition. Progressio ICS volunteers are working on food security projects with school children in Mozonte. "The vegetable garden project will hopefully inspire the students and create an interest in nutrition," said volunteer Laura Savage.

👉 When you see this symbol, it means you can read more on this story at progressio.org.uk (Tip: use the Search box at the top right of our website)



What farmers really think

“We are really changing the way we do agriculture – and it’s a great change.” So says farmer Pierre Magloire (above centre, with his wife Clairevena and Progressio’s Gabriel Petit-Homme), giving his verdict on our ‘Food for a better future’ project in a short video filmed in Lamine, Haiti, in April. Thanks to your support, our development workers Gabriel, Karina and Bernardo are making a real difference to the lives of rural people on the Haitian/Dominican border – running workshops on nutrition with women’s groups, boosting coffee and cocoa production, setting up family food gardens, providing goats and chickens, building water tanks for irrigation, and much more.

- 👇 watch the video: search ‘farmers in Haiti’ on our website
- 👇 read more: search ‘food security project’ on our website

👉 Celebrating diversity

To commemorate World Day for Cultural Diversity, for Dialogue and Development (21 May), our partner FUNCAR (the Foundation for Cultural Exchange between the People of the Caribbean) organised an event with performances of artistic troupes from Wanament (Haiti) and Dajabón (Dominican Republic). They said: “This day gives us the opportunity to appreciate cultural diversity and to learn to live together in a better way.”



Post-2015 goals

Women’s rights and access to water are two cornerstones of development and both need to be targeted by new poverty eradication goals, said Progressio in response to a UN High Level Panel report on post-2015 development. Lis Martin, Progressio’s environmental advocacy officer, said: “We are disappointed that the call for sustainable and equitable access to water for small-holder farmers has not been heard.” (Above: Elismar, a farmer in Lamine, Haiti.)

- 👇 read more: search ‘HLP report’ on our website



Remarkable people

Bothwell Makumbe (above, in dark glasses, with colleagues) is working with two Zimbabwean NGOs to develop HIV information in braille and in a range of other accessible forms for visually impaired people. He will also help DHAT (Disability, HIV and AIDS Trust) and THAMASO (The HIV and AIDS Management and Support Organisation) become even more effective by passing on skills and techniques in advocacy. This will help to support visually and hearing impaired people in Zimbabwe to articulate their needs so they can empower themselves to prevent HIV and reduce poverty. Humba, a young man in the Ebworth community near Harare, said: "As disabled people, we are looked down upon. We urge you to help us to be recognised in society." Pindurai, a young woman from the Kushinga community group, said: "Thank you for coming back to us. You have given us knowledge about HIV and AIDS which can help us to prevent it. We look forward to more of your HIV material in braille and other assistance."

👉 read more: search 'disability groups' on our website

Gender violence

A guide on how to prevent gender-based violence – based on our project tackling violence against women in the border provinces of the Dominican Republic – was published in March. Our development worker Percy Álvarez said: "This project has contributed to improving the coordination between national and local authorities and civil society organisations for the prevention of violence against women. This is especially important in a country where the official figures registered 134 gender-based homicides in just the first seven months of 2012."

Zimbabwean experts

Progressio is recruiting home-grown experts (like Bothwell Makumbe) as development workers to support our partners in Zimbabwe. Fiona Mwashita, Progressio's Southern Africa regional manager, says: "Talented Zimbabwean experts committed to helping some of their poorest and most marginalised fellow citizens to empower themselves – we feel this approach has built-in sustainability to make a lasting difference. But we do need more financial support to employ more local development workers and help more poor communities to help themselves."

👉 read more: search 'Zimbabwean experts' on our website

Empowered youth

Progressio ICS volunteers in Regina, Zimbabwe, working with partner organisation DOMCCP, have begun a youth group for out-of-school youths. Topics include income generation, leadership and volunteerism, and several are now volunteering in the local hospital.

ClimatePro launched

Progressio and Progressio Ireland have launched a new approach to tackling climate change. ClimatePro invites individuals, groups and companies to become Climate Adaptation Partners. Partners support Progressio projects that work to strengthen the resilience of communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while also committing to reduce their own carbon footprint. We believe that this combination of both adaptation and mitigation is the only fair and effective way to tackle climate change. Find out more at climate-pro.org



Responding to climate change

At an event in Parliament on 15 March, over 20 Progressio ICS volunteers met with political leaders to urge them to treat the issue of climate change as a matter of priority. They said adapting to the effects of climate change was a major concern for the poor communities they volunteered alongside in Central America.

Enough Food for Everyone IF



IF campaigners

Thanks to everyone who added their voice to the IF campaign – together we achieved some notable successes, particularly in highlighting the role that small-scale farmers play in growing food for poor communities around the world. 45,000 people came to Hyde Park in London for the Big IF event in June – a fantastic show of solidarity with people living with hunger worldwide. There were speeches, an installation that Progressio volunteers helped to create (the picture above shows the work in progress), but most importantly the chance to get together with like-minded people to demand action on hunger (see below). The G8 summit was a major target for the campaign, and we welcome the G8 commitment to “ensuring that investments have a measurable impact on reducing poverty and malnutrition, particularly for small-holders and women, and are made responsibly and support the sustainable use of natural resources.” However, we’re disappointed not to see water for livelihoods explicitly mentioned in the G8 communiqué, so we’ll be keeping up the pressure to ensure small-scale farmers have a voice in decisions about water access and management.



what we've been up to



Women dancing during the tree planting ceremony at Chembe village

Investing together in a sustainable future

Unpredictable rainfall, droughts and floods are the scourge of small-holder farmers – especially when facing the ‘hunger period’ between harvests. But help is at hand for farmers in Malawi, writes Progressio chief executive Mark Lister

You don’t need a degree in environmental science to understand what climate change means when hunger comes knocking on your door.

In Malawi last year, the rains came late – in December instead of October. And when they came, the rain fell in downpours of such raw force that they damaged crops and swept away precious topsoils containing the nutrients that are vital for good yields.

For the small-holder farming families I visited in the scattered villages of Salima near Lake Malawi, the consequences are stark – a decent yield means enough food to eat and a poor yield means hunger.

The hunger period

Even without the delays and devastation of unpredictable rainfall, droughts and floods,

every year the people of southern Africa face what they call ‘the hunger period’: the gap between harvests which leaves many villagers without food for months at a time.

“The hunger period for our families is often October to January in the rainy season. We have no more food from the last harvest and cannot afford to buy enough food at the market,” a farmer from Kasache village told me.

Another farmer, Peter Mulela, added: “Because of climate change we are not getting enough rain and our yield is reduced.”

Getting through the hunger period

But during my visit I saw the impact achieved by Progressio development workers, working alongside partners and communities to find sustainable ways to overcome these problems.

We’ve done this by sharing skills in agro-ecology with the Malawian NGO Environment Africa, and with the communities in Kasache and many surrounding villages.

Our development workers and Environment Africa have provided local small-holder farmers with training on how to improve yields, diversify crops and extend harvest times – so helping the small-holder farmers to get through the ‘hunger period’ and invest in a sustainable future.

Food and income

“We chose the local sweet potato and cassava, as a source of income and food,” said Michael, one of the local farmers. “There is a local market for sweet potato

continued overleaf...



Welcome to Chembe

Later that afternoon, with the sun already dipping on a sweltering day, Jumrah Mbwana, the Village Headman, and I had been invited to join a large gathering for a ceremonial tree planting at Chembe. It was an occasion of singing and speeches and of real joy for the whole village.

“We the people of the Chembe Village Forest Club want you to be welcome,” said the Chairman of the Forest Club. “After we noticed the issue of climate change and deforestation in the area, we started planting trees of our own initiative – 2,800 trees last year.

“Even in the face of other challenges we have 3,500 seedlings this year – some are already planted. With Progressio and Environment Africa, we walk hand in hand to protect our climate.”



especially in Ramadan. Cassava too is ready nine months after planting in the hunger period.”

The new approach comes from increasing or introducing crop variety and diversification away from maize, the villagers’ staple crop. The properties of the types of cassava and sweet potatoes now being introduced – of late planting, slow growing and drought resistance – are a real advantage for the villagers.

What is more, sweet potato vines can be stored and provide the seeds for next season’s harvest – a free self-regenerating crop for farmers who sometimes cannot afford seeds.

Putting down new roots

Just as importantly Progressio, Environment Africa and the villagers are also putting down new roots for the future. Working together, they combine agro-ecology expertise with local knowledge to tackle other challenges such as deforestation and soil erosion.

With Progressio and Environment Africa’s help, villagers set up a tree nursery to nurture and plant locally sourced tree varieties that will help protect crops against the wind, produce nuts to supplement their diets or sell at market, and help with topsoil retention.

I visited the nursery they had erected to nurture the saplings – 832 in total. There will be some early benefits, but really this is an investment for the future. As Annis, one of the 74 women in the tree-planting group, said as she showed me the saplings: “I hope for a better future for my children.”

A voice for farmers

Farmers don’t just need practical skills – they need a voice so that their knowledge and expertise can help to shape agricultural and environmental policy. That’s why our development worker Christopher Mweembe is working as an environmental advocacy adviser with Environment Africa.

In April, Progressio arranged for Chris to attend an international conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Climate Justice in Dublin. He said: “The two-day conference was conducted in a unique way: farmers spoke, policy makers listened. Policy makers, politicians and researchers acted as listeners, while farmers shared their experiences, ideas, successes and challenges.

“A farmer from Malawi gave the closing remarks. She highlighted that often, conferences are dominated by people who know nothing about farming. She said: Their advantage is that they can read and write, but we farmers are the owners of the work and knowledge even though it’s not contained in papers – we have it in our minds.”

 read more: search ‘what farmers know’ on our website



Farmers in Amendlethu Community Garden in Lupane, Zimbabwe



Progressio ICS volunteers (in red t-shirts) with Progressio and ASI staff at the demonstration plot in Kabudula

Sharing skills in short trousers

Kabudula means ‘Short Trousers’ – somehow a fitting place to work for Progressio’s ICS (International Citizen Service) youth volunteering programme, writes *Mark Lister*. Our young people are our future in every society of course, but especially in Malawi where over 60% of the population is under 25.

The young people I met in Kabudula are actively taking responsibility for the sustainable future of their livelihoods and their local environment. They included about 130 young people from the village (roughly half girls and half boys), plus the 8 young adult volunteers with Progressio ICS – 4 Malawians and 4 Brits.

“We are working with the local young villagers to show them how to diversify beyond the staple crop, maize, by growing a new higher value crop, paprika (peppers), in an organically sustainable way,” explained Patrick, who works for our ICS partner, the local Malawian organisation Arise and Shine International (ASI).

“Not only can the learning spread round the village but also be taken to other communities too,” said Patrick. As one young farmer said: “My wish is to take the skills I have learnt across to my family’s small farm plot so we can get more produce for the whole family in future.”

The ICS volunteer team is also developing other activities in response to priorities identified by the local young farmers. These include HIV and AIDS prevention, Early Childhood Development, and family planning to address key health issues. Through the project, the local young people become ‘trainers’ on these issues, themselves taking the message to others in the village and in their families. The obstacles and challenges are huge but these young people were full of smiles when talking about their hopes for the future – a future that they are empowering themselves to shape.

👉 read more: search ‘short trousers’ on our website



UK volunteer Andy Griffiths and national volunteer Violet Nkhoma conducting a survey in Katengeza village

Helping communities change for the better

Progressio ICS is achieving a real impact by planning and following through long-term interventions, such as a project to improve villagers' water management and use in rural Malawi. Violet Nkhoma, a Malawian volunteer with Progressio ICS, explains how the project got started

The placement is still going on, many things are happening. So far we have done so many activities like participatory diagnosis in Katengeza and Phalazi villages, during which the villages were able to come up with their vision statement and action plan. We've also been attending life skills training, training the youths at Malingunde primary and secondary schools and also the youths at the youth centre in TA (Traditional Authority) Masumbankhunda's compound as well as the youths at Phalazi village on life skills.

Phalazi is a group village head under TA Masumbankhunda and it has 10 villages which are Chionaine, Mkambayani 1, Mkambayani Wansalu, Eleson, Chasaza, Phalazi Njuzi, Phalazi Zamadzi, Manyonga, Chikanamoyo and Mchambo. Katengeza is under group village head Maziro in TA Maliri. Phalazi and Katengeza are our model villages in these TAs, chosen by ASI

(Progressio partner organisation Arise and Shine International) with the help of these TAs.

The interesting story is that these villages lack good sanitation and hygiene. We did PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation) surveys in these villages. In Phalazi they use Likuni river and Mphangwe dam as a source of water for bathing, washing dishes, washing clothes, as well as drinking, and there is no water treatment. They just draw water and drink which is a very bad situation since the same river is used by the livestock and also people.

This is common in rural areas of Malawi. In Katengeza the situation is the same, except they use a shallow well as a source of water. This is why we have cholera outbreaks each year in Malawi, and this has affected Malawi as a whole in the sense that the government uses money to buy medicine for cholera patients instead of using the money for other development works.

With the same survey we also found that these villages have unprotected sanitary facilities. Their rubbish pits are very close to the houses, the toilets and washrooms have no roofs or windows, the washrooms are sometimes also used as toilets. Many washrooms are falling down due to poor drainage and all these things increase the spread of water-borne diseases.

Considering that the situation in these villages is bad, quick help is needed. Thus we came up with the PHAST campaign which we have planned to carry out before this placement ends. This campaign we think will help these communities change from a worse situation to a better one.

 read more: check out our volunteer blog at progressio.org.uk/blog/empowered



We can see the changes

The ICS teams combine practical improvements such as renovating boreholes and constructing pit latrines for local schools, with training in sanitation and hygiene for children and young people (see photo above), life planning skills, and support for women's groups and youth groups. Commenting on one of our volunteer blogs, about a Progressio ICS team working with partner organisation People Serving Girls at Risk (PSGR), a woman called Namaona wrote:

"Incredible work! I come from this area, upper part of Mdeka. I am very conversant with the area, having been born in the area and lived there for more than 20 years. There are lots of problems in this area: girls lacking self esteem; girls joining the sex trade due to poverty; falling victims to sex trafficking to South Africa; lack of clean water; non-availability of pit latrines in most of the schools; and many others. PSGR is doing very commendable work. We are proud to have white people working alongside young Malawians as volunteers. We are able to see the changes. Please expand your work to more schools in upper Mdeka."

Live Below The Line

Thank you to all the Progressio people who took part in Live Below The Line – 44 people have raised over £5,000 so far. But more importantly, you've raised awareness and understanding of the realities of living in food poverty. Ingrid Leduc (pictured above during her time as a Progressio ICS volunteer in El Salvador) told us: "I wanted to take part because the purpose of the challenge was not to simulate poverty but to get others, including myself, to think about the plight of people. Planning has been the key to creating reasonable meals on £1 a day. I managed to get the necessary ingredients, although very poor people might not have access to cheap canned or frozen food. The first two days were very exciting, but as the challenge went on, I lacked energy because of insufficient nutrition. However what I did cannot come close to experiencing what it is like to live in that kind of poverty. As a mother, just the thought of many families not just living on £1 a day but also having just £1 to spend on food, drink and everything else, is alarming. Taking part has made me acknowledge how much money I've been wasting away. And it has made me think about people in developing countries as well."

 read more: search 'live below the line' on our website

National volunteers are an integral part of Progressio ICS, which aims to build a global community of active citizens. Like the UK volunteers, national volunteers do an 'Action at Home' after their ICS placement, and this group in El Salvador – from the communities of Ahuachapán, El Refugio and Santa Marta – got together to build a stage in Santa Marta (pictured) that the community can use for public events.

Active citizens



IF church service

3,700 people came for a service at Westminster Central Hall part-organised by Progressio – and then made the long, hot walk to Hyde Park to participate in the Big IF event. Thank you so much for your support and commitment.

Student voices

It was great to see so many at the Student Christian Movement and SPEAK conferences this year, and thanks to the schools who got involved in our food campaigning, especially Howells School, Cardiff, Loreto College, Manchester and Sacred Heart, New Malden.

World AIDS Day

Thanks to everyone who took the time to add their voice to our World AIDS Day campaign action – together with the rest of the UK AIDS Consortium, we powerfully spoke out about the need to make sure funding for AIDS was well-targeted.

Empower

Refresher Day, MP lobby training, Café IF events, Act on Hunger, Live Below The Line – thanks to our amazing Empower Local Leaders and Regional Mobilisers for all their work. Want to join us? Find out more at progressio.org.uk/empower



Supporting the IF campaign

A big 'thank you' to all the Progressio volunteers who turned out to help spread the message about ending hunger – and particularly about the need to support small-scale farmers. Pictured above are just some of the 20 volunteers who helped create a buzz around our stall at the Big IF event in London. ICS return volunteer Gemma said: "Having been to Nicaragua with Progressio I was keen to come along today and continue talking to people about what I experienced there and to carry on doing my bit to make a difference." Holly, who volunteered with Progressio ICS in Zimbabwe, said: "Today is such a big important event about ending hunger, I couldn't have not come along and been a part of it. When you've experienced living with people who have very little food you feel you have to do something about it."



Act on Hunger 'craftersnoon'

Thank you to all the people who put their time and energy into promoting the IF campaign. Our Empower Local Leaders held Café IF events in Scotland, Essex and London, reaching dozens of people to tell them about the IF campaign. And the day before the Big IF event, a team of enthusiastic volunteers joined us at the Progressio offices to make brilliant placards and learn about food and hunger with Dr Severine Deneulin, a lecturer in international development at the University of Bath.



Become a Climate Adaptation Partner

Climate change is happening now. We need to help the world's poorest communities adapt to its effects whilst continuing to reduce our own contribution to the problem. ClimatePro is an innovative programme, set up by Progressio and Progressio Ireland, that invests in vulnerable communities to enable them to adapt to climate change. As well as supporting these communities, ClimatePro Climate Adaptation Partners make a commitment to reduce their own contribution to climate change in four high-impact areas: flights taken, vehicle use, electricity use and other fuel use. If you believe that this combination of adaptation and mitigation is the only fair and effective way to tackle climate change, then why not join us as a Climate Adaptation Partner? It's open to individuals, groups and small, medium and large businesses; for companies, accreditation is available for you to publicly show that you're serious about tackling climate change in a progressive, holistic way. To find out more and to become a Progressio Climate Adaptation Partner, please visit climate-pro.org

Be our contact

Become a community contact and bring Progressio's inspiring campaigning and fundraising to your church, school or workplace. Please email campaigns@progressio.org.uk to find out more.

Spread the word

You can help us by spreading the word about ICS to your friends, families and networks and encouraging people who are interested to apply. We are looking for UK-based 18-25 year olds with the passion to make a difference, and group leaders (23+) who have some experience of leading young adults. James North, who has just returned from El Salvador, described it as a "life changing experience to say the least", so if you know other people who may be interested in ICS, please let them know! More info at progressio.org.uk/ics

Thank you for giving

Thank you for continuing to donate to our 'Food for a better future' project in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In one of his regular updates on his work in Restauración, development worker Bernardo Lopez said: "The target is 60 families, we've started working with 14 of them and now we need to make sure that the rest get their small-scale gardens and begin to produce enough food for consumption and sale." Thank you for enabling this work to happen.

▶ Come dine

Want to get involved with the 'Below The Line' challenge, but not able to 'Live' it? Host a Come Dine Below The Line dinner party instead! Invite your friends round, cook them a meal for £1 a head and then ask for a £5 or £10 donation each. There are lots of recipe ideas available in the Below The Line pages on our website. It will be a brilliant way to entertain your friends AND act on hunger. Do let us know how you get on!

▶ Get active

Join Team Progressio for a running challenge this autumn! We have places for two half marathons, the Royal Parks on 6 October and the Great Birmingham Run on 20 October. These are some of the most popular runs in the country, so there will be a fantastic atmosphere to enjoy, whilst helping us fight poverty in the process. Search 'run for Progressio' on our website or email Catherine@progressio.org.uk for more details.



Fall in love with farmers

The government has a track record of supporting small-scale farmers, but we need to step it up globally if we're going to meet the MDG on hunger. That's why we're asking the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, to fall in love with farmers and show she cares by investing some of the extra 0.7% aid spend in small-scale farming, particularly projects targeting women and water for livelihoods. And – like Rebecca and Kate in the photo above – we're asking you to show your support, and show Justine Greening that she needs to fall in love with farmers too! Please visit our website to find out how you can get involved.

▶ Legacies

Thank you to all those supporters who have let us know they are leaving a gift in their will to Progressio. If you have not done so, please consider leaving a gift in your will – your legacy will be much appreciated and will make a long-term difference to the lives of the people we work with in poor communities overseas. Please see our website or contact Catherine@progressio.org.uk for more information.

▶ Regular giving

Regular gifts really help us and our partners plan our work. Please consider taking out a monthly direct debit in favour of Progressio. You can do this online at progressio.org.uk, or please contact us for a form. If you are already making a regular gift to Progressio and would like to change the amount, please contact Catherine@progressio.org.uk



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