

How can Friends be involved?

1. Study our Biblical and Quaker heritage. Pray for ways to make our individual and corporate economic behavior consistent with our faith.
2. Take steps in your family to use fewer resources and to reuse and recycle more of what is used. Encourage these practices in your community.
3. Contribute to RSWR. Some Friends use the guideline of 1% of after-tax income.
4. Hold educational events which focus on the concerns of Right Sharing.

Enclosed is a gift of \$ _____ to RSWR.

Please send me *Right Sharing News*,

Please send the newsletter electronically.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Right Sharing of World Resources

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In most of the world the women do much of the food growing.



*God calls us
to the right sharing
of world resources,
from the burdens
of materialism
and poverty
into the abundance
of God's love,
to work for equity
through partnership
with our sisters and
brothers throughout
the world.*

Right Sharing of World Resources supports grassroots income-generating projects in the developing world and encourages economic discipleship among Friends in the United States.



Mukuyu Village Friends Widows

What is the Scriptural basis of our work?

"But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving ... Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: 'He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.'"

2 Corinthians 8:7, 13-15, NIV

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard."

Isaiah 58:6-8, NIV

How might Friends understand this work?

"Our gracious Creator cares and provides for all creatures. His tender mercies are over all his works; and so far as his love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distress of the

afflicted and increase interest from which our own is inseparable—that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.

... Oppression in the extreme appears terrible, but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression, and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive: that to labor for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the greatest business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world."

—John Woolman, *A Plea for the Poor*

The Heart of RSWR

From its beginning in 1967 the basic idea of RSWR has been wealth redistribution. In 1967 we called it "right sharing". Today, we also understand it as Jubilee justice or Sabbath economics, recalling the Biblical teaching of Sabbath and Jubilee. We believe God is calling Quakers and other persons of faith in the United States to this practice.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

—LUKE 4:18-19

Walter Brueggemann¹ has shortened Luke's account of Jubilee justice to the following:

You find out what belongs to whom and give it back.

¹"Voices of the Night—Against Justice" in *Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: An Agenda for Ministers*. 1986

“Giving it back” is wealth redistribution. RSWR’s distinguishing feature is in the practice of redistribution as a grant (*gift*) of capital, which is then owned and used by women’s self-help groups to support the implementation of small-scale, income-generating businesses. Most micro-enterprise endeavors make capital available via *loans*, which must be paid back by the poor to the original owner of the capital. RSWR understands that God calls us to Jubilee justice, wealth redistribution, in the grants which continue to be redistributed. Our partners who receive the grant are women’s self-help groups which hold and manage the funds in common, making loans to members to implement small-scale, income-generating businesses. Each member must repay her loan, with interest, so that the original gift will continue to flow and grow within the communities.

The heart of RSWR, then, is a partnership. One member of the partnership is Quakers and other persons of faith seeking to live more justly, providing capital to help support micro-enterprises, and experiencing jubilee justice. The other member of the partnership are women’s self-help groups who, with the guidance of local non-governmental organizations and by their participation in the self-help group and the micro-credit project, are living Sabbath economics in their own community.

What do these experiments and these women teach us? That the Jubilee can be a real, practical way of life that liberates us all into God’s shared abundance. Specifically, three principles are the root of RSWR’s understanding of Sabbath economics as practiced by RSWR partners:

Local Self-Reliance – Economies, to the extent possible, are locally-based. Production is for local consumption. Local consumption needs guide local production.

Sustainability – Economies are sustainable in a number of ways including environmental, fiscal, social, political, and cultural. Economies serve the community, rather than the community serving economies.

Mutual Support and Accountability – Each social unit is a vital part of a community. As such,

everyone should be accountable to and responsible for “the common good”.

The heart of RSWR is a partnership in which we, Americans and the planet’s poorest of the poor, practice Jubilee justice and demonstrate that just living is possible.

Who are Right Sharing’s partners?

We work primarily with newly established and small organizations in the developing world. Our grants support innovative income-generating projects and environmental regeneration.

Why small projects?

People in the developing world often have little or no access to capital. Right Sharing’s grants provide seed money which, via a revolving loan, is recycled within a community. RSWR supplies each project with no more than \$5,500 per year. After receiving RSWR funds, organizations and communities are frequently able to obtain local funding and resources.

What is RSWR’s relationship with its partners?

Partnership benefits participants mutually. Friends in the United States offer material resources, and our testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality and integrity.

Project partners offer experience and expertise working with the poor, a vision of community, and a commitment to peace and justice.

Some examples of RSWR work around the world

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION—INDIA

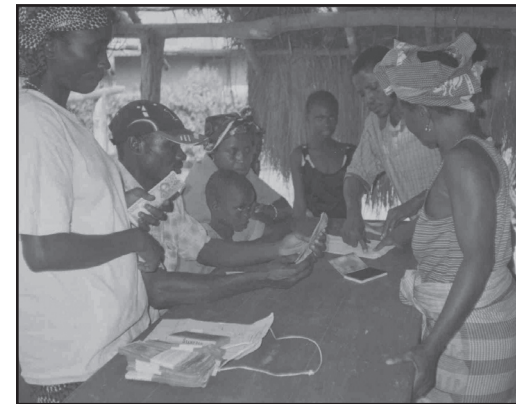
24 tribal and Dalit women in three self-help groups from the western (Ghat) mountains are participating in this one-year project. They will



Ms. Sudarmathi (right) meets a self-help group member.

receive ten days of training in awareness, confidence building, income-generating projects, marketing, and account maintenance. Loans of \$140 will be given to each woman, to be repaid at 12% annual interest in one year. One group of women will jointly engage in floriculture (preparing bouquets). Their net monthly income will be \$60. The other two groups will do herbal collection, bee-keeping, fruit and vegetable sales. Their net monthly income will be \$70.

Ms. S. Sudarmathi, VIVA’s director, has a masters in social work. She did her internship in the area (25 km. outside the vacation town of Kodaikanal) and returned after graduation to begin VIVA. Her one employee is her (then) internship supervisor, a man. Dr. R. Kannan summarizes from his site visit report, “The women are well organized and are formed into well-functioning groups. The income-generation activities have good marketing potential and are eco-friendly.”



Mrs. Turay (left) disburses a loan from MFA.

KIHILA AVALINA VAKALI GROUP—KENYA

20 women members of the group, from Vihiga Yearly Meeting, are participating in this three-year project. The group has 23 members, twenty women and three men, with the men being in a supportive role, particularly maintaining financial records. The women will be lent \$230 to construct a poultry unit

with at least twenty mature layers and three roosters. Income will begin the fourth month with each woman earning \$14 per month. Loan repayments will be \$5 per month.

The women stated in their proposal that “though this project is focused on the members of KAVG our long-term goal is to pull most, if not all, Christian women irrespective of denominational affiliation into the project”.

MABULOH FARMERS ASSOCIATION—SIERRA LEONE

120 rural, women farmers from the area of Mile 91 (central Sierra Leone) are participating in this one-year project, which is an expansion of a previously funded RSWR project. The women will grow rice, groundnuts, vegetables and cassava for home use and for sale. The women will be trained in integrated agriculture. Each woman will receive a loan of \$50, to be repaid at 24% annual interest. The women will earn \$35 per month. \$9 will be repaid per month, \$20 used for expansion and sustainability of the business and the remainder, \$6, for income.

What is RSWR’s relationship with Friends in the United States?

Friends in the United States benefit from more than our share of the world’s resources. Some of these resources are available to us as a result of exploitation and some are gifts of God.

From its beginning, Right Sharing has offered Friends in the United States a deeper understanding of how most people in the world live, and of the inequitable distribution of the world’s material and other resources. It has also challenged Friends to respond to these inequities through spiritually-rooted Quaker witness. Right Sharing lifts up three queries for Friends:

- How does materialism and consumerism hinder or mar our relationship with God?
- What can be released outwardly as we accept the discipline of cleansing and fasting?
- How can our lifestyles be adjusted so that they are sustainable in the world, without depriving others?