

Agronomic Science Foundation

A Pathway to Sharing



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In the March 2010 issue of *CSA News* magazine, the president of ASA at the time, Francis Pierce, presented an initiative called **Agronomists Making a Difference**. As he stated, “The idea is simple—create a forum for our members, constituents, and stakeholders to report to the world examples of agronomists making a difference.”

I believe this was an excellent idea, and the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) has recently taken it one step further by developing the **Pathway Fund**. This new fund was created to encourage groups of energized scientists and professionals to offer their scientific expertise in struggling areas around the world. This new initiative provides an excellent opportunity to align with other groups who share that same passion. Some of these groups include the Peace Corps, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

Currently, the Peace Corps is working with ASA to recruit volunteers who have a background in agriculture to work with small-farm operators in other countries. The current commitment to volunteer with the Peace Corps is at a minimum of 27 months, which can create an obstacle for some members who have established commitments with

The **Pathway Fund** was created to encourage groups of energized scientists and professionals to offer their scientific expertise in struggling areas around the world. To support the fund, call 608-273-8095 or visit www.agronomy.org/foundation/donate.

career, family, and financial obligations. However, this effort has merit, and ASF is currently requesting proposals for the Pathway Fund that offer a six-month option for members of ASA, CSSA, and/or SSSA.

When fully funded, up to \$15,000 will be provided per successful proposal with the option of renewal. This provides an excellent opportunity for ASF to work with groups like the Peace Corps through a consulting arrangement.

Here is one example of how I believe it could work. ASF could offer multiple teams of members to share their expertise through a series of six-month service trips, which would utilize the strengths of both organizations. The Peace Corps has the international relationships, volunteer workforce, and brand awareness while ASF brings the scientific knowledge of its donors who specialize in agronomy, crops, and soils. The collaboration between these two groups can work miracles at the grassroots level.

As Dr. Pierce suggested when he first proposed Agronomists Making a Difference, the initiative could “be supported through sponsorship of agronomic activities throughout the world; support of students in K-12 and higher education to make a difference; recognition of agronomists who make a difference; and documentation and public promotion of notable achievements in agronomy.”

Dr. Pierce’s initiative and leadership continues to inspire me, and I hope you share in this vision as well. He has shown us a path to follow, so now it is up to us to make the journey. Please consider supporting this fund with a donation or by submitting a proposal to utilize this opportunity.



Photo courtesy of Gary Slaats/Peace Corps