



# 10 Things You Need to Know About the New Roots Program

International Rescue Committee's New Roots food and agriculture program engages refugees, immigrants and their communities in urban agriculture, food markets, youth programs, community food orientation, and emergency food distribution.

In 2021, New Roots reached almost 9,000 people across 12 U.S. cities through activities that promote improved health, increased income, new skills, and strengthened social capital.



*Sheryll Durrant, New Roots Program Manager in NYC, and members of the New Roots Community Farm in the Bronx, NY*

## Here are the Top Ten Things You Need to Know about the New Roots program:

- 1. People grow and sell food in 66 locations across the US.** These gardens, farms, and markets add safe and engaging places to communities that may otherwise feel unwelcoming to new Americans.
- 2. New Roots builds new connections.** Familiar foods provide a link to a sense of home, and 79% of participants mentioned meeting people from other cultural or ethnic groups through sharing food and crop varieties unique to their cultures.
- 3. There is strong evidence that the program impacts household nutritional security.** Participants have reported an average of \$195/month saved on groceries during the growing season, and 80% said that during the growing season they have more fresh food available to them than they used to.
- 4. Farmer training programs boost household income.** Farmers across 6 sites earned \$440,000 from sales through IRC-brokered markets (not including independent sales) in 2021. For the farmers, this additional income can fill critical gaps in household budgets.

# 10 Things You Need to Know About the New Roots Program

- 5. IRC is stepping up to address emergency food needs.** In 2022 New Roots and US Resettlement programs assisted over 8,470 families with more than \$340,230 worth of food distributed directly and through partners.
- 6. Markets position farmers as grassroots community leaders.** Many participants are women, who practice key employment and business skills while inspiring and organizing others.
- 7. Youth gain skills, confidence and improved eating behaviors.** Over 500 children and youth grew produce, learned about nutrition, and practiced new leadership and vocational skills in 2021.
- 8. Food markets are a catalyst for local food systems change.** An average of 88% of all purchases last year came in the form of food incentives, indicating that New Roots markets and farm stands provide healthy food to thousands living in low-food-access communities.
- 9. Garden and farm sites improve mental health.** Being outside, being with other people, and getting physical activity are important reasons for people to be involved. Over 60% of participants said they were more active, and more than half reported they were happier or less stressed.
- 10. Close to 700 gardeners and farmers produce over 65 different varieties of produce.** In some cases, the produce people grow is the only produce they consume due to their limited incomes.

To learn more, please contact IRC technical advisors for food security and agriculture Eugenia Gusev ([eugenia.gusev@rescue.org](mailto:eugenia.gusev@rescue.org)) and Aley Kent ([aley.kent@rescue.org](mailto:aley.kent@rescue.org)). You can donate to the IRC's work combatting food insecurity in the U.S. [here](#).