



# new roots

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





# NEW ROOTS AT-A-GLANCE



**71** urban garden, farm and market sites



**12** IRC locations



**13,449** total people served by New Roots programs in 2022



**661** gardeners & farmers



**1,280** children & youth involved



**161** community events



**\$2.9 million** worth of culturally-relevant food assistance provided



# NEW ROOTS AND FOOD SECURITY

Most people participate in New Roots programs because of the food. Participants in farms and gardens had more food available to them throughout the year, and this food was fresher than what they might eat otherwise.

New Roots also helped thousands of newcomers to navigate their food system and get access to fresh produce. Refugee farmers accepted food assistance benefits (such as SNAP) and other purchasing incentives at markets to make healthy food more affordable, and contributed culturally important products to food pantries as well.



**84%** of New Roots clients said they **have more food** available to them



**89%** of New Roots clients said they **have higher quality food** available to them



New Roots Farmers and gardeners are **20% more likely to be food secure** than others who do not grow food



**1,132** people received nutrition education



**3,757** shoppers accessed food using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other food incentives at New Roots markets



**\$2.9 million** worth of culturally-appropriate food provided as food assistance across the US



New Roots farmers grew **484,474** pounds of culturally-appropriate produce for food assistance efforts



# **PROFILE:** **COMBATting HUNGER AND BUILDING SKILLS**

Youth Food Justice (YFJ) Leaders at two high schools in Oakland, California, worked hard last year supporting their community's health and food security. These youth manage a weekly food distribution in partnership with the Oakland International High School (OIHS) and the Alameda County Food Bank, providing 3,800 pounds of fresh, local, culturally-appropriate food each week to community members for a total of 170,000 pounds in 2022. Medina Ali of OIHS says, "...it's honestly one of the highlights of our week. Families come and know that our school is not just an institution of learning but a place that holistically serves them and the community."

The YFJ program also helps youth to learn and practice skills that are transferable to multiple contexts and build their confidence and self-efficacy. Youth leaders garden, create menus, and prepare samples of dishes inspired by their cultural heritage using ingredients from the weekly food distributions. Ali continues, "If you walk through our school today, you will see gardens with vegetables and fruits from the countries of our community...it's a space that is valued and loved, where people feel seen and celebrated."





# NEW ROOTS AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Over 660 people participated in a total of 50 urban gardens and farms in 2022. This contributed significantly to family financial health through savings on food costs.

Some participants earned extra income through selling to a variety of markets, restaurants, and grocery stores. Most markets were in neighborhoods with limited food access, and provided high-quality and hard-to-find produce at affordable price points.



**88%** of participants reported saving money on groceries



Families saved an average of **\$85** per week during the food-growing season



**116** participants farmed for income



Farmers made almost **\$380,000** from sales of their produce



Farmers sold through **21** markets and food stores



Markets run by New Roots programs made over **\$132,000** in sales to communities with limited access to healthy food





## **PROFILE:**

# **SUPPORTING NEW LIVELIHOODS**

Krishna owns Namuna Farm outside of Seattle, Washington. He grew up farming, but his family lost their farm in Bhutan when they were forced to migrate to Nepal. Krishna came to the US in 2010 and soon after began growing food in the Namaste Garden in Tukwila, WA. In 2018, he took the New Roots "Micro Producer Academy" course to improve his knowledge about crop planning, budgeting, product safety, and market management. Many refugee farmers in his class had not received any formal education during their youth and valued the opportunity to learn new things about agricultural practices. "Here, farming methods are totally different," he says, "I had never even heard about a tiller or machine to help with farming. We had no lines or irrigation - we [didn't] even irrigate the farm. It all depended on river water and rainwater."

Now Krishna grows dozens of vegetables on four acres, many that are hard to find in local stores and are culturally relevant to other Bhutanese people, such as pumpkin and chayote vines, Tukrukey (stuffing cucumbers), Gheu bodi (dragon tongue beans), mustard greens, Bhotey khursani (hot peppers from Bhutan), and daikon radishes, as well as other common vegetables. He sells his produce at the Tukwila Valley Farmers Market and to other places like the DesMoines Food Bank, and is most proud of his high quality produce and the high demand by the customers. "We had no farm, no nothing. But now here again I had a chance to farm...and I'm proud that I am providing popular produce to my community."

Visit [Krishna's page](#) on the New Roots Seattle website.



# NEW ROOTS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

New Roots gardens and farms provide more than food. An overwhelming majority of participants express that gardens and farms provide places of healing and reconnection.

Programs are nurturing strong bonds among members of each site. In addition, programs that integrate community events and offer opportunities for youth and adults to build skills or take on leadership roles are enabling people to expand their social networks, strengthen their support systems, and build their self-esteem.



**93%** of respondents said they felt their health improved in at least 1 of 3 ways:

— **66% less stressed** —

— **68% more active** —

— **77% better diet** —



**73%** of participants said New Roots supported their mental health through getting outside, seeing other people, and reconnecting with familiar practices



**90%** of participants feel a positive connection to others in New Roots:

**98%** said they would offer help to others

**77%** said they would go to others for support



**77%** of participants said they now know someone from outside of their immediate community or cultural group





## **PROFILE:**

# **CULTIVATING COMMUNITY AND REDUCING ISOLATION**

Eloise has been volunteering at the New Roots Community Farm in the South Bronx for five years. Now at 70, Eloise has become a leader during Friday workdays, food box distributions, and market days. The farm brought her back to her roots – she grew up around chickens, apple trees, and grapevines – and now she shares food with other people in her building, like one elderly man who "looks forward each week to getting his mint and cucumbers."

Being able to come harvest her own fruits and vegetables has supplemented her food and reduces her expenses. But as important to her is the community it creates. Eloise enjoys visiting with other people as they wait in line at food distributions or at the market. "It's so diverse and people cross ethnic boundaries just to talk to each other because we're in the same space," she says.

Eloise also appreciates how the farm has provided structure to her week and enables her to add value to her community. "Friday is my day to be at the farm." She continues, "when we're young we think we'll go on forever, but when you're approaching retirement, you have to think about having something else to do – having a place to come and be in community and not be isolated." Eloise plans to stay active at the Farm as long as she can. "The community we have created here is meaningful," she says, "I don't see myself retiring from life."

