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**January 12, 2010**

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## **Global Greengrants Fund Board Welcomes Five New Members, Diversifies Leadership**

**Boulder, Colorado**—Last week, Global Greengrants Fund welcomed five new members to its Board of Directors to replace departing members China Brotsky, David Chatfield, and Catherine Porter.

Joining the board are Founding Executive Director of TrustAfrica, Akwasi Aidoo; Executive Director of Nigeria's Environmental Rights Action, Nnimmo Bassey; Founding Board Member of the Law and Social Entrepreneurship Association, Jake Beinecke; President and Founder of Commonweal, Michael Lerner; and Founding Member of the Guatemala City's Instituto para el Desarrollo Rural, Elmer Lopez. Stephen Pittam, Secretary of the UK-based Joseph Rowntree Trust, will be joining the board later this year.

These new board members signal a shift in leadership at Global Greengrants Fund. The board is increasing in size, expanding in expertise, and broadening its global reach. What's more, with four of the new members hailing from outside the United States, Greengrants meets the growing demands of international grantmaking for diversified leadership.

"We're excited about the opportunities for new partnerships and the broad reach that these board members bring to our organization," said Greengrants Executive Director, Terry Odendahl. "We're looking to double our grantmaking in the next five years, and the diverse backgrounds and connections of our new board will deepen the impact of our growth."

This increase in grantmaking is part of a five-year strategic plan recently completed by the organization. The plan also includes goals to do more outreach in Europe and grow its individual giving program.

### **Akwasi Aidoo**

Akwasi is the founding Executive Director of TrustAfrica, a grantmaking foundation dedicated to advancing democratic governance and equitable development in Africa. His previous positions include regional program officer for West and Central Africa at IDRC, head of the Ford Foundation's offices in Senegal and Nigeria, and director of the Ford Foundation's Special Initiative for Africa. He serves as a

director on boards of several nonprofit organizations, including the Fund for Global Human Rights, Resource Alliance, International Beliefs and Values Institute, International Committee of the Council on Foundations, African Grantmakers' Network, and Global Greengrants Fund, and he previously served as a trustee of OXFAM America. Akwasi has taught at universities in Ghana, Tanzania, and the United States. He was educated in Ghana and the United States and received a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Connecticut in 1985. He writes poetry and short stories in his spare time

### **Nnimmo Bassey**

Nnimmo is a Nigerian human and environmental rights activist. He is the executive director of the Environmental Rights Action (ERA) ([www.eraction.org](http://www.eraction.org)) – Nigeria's foremost environmental rights advocacy group, and Chair of Friends of the Earth International – the world's largest federation of grassroots organizations fighting for environmental and social justice. Nnimmo is a member of the international steering committee of Oilwatch International. He is also a practicing architect in Nigeria as well as a published writer and poet. Nnimmo is a longtime advisor on Greengrants' West Africa Advisory Board and served on the strategic planning committee

### **Jake Beinecke**

Jake is a recent graduate of New York University School of Law, where he studied environmental law and the legal implications of social enterprises. He is a former Executive Director and founding board member of the Law and Social Entrepreneurship Association, and was a legal intern at Acumen Fund during law school. Jake has professional experience in sustainable food and agriculture, environmental activism, energy conservation, and traditional philanthropy. He currently serves on the Young Patrons Steering Committee of Lincoln Center Theater, the New York Regional Board of Indego Africa, and is actively involved in the grant-making activities of the Prospect Hill Foundation.

### **Michael Lerner**

Michael is President and founder of Commonweal, a health and environmental research institute in Bolinas, California, and of Smith Farm Center for Healing and the Arts in Washington, D.C. He is also co-founder of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment ([www.healthandenvironment.org](http://www.healthandenvironment.org)) an international partnership for people interested in or working at the interface between the environment and human health. Michael's most recent project is The New School at Commonweal, [www.commonweal.org](http://www.commonweal.org), which explores the interface between ecology, culture and the inner life. Michael sits as president on the Board of Directors for the Jennifer Altman Foundation.

### **Elmer Lopez**

Elmer is an advisor on the Greengrants Central America Advisory Board and a founding member of the Instituto para el Desarrollo Rural, based in Guatemala City. An agronomist by training, Elmer began his career as an environmental activist in 1991 when he and his wife joined the Municipal Environmental Commission of Coatepeque in order to help save Guatemala's largest mangrove forest. He worked as a Central American Greenpeace campaigner until 1998, when he became the Greenpeace international

representative for Latin America on coastal marine issues. He has worked on mangrove protection and shrimp farming issues, and he helped create REDMANGLAR, a Latin American network working to protect coastal marine ecosystems. He was the Regional Area Vice President Latin America & Caribbean for World Neighbors.

### **Stephen Pittam**

Stephen has worked at Joseph Rowntree Trust since 1986 and has been the Trust Secretary since 2001. While at the Trust he has overseen the expansion of the Trust's work from Northern Ireland into Ireland, and the setting up of a local Racial Justice Programme in West Yorkshire. Before joining JRCT in 1986 he spent 10 years in local government in London in roles involving liaison with the voluntary sector and support for community development. Previous to this he worked in community development projects in Ireland, Jordan and in the UK. Stephen is now responsible for the Power and Responsibility Programme of the Trust. He represents the Trust at the Network of European Foundations and is chair of the European Policy Centre steering group on multicultural Europe. He is also a member of the working group – Philanthropy for Social Justice & Peace

### **About Global Greengrants Fund**

Global Greengrants Fund is the world's leader in supporting grassroots environmental justice through small grants. Since 1993, Greengrants has given over \$20 million in donation-funded grants to more than 6,000 grassroots groups, mostly outside of the United States and Western Europe. With this support, the communities that are most affected by environmental degradation are shaping a just and sustainable world. For more information, see [www.greengrants.org](http://www.greengrants.org).

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