

# Supporting The Hunger Project Switzerland entrepreneurship programme for young adults overcoming hunger and poverty in Benin

Grantee: The Hunger Project Switzerland

Location: Benin, Africa

Grant Cycle: 2025 – 2027

Type of Grant: three-year program support, Human Welfare & Rights

Website: [hungerprojekt.ch](http://hungerprojekt.ch)

The Hunger Project Switzerland (THP Switzerland) was established in 1983 as an association based in Geneva and it is part of the Global Hunger Project (THP), a UN-recognized non-governmental international organization founded in 1977. The organization operates to significantly reduce chronic hunger and poverty in nine countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia), as well as in South Asia (Bangladesh and India) and Latin America (Mexico and Peru).

Following the UN Millennium Development Goals, THP is firmly committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a primary focus on ending hunger worldwide by 2030. THP's approach is grounded in three key pillars. First, it mobilizes communities to develop their capacities, leadership, and self-confidence to drive sustainable change. Second, it places the empowerment of women at the center of its programs, recognizing their essential role as catalysts for progress. Third, THP works in close partnership with local authorities to ensure that development efforts are community-led, inclusive, and sustainable.

The **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation** (NaEPF) supports THP's initiatives across eight regions in central and southern Benin. The grant is

aligned with NaEPF's Global Philanthropy strategy, which aims to drive systemic change through a community-led approach that addresses the root causes of poverty, fosters sustainable livelihoods, and promotes sustainable agriculture. The current project, funded by NaEPF, is focused on combating hunger and poverty in Dassa-Zoumè, Benin, by 2027, with a direct impact on 2,700 young adults. The program emphasizes the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, the development of entrepreneurial skills, and the strengthening of local economic resilience.

Poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges to Benin's development. Approximately 40% of the population lives below the poverty line, with the vast majority residing in rural areas. Agriculture continues to be the backbone of the economy, employing around 70% of the working population and contributing approximately 33% to the national GDP. However, smallholder farming, which dominates the sector, faces persistent obstacles, including reliance on traditional techniques, weak value chains, limited access to modern technologies, and low productivity. The impacts of climate change, such as exceptional floods and prolonged droughts, are further exacerbating these vulnerabilities. At the same time, Benin's very young population faces high levels of unemployment and limited economic opportunities, posing an

additional challenge to sustainable development.

In this context, increasing agricultural productivity and harnessing the potential of youth are essential to addressing poverty and food insecurity, particularly in the rural areas where The Hunger Project Benin operates. Realizing this potential requires proactive measures and the creation of meaningful opportunities. This can be achieved through systematic support for young people, including improved access to knowledge, resources, financial services, and markets.

The project supported by the NaEPF has the primary objective to strengthen economic resilience in the region by training 2,700 adolescents and young adults, aged 15 to 35, in innovative and sustainable entrepreneurship. Through The Hunger Project's capacity-building programs, these young entrepreneurs gain in-depth knowledge in areas such as entrepreneurship, innovation, and digitalization, while also building the self-confidence needed to take initiative and lead change. By doing so, they become active contributors to a more resilient and self-sufficient local economy, a crucial step toward reducing hunger and poverty and enabling communities to lead independent, self-determined lives with real prospects for the future.

By the end of 2028, the initiative is expected to indirectly benefit an additional 25,497 individuals across Dassa-Zoumè, providing a scalable model for Benin.