

Small WORLD

Issue 76 May 2022

Good work
Putting our founder,
E.F. Schumacher's vision for
smarter economies into practice



**Practical
ACTION**

Big change starts small

REWARDING JOBS, RESILIENT FUTURES

Our founder, E.F. Schumacher, believed in the importance of 'good work'. That it is about more than being paid for a job you do. That work provides a sense of security, fulfilment, status and solidarity. He believed that smarter economies are possible, where everyone benefits. Economies that ensure no one who contributes lives in poverty, but makes a decent income.

Today, we are putting Schumacher's vision for smarter economies into practice. In this issue of *Small World*, we explore their positive impact on communities around the world.

Over the page, my colleague Jim Ouko will introduce you to market systems and the concept of participatory market systems development (PMSD).

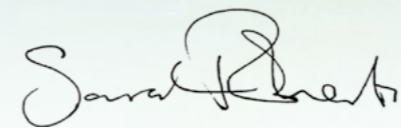
PMSD is a unique process pioneered by Practical Action for establishing market systems based on collaboration and equality. They have huge potential to not just lift individuals out of poverty, but to create circular and sustainable economies that allow many people to flourish together, while building resilience to the erratic climate. These are the systems that we need across the world for people and the planet to thrive.

In the special feature on pages 6-9, we'll explore some examples of market systems in action – from coffee farmers diversifying into beekeeping, to small-scale chicken farmers working co-operatively to boost their incomes.

I hope that by the end of this magazine, you'll share Schumacher's way of looking at work, and understand its far-reaching benefits, such as its ability to foster gender equality, to combat the effects of climate change, and to regenerate our natural world.

You'll also see how vital your support is in setting this work in motion. Thank you for making an active contribution to a better world.

With warmest regards,



Sarah Roberts
Chief Executive Officer



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Cover image

Beekeeping provides an additional income source for coffee farmers in Peru.



Coffee farmers in Peru work together as a collective.

A market that WORKS FOR ALL

We talk to Jim Ouko, our economic development expert in Kenya, about participatory market systems development (PMSD) and its power to transform lives.



Jim Ouko

What are market systems?

Market systems are made up of everyone involved in the sale of a particular product – e.g. tomatoes, groundnuts or poultry. This includes the growers, retailers, various service providers, and bodies who regulate the market. Too often market systems do not benefit marginalised communities and actually perpetuate poverty. PMSD is Practical Action’s unique approach to transforming market systems so they are more inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and a powerful way to tackle poverty.

How is PMSD unique?

PMSD looks at the whole chain, everyone involved, bringing them together to make it work better for everyone. More efficient, more inclusive and more equitable.

In PMSD, it’s in everyone’s interest to keep each part of the system working smoothly. Let me use the example of the human digestive system. For it to work, all of it needs to work in harmony. If any part of the system is dysfunctional, the entire system is affected. If the mouth cannot chew, the whole system has a problem.

What are the objectives of this approach?

In short, it’s empowerment, scale and sustainability. It’s about empowering the most marginalised people in the system – usually the farmers – to have a voice, and contribute equally. It’s also about enabling market actors to collaborate in improving the market system so it becomes more inclusive and grows. Then it can provide long-term income security, independent of any aid or outside help.

How is Practical Action involved?

Initially, we take a leading role in bringing together all the people involved in a market. We explain to them the benefit of working in this very participatory way, how it helps everyone in the chain. We facilitate at the start, but it is the actors in the market themselves who identify the problems and come up with solutions, not us. Gradually Practical Action withdraws and leaves the actors to run it by themselves.

Can you talk us through the process?

We create a list of potential product sectors (e.g. rice, maize, millet, groundnuts, poultry). We then assess them against a set of criteria to help us understand the pros and cons of working in each of them. We might use

criteria such as: the opportunities provided for women, the likely growth of the sector, the opportunity to use a regenerative agricultural approach, and many others. This comparison allows us to select the product sectors that can make the biggest contribution to change.

Then we talk to the smallholder farmers. We want to bring them in and empower them. In a market, they’re usually the most disadvantaged. They do the most work in the system but get the lowest prices. We build their confidence, so they feel comfortable discussing issues with, for example, the CEO of a packaging organisation. They can express themselves and negotiate and participate equally in the market.

After this, we bring together all the main actors in the market chain. That might include people such as other farmers, agricultural vets, transporters, microfinance institutions, cold storage facilities, energy suppliers, retailers. Together they gain a shared understanding. They identify all the bottlenecks, risks and

opportunities in the system. What is hampering growth? What are the leverage points for inclusivity and productivity?

At this stage, they are all fully aware of the system. They understand how their actions impact everyone else, and this encourages everyone to work more collaboratively, and equitably. They forge a common interest and a shared vision.

What is needed for the long-term success of a market system?

We need a critical mass of actors to buy-in to the concept, otherwise it will fizzle out. This might mean bringing in the government and the private sector. If the private sector sees the business case for this approach, they’ll buy into it strongly and it can grow. If the government supports the system by incorporating it into their planning and their budgets, then you are assured of long-term success.

How does a participatory market scale up success?

I’ll use the Transforming Rural Economies and Youth Livelihoods

(TREYL) project as an example. That’s the project I am involved with. We started out in 2019 in two counties in Kenya: Kisumu and Homa Bay. In just the couple of years since we started, the approach has started to grow all by itself, because people from nearby counties in the Lake Basin area are seeing the PMSD process working and asking, how can we join in, how can we also benefit from it?

When people see how the farmers we are working with are making a big success and solving long-term problems, and making a good income despite the impacts of climate change on the land, everyone wants to be in on it. Each enterprise grows and can employ more people. It escalates and escalates and then the growth really snowballs!

We explore some examples of market systems in the special feature on the next page.

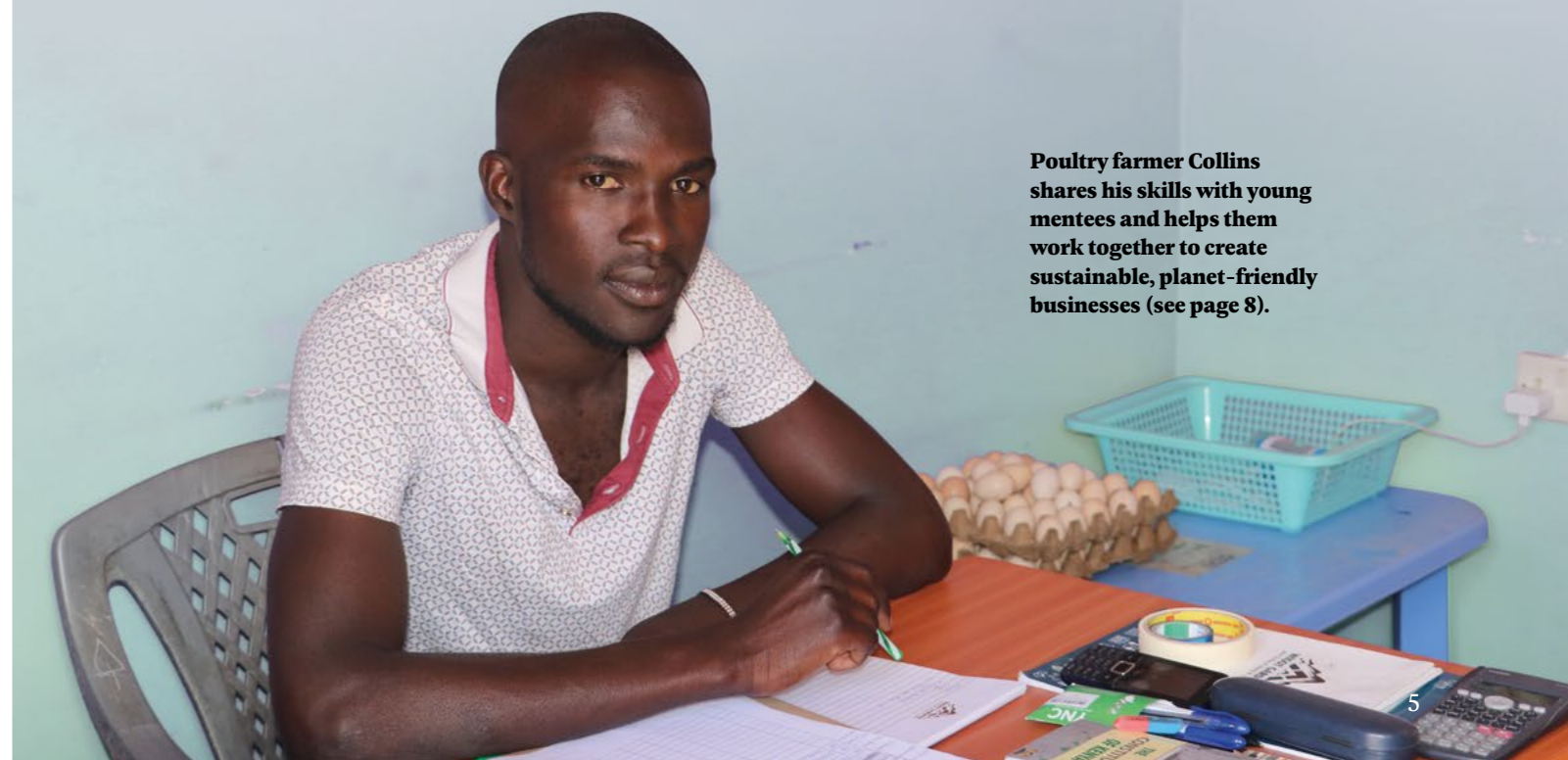
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Beryl Opiyo



With training and support from Practical Action, Beryl has been able to access a participatory market system and scale up her peanut butter business. She is well on her way to achieving her ambition for her ‘Awesome’ peanut butter to be the best business of its kind in the region.



Poultry farmer Collins shares his skills with young mentees and helps them work together to create sustainable, planet-friendly businesses (see page 8).

WORKING SMARTER

How your support is helping smallholder communities to create connected, sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods.

For generations, subsistence farming has been a way of life around the world. But the new generation of farmers face challenges that their grandparents could not have imagined. Unpredictable weather, rising temperatures, persistent droughts, intense storms, and the over-use of chemical farming inputs have taken their toll, creating a situation for many communities where farming is no way to survive.

If the world needs food and food grows on farms, why can't farming work and provide a better future for these farmers? The answer of course is that it can. The secret is to evolve beyond subsistence farming.

At Practical Action, we want to make it possible for farmers to not just adapt to climate change, and not just to survive, but to thrive. Achieving a good standard of living from farming involves changing not just the way farmers farm, but how they make it pay.

Over the next few pages, we'll explore how that works in practice. Meet the farmers adopting multiple income streams, working more collaboratively, and plugging into bigger markets with fair pay. This is E.F. Schumacher's vision for fairer economies in action.



Coffee farmer Luis Bobadilla has added beekeeping to his business, and has a more stable, sustainable income.

The power of multiple income streams



Coffee is one of the most important products in Peru. Every year, more than 1.5 million farmers collectively produce and export around 500 million kilos of coffee beans to the rest of the world. And yet, many coffee farmers live in poverty. The reasons are manifold: the impact of climate change on temperature-sensitive coffee crops; lack of access to markets that pay fairly; and the fact that coffee plants produce only two crops a year, leaving an income gap.

Over the past ten years, Practical Action in Latin America has partnered with small-scale coffee farmers to develop a series of techniques to increase productivity, quality and income, and to engage farmers more effectively with the market. The solutions also help conserve the forest and reduce emissions, resulting in a win/win for people and the planet. Farmers achieve this transformation through an ingenious combination that makes a huge difference: improved farming techniques, diversified crops and income sources, and working together with other farmers, among other strategies for achieving change at scale.

Luis Bobadilla (pictured) is one of the farmers we worked with. Having grown coffee for over 25 years, he has now adopted beekeeping as an additional income stream. He sells the honey his hives produce, but the bees have an additional benefit in fertilising his coffee crop during flowering season, also benefitting his coffee yield.

The introduction of beekeeping has been so successful for Luis that he has encouraged many other coffee growers within his co-operative to adopt the practice.

It costs the equivalent of around £450 to buy all the necessary equipment and get set up in beekeeping. But Luis found that this can be earned back within six months, which inspired other co-operatives to invest in their own hives.

This is just the beginning. We've provided farmers with extra business training so that they can tap into potential new markets that stem from their beekeeping activities. As well as selling honey, the farmers are investigating selling pollen, royal jelly and propolis too – these are all 'superfoods', highly valuable commodities renowned for their health benefits. We hope farmers will soon connect with opportunities to sell these products to supermarkets, and for export, to increase their profits even further.

Through this collaboration, more than 3,000 rural coffee farmers are improving their livelihoods, building financial security, and contributing to the health of their natural environment.

Work like this is only possible with your generous support. Please make a gift today at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

Mentoring young chicken farmers

It has become increasingly challenging to make a living as a farmer in rural Kenya. Erratic weather, caused by climate change, has led to frequently failed harvests. As a result, young people have been turning away from farming as a livelihood, instead moving to cities to try and find work. But in cities they can find more problems, including overcrowding, poor sanitation, and a further lack of opportunity.

Our TREYL project is working with young people in two counties: Kisumu and Homa Bay, to make farming profitable again. As Jim Ouko described on page 5, we went through a process of identifying the best commodities to work with and decided on poultry, tomatoes and groundnuts. There is huge local demand for these products, people can begin making a profit relatively quickly, and there is great opportunity for creating gender equality from them.



Collins Onyango is a poultry farmer we worked with in Kisumu. When we first met Collins, he was trying to build a business selling chickens and eggs. We gave him training in how to boost his profits and improve the sustainability of his enterprise.

Seeing him apply these new skills, we knew that his success could inspire many other young farmers in the area. So we gave Collins further training to become a mentor and pass on his knowledge.

“As a mentor, I support young poultry farmers with information on how to monitor their flock for diseases, how to manage their business finances, and even where to seek out financing opportunities.”

Collins is now a passionate advocate for poultry farming in his local area. Compared to other agricultural practices such as fish farming and growing sugar cane, poultry requires relatively little land, and has far cheaper start-up costs.

“There is a ready market for chicken and eggs in the region. If young people form groups to jointly market their products, they have a better chance of making good profits from their farming.”

Collins is one of 6,000 young farmers we’re working with in rural Kenya. By bringing people together and helping them share their new skills with many more people, we’re putting regenerative, profitable farming back into the heart of communities.



With training, Collins has grown his business and become part of a vibrant rural economy in Kisumu.

Working with the private sector



Explaining the pilot to Yogi Tea staff.



Making organic compost.

In Rwanda, we’re working with smallholder farmers, international tea company Yogi Tea, and Sorwathe, one of the largest producers of Rwandan tea. The aim of the project is to boost farmer incomes through diversifying crops, and to improve sustainability through regenerative agriculture techniques.

In common with smallholders around the world, Rwandan farmers face increasing challenges from the changing climate. Their plots tend to be small, and on steep hillsides where soil erosion is a big problem.

We’re working with farmers to introduce new botanicals crops – such as lemongrass – to their tea crops. The botanicals add an extra income opportunity, and, in the case of lemongrass, can be planted in a position where they reduce soil erosion and help retain water.

Adopting regenerative farming practices is also key to this pilot, and includes activities such as producing

a special organic compost using manure from their cattle and vegetal matter. This helps maintain soil quality, boosts yields, and reduces the amount farmers have to spend on buying organic fertiliser.

John Chettleborough, our agricultural markets lead, said: **“The challenges faced by small-scale farmers in Rwanda are complex. But a collaborative approach like this that involves learning with local and international companies and the farmers themselves, provides us with a means to find appropriate, long lasting solutions.”**

At Practical Action, we’re always looking for opportunities to take solutions to the next level. The learning that comes from this small pilot will enable Yogi Tea, and potentially others, to scale up the approaches and reach the 2,000+ farmers they source tea from in this area.

A gift from you today can help us get more innovative projects like these off the ground. Please visit: practicalaction.org/smallworld



Turning the tables on **CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEPAL**

Dev Bhatta, project manager in Nepal, updates us on progress so far.



In 2021, you helped raise £3.53 million, including £1.6 million in match funding from the UK Government. I'm excited to say that the *Turning the Tables on Climate Change in Nepal* project is underway, and I'd like to share what we have already achieved in these early stages.

We are working with marginalised, climate-vulnerable communities and local government to create financial stability and climate resilience. Overall, this work will directly improve the lives of 6,000 people living in eight communities in the districts of: Dang, Rolpa and Rukum East. It will also create positive benefits for almost 30,000 more.

These districts are remote and mountainous. It's a hard place to make a living as a farmer, especially as the effects of climate change bite, reducing winter rains and making the monsoon season more unpredictable.

On top of these challenges, our communities are having to overcome social disadvantages. Addressing gender inequality is an important aspect of this work, and 80% of the farmers we work with will be women. Men from marginalised groups and people with disabilities will also be included.

The secret to success here will be improved farming techniques, and creating a dependable water supply powered by solar energy. We'll also provide business training to help farmers connect with new markets, access affordable finance, and improve their incomes.

So far, we have been laying solid foundations so this work can get off to the best start. An essential part of Practical Action's method is getting everyone who has a stake in the project on-board from day one. We've met with communities, local government, the women's network, and many other people to make sure we have a really in-depth understanding of what's already working in the communities, and what isn't, what skills and knowledge already exist, and what we need to build on.

After establishing our project office in the heart of the Dang community, and putting our expert staff in place here, everyone is ready and excited to begin putting some truly ambitious plans into action.

Thank you to all of you who made this project possible. I will keep you updated on progress in the near future.

Junmaya and her community are learning climate-resilient farming techniques.



...AND IN SUDAN

Mutaz Eltayeb, project manager in Sudan, reports on the first year of the project.



In 2020, you helped raise £3.15 million, including £1.48 of match funding from the UK Government, for our *Turning the Tables on Climate Change in Sudan* project. Our work with communities here is a year further along and it's exciting to see just how much has been achieved in that time.

I have been impressed to see the incredible energy and positive spirit of the communities we're working with. Thanks to their enthusiasm, we've been able to connect with even more people than we planned in year one. 13,798 participants have benefitted directly, with a further 17,122 people indirectly.

The area of Sudan we are working in is one of the most drought-prone in the country. Soil degradation and lack of access to water has left communities struggling to survive. In the first year of the project, we have all made great progress towards changing this, together.

Currently, we are close to finishing construction of a new dam in an area called Korga Norga. We are also working with the community to repair an existing dam in Aza Garfa, which will provide more than a thousand farmers with water for crop irrigation. In Garmi, we have started repairing and expanding an existing *haffir* (a reservoir). The new *haffir* will provide more than seven villages with water for drinking and irrigation.

In Tartora and Derma, local pastoralists helped us identify ideal locations to construct two hand pumps along routes they use. These will provide water for

their livestock. We are also finalising plans for two solar powered water points in Goz Hayi and Goz Alnaeem. These should be in place by June 2022.

An important aspect of our project is to address social challenges by promoting gender equality and the involvement of people with disabilities. From the beginning, women have been involved equally in all project planning and implementation. Their views and needs are captured in community action plans, and fair representation and participation is ensured in all project activities.

We have also run specific training for women pastoralists, focusing on dairy and leather production. This included new business and marketing skills so that participants can develop stable incomes and sustainable livelihoods.

Recognising the importance of people with disabilities and their role in the community is something that people are very keen to push. This has been reflected in the 237 people that are now involved in key roles and project implementation so far.

I look forward to sharing more progress soon. Thank you again for making this work possible.

Transformative projects like these can only happen with your support. Please make a gift today at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

We're beginning to see the desert returning to life in North Darfur.

SARAH'S Travel blog



Our Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Roberts, recently travelled to meet communities we work with in Kenya and Rwanda. In this excerpt from her blog, she shares some of her experiences.

In my first eight months as Chief Executive of Practical Action, I have read so many project reports, imbibed the videos and podcasts from our programmes, analysed the impact data, and discussed our approach virtually with staff from all over the world to get under the skin of the work we do. It has all helped, but being able to travel overseas and meet people in person has changed so much for me.



Visiting the Nyabiheke refugee camp in Rwanda vividly brought home the transformational impact of our renewable energy work. The 'camps' are more like small rural towns, with multiple generations of long-term residents. Now they have streetlights, and solar lights at home, enabling all sorts of positive activities to happen safely after dark.



In Kenya, I met Evelyn, one of the farmers we worked with through our TREYL project. Evelyn showed me how she had set up a successful seed business with other women farmers she mentors. In her hydroponics shed, Evelyn grows food for her cows, which provide milk and compost. She breeds tilapia fish to sell, using solar energy to run her ponds.



Some of the world's best tea is grown on Rwanda's 'thousand hills', but it's challenging terrain. I met with farmers and tea companies to find ways to increase farmer incomes.



Good organic fertiliser is essential for growing tea and lemongrass. Producing it on-site keeps input and transport costs down, increasing income for farmers.



The tea farms were remote and hard to reach. Luckily, Practical Action employs great drivers. Christine is one of the few female drivers in Rwanda.

Why I support Practical Action...

We were thrilled to hear from Radio 4's *The Food Programme* presenter, Leyla Kazim, who has recently become a supporter.



Leyla Kazim first discovered Practical Action last year, when one of our leaflets fell out of a magazine. When she read about our work and our approach, she felt a strong connection: "I'd never come across an organisation like this that resonated so much with my own ways of living and personal beliefs," Leyla told us.

"I think the thing that appeals to me most is that Practical Action is not about painting over rust, or putting a bandage over a wound. It's not just a reactive thing – it's very proactive. And it's about actually equipping and empowering people on the ground to improve their own situations. Giving them the tools they need, the knowledge they need, and the support they need to be able to prepare and adapt for their ever-changing situations."

Welcome aboard Leyla, we're glad to have you with us!

Amazing fundraisers

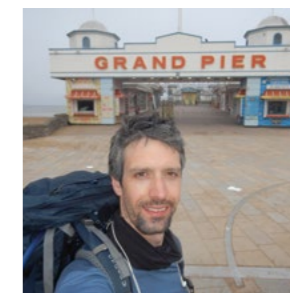
We love hearing from supporters who are coming up with ingenious ways to raise funds to support our work.



Richard Abramson has been a Practical Action supporter for many years. When his 70th birthday approached, and people were asking what he wanted, he decided that he didn't really need anything, and so he set up a Just Giving page and asked people to make a donation to Practical Action instead.

"My friends were very generous, raising nearly £1,200. I feel that as well as the cash raised, spreading the knowledge of the good work done by the charity was important. The donors seemed to appreciate giving to something useful; and perhaps it relieved them of the burden of choosing a present as well!"

Thanks so much Richard for your thoughtful and generous support.



Ben Harridge wanted to take on an epic challenge to raise funds for Practical Action and help communities adapt to climate change. He has decided to walk the Appalachian Trail – a hiking route that passes through 14 states in the US, between Georgia and Maine. He's hoping to raise £1 for every mile of the 2,194-mile journey, which he'll begin in May.

"As climate change increases then it becomes harder for people living on the margins as crops die and disease and disasters spread. I wanted to support a charity that focused on helping people to be more sustainable."

Good luck Ben, and thank you so much.

Award-winning work in Bolivia

Our team in Bolivia have won an award for their work to end hunger.



Congratulations to our team in Bolivia, whose work with rural farming communities has been recognised by the Bolivian Chamber of Private Businessmen, the UN System and the UN Global Compact, with an SDG2 Zero Hunger award.

In the past year, we've worked with more than 2,000 rural farmers to introduce renewable energy and climate resilient farming techniques, boosting farm

productivity and opening up new markets for selling produce.

Victor Yapu from Practical Action in Bolivia said: "We would like to share this recognition with our partners and supporters, but above all with the communities and organisations with whom we have been working since 2010. We believe that small actions can make big changes, and in particular, we believe in the transformative power of clean energy as an engine for improving the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector, promoting decent work and economic growth."

Discover more about our work with farmers in Bolivia at: practicalaction.org/smallworld



Farmers in Bolivia have developed new skills to grow abundant crops, despite the erratic weather.

THANK YOU

Thanks so much to everyone who supported our *Choose a better future now* fundraising campaign at the start of this year. Together, you raised an amazing £1.06 million.

Your support will kickstart massive change, helping us work directly with six million people by 2025, improving the lives of 20 million more.

Thanks to you, many more people will become climate pioneers, like Bibiana (right), whose sustainable cookstoves business is helping protect her community's health and reduce local deforestation.

To meet more climate pioneers, visit: practicalaction.org/smallworld

CHOOSE
A BETTER FUTURE NOW.



We welcome the Terra Carta

We're proud to support a radical initiative to put sustainability at the heart of the world's economies.



Eight hundred years ago, the Magna Carta created a step change for humanity – inspiring a new age where the fundamental rights and liberty of people were central. It is in that spirit that our Patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales launched the Terra Carta, which seeks to do the same for Nature.

The Terra Carta, a key part of his Sustainable Markets Initiative, provides a roadmap for accelerating progress towards a more sustainable future and tackling the climate emergency. It's a bold vision for a future that works for Nature, People and Planet – a vision we share, of course. We're very proud to support this charter.

The Terra Carta sets ambitious goals for transforming the world's economies through collaborations between the private sector, governments, individuals and NGOs. Two Practical Action projects recently featured in the

Terra Carta impact report as examples of what's possible: The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, and the Global Distributors Collective. Both of these innovative projects demonstrate how smart collaboration can transform systems to benefit millions of people.



The Terra Carta impact report showcases our Global Distributors Collective.

To find out more, read our blog at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

