

# Horticulture Innovation Lab: Trellis Fund

## Engaging U.S. graduate students in international development

The Trellis Fund connects organizations in developing countries with U.S. graduate students who have agricultural expertise, generating benefits for both the students and the in-country institutions. Together, they collaborate on short-term projects to address horticultural challenges faced by local farmers.

### How it works:

Organizations in developing countries are invited to propose a horticultural project for a \$4,000 grant and specify the type of expert support they seek in a U.S. graduate student. Trellis projects may address issues of horticultural production, pests, soil fertility, water management, postharvest practices, value addition, nutrition, and marketing.

The Trellis Fund matches the organization to a graduate student with related expertise. Graduate students from the Horticulture Innovation Lab's partner institutions are invited to participate:

- University of California, Davis
- North Carolina State University
- University of Florida
- University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Selected graduate students work remotely with the organization as consultants on projects for a minimum of 100 hours. Students travel for approximately 2 weeks of in-country work, to gain a better understanding of local situations and execute parts of the project. Travel expenses are covered, and students receive a \$300 fellowship upon completion.

### Achievements:

Since 2011, the Horticulture Innovation Lab has awarded 76 projects to 60 organizations in 17 countries. These grants have supported:

- 12,471 training participants (65% women)
- 260+ demonstration plots
- 374+ training and extension meetings



*UH Mānoa graduate student Brad Reil, right, talks with farmers in Uganda about fruit fly management, during a Trellis Fund project led by the National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI).*



*In Nepal, Rachel Suits of NC State works with a local graduate student on a field trial with the Ecological Services Centre.*



*Nick Reitz of UC Davis prepares mangos in a solar dryer, as part of a Trellis Fund project led by Methodist University College Ghana.*

<http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/trellis>





## Trellis Fund: 2011 to now

### Advancing horticulture by connecting farmers, students, and in-country organizations

The Horticulture Innovation Lab's Trellis Fund connects organizations in developing countries with U.S. graduate students who have agricultural expertise, generating benefits for both the students and the in-country institutions. Together, they collaborate on short-term projects to address horticultural challenges faced by local farmers.

Started in 2011 by UC Davis graduate students, the Trellis Fund endeavored to support local in-country organizations that are already well connected to smallholder farmers, while also providing international experience to tomorrow's agricultural researchers. Organizations apply for a small horticulture-focused grant, and each grant awardee is matched to a knowledgeable graduate student who serves as a consultant on the project.

Find blog posts, videos, photos and details about Trellis Fund projects at <http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/trellis>

**12,471**  
participants trained

including 65 percent women. Trellis Fund projects support smallholder farmers with new knowledge on topics from soil health to postharvest processing. In addition to supporting more than 374 extension meetings, Trellis outreach has also established more than 260 demonstration plots.

**60** in-country organizations

supported in 17 countries with Trellis Fund grants. Small grant awards of \$2,000–\$4,000 lead to big impact, with a total of \$182,000 invested. Groups can build off each activity and receive multiple Trellis Fund grants over time.

**76** students applying lessons globally

from the Horticulture Innovation Lab's partner institutions — including North Carolina State University, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, University of Florida, UC Davis and Cornell University. Student alumni have continued into careers in domestic agricultural research, agricultural extension, and international agricultural development.

## Trellis Fund Summit in 2019

In March 2019 the Horticulture Innovation Lab hosted more than 30 alumni of the Trellis Fund program — both students and grant awardees — from 10 countries for the Trellis Fund Summit. Part of an ongoing commitment to adaptive management, the Trellis Fund Summit reflected on program success, lessons learned, and ideas for the future. Trellis Fund Summit participants also attended the Horticulture Innovation Lab's "Colorful Harvest" conference, participated in a workshop focused on fundraising and grant writing, and visited a local farm.