

FISCAL YEAR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# PFS FORWARD





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# From Our CEO

Dear PFS community,

Since I took the helm of our organization in July, I've spent the past three and a half months touring Africa, visiting Partners in Food Solutions staff and getting to know clients and volunteers.

I am humbled to take on the responsibility of powering up the African food processing sector by working with our dedicated corporate partners and volunteers. I extend my deep gratitude to the founders of PFS, including Jeff Dykstra, who led our organization for 16 years.

Leading PFS brings my career full circle. I was born in Zimbabwe and have worked across the continent on various parts of the food system. The entrepreneurial spirit of those processing agricultural commodities and food products in Africa is inspiring – they are literally attempting the near impossible, in order to feed the continent.

Over the course of its 16 years, PFS has had the discipline to stick to its core objective of strengthening African food processing companies by engaging volunteers to provide





wraparound services strengthening technical capacity, human capital, business practices, and more. Our approach differs from a typical NGO, which provides a fixed amount of money for a program that lasts a fixed amount of time. Instead, our goal is to sustain these relationships over the long term using our volunteers' expertise, in the hopes of creating institutions that, like General Mills, can last for 150 years and more.

There is no shortage of work to be done to take meaningful steps forward in achieving this vision. I want to build the next generation of food processing professionals through our apprenticeship program. I seek to grow our pool of partner companies, volunteers, and sectors in which we can deliver magnified impact.



Our future sees PFS taking on bold new projects, stepping into spaces like the rice processing industry that allow us to have an outsize influence of shaping an entire sector. West Africa consumes over 13 million metric tons of rice annually, yet it only produces about eight million metric tons. Improving production, and fortifying the output, can have a massive effect on economic prosperity and nutrition.

Our partnership doesn't only allow food processing businesses to reap the rewards of how PFS volunteers help them grow their businesses, it supports broad access to healthy, nutritious food by supporting farmers with steady buyers and stabilizing household incomes. This will reverberate long after PFS is no longer there.



I am honored to lead PFS into this next chapter. We have a bold vision for how to grow our organization, multiplying the positive effect we have on food businesses across Africa.

PFS forward,

Mandla Nkomo

# Impact and Reach



**2,301**  
ENGAGED  
VOLUNTEERS

**170,558**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



**2,417**  
CLIENTS

total assisted or trained  
since inception

PFS client companies  
in Africa have

**1.8 MILLION**  
SMALLHOLDER  
FARMERS

in their supply chain and  
directly employ

**43,000**  
EMPLOYEES

**41%**

of our client  
companies  
are owned  
and/or managed

**BY WOMEN**

**111**  
BILLION

safer, more  
nutritious and  
affordable  
meal servings



Acefods



## DEEPENING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS TO UNLOCK SUCCESS

When he first heard of Partners in Food Solutions, Obinna Okenwa was skeptical that the kind of comprehensive support PFS provides to food processing businesses could really be offered for free. It seemed too good to be true.

But as the partnership between PFS and the Nigerian spice company where he is a manager began, Okenwa (pictured) immediately saw the value PFS brought both to AACE Foods and his professional career.

“Working with Partners in Food Solutions is one of the best things anybody in the industry can imagine to have,” said Okenwa. “Anybody who is in this space that does not have a touch or relationship with Partners in Food Solutions is missing out big time.”

AACE Foods, founded in 2009, produces spices and other food products for the flavor-conscious Nigerian customer and export market. It has collaborated with PFS on seven projects over the course of five years, delivering on PFS’ strategy to go deeper with clients.

This strategy, known as the three-by-nine ambition - aimed to provide nine services over three years to each PFS client. This approach of cultivating longer-term relationships while



providing a variety of types of services allows PFS to penetrate deeper within a business and leads to higher economic growth and employment creation, an increase in crop purchases from smallholder farmers, and a higher production of safe, affordable, and nutritious foods.

“The relationship and partnership I have built over the years with Partners in Food Solutions transcends beyond just trying to make a product better and meet basic needs. It went to the point of developing me as a person, exposing me to other things and building capacity personally,” Okenwa said.

He received mentorship from a PFS volunteer from corporate partner dsm-firmenich that led him to earn his MBA from a university in the Netherlands. This opened his eyes to new administrative strategies that have helped transform AACE Foods, Okenwa said.

With the help of PFS volunteers, AACE Foods has also received an international

food safety certification, designed a new facility, developed a new packaged snack, and created new shelf life standards.

Completing food safety certifications are a large hurdle for small and mid-sized food processing businesses. They don’t often have the staff capacity or regulatory expertise required to complete the paperwork and rigorous documentation, and make the necessary changes to operations or facilities to get into compliance. But doing so supports a huge amount of business growth for companies like AACE Foods that can expand to international markets and B2B sales, unlocking new markets and larger commercial customers.

Working with PFS, AACE Foods received a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification, a dominant international food safety system.

“It has transformed our business in terms of the global reach. Right now we can export to Europe and we can export to other countries in the world because

our product is HACCP certified,” Okenwa said. “Internally, quality awareness and engagement drastically increased and it has helped us to build the business.”

A new shelf life protocol developed with the help of PFS volunteers contributed to receiving the HACCP certification, creating a system for verifying how long a product remained safe to eat while stored at different temperatures after being packaged.

AACE Foods can also export processed spices, not just bulk raw materials, garnering a higher price on the international market. Business has “increased astronomically” with this edge, Okenwa said, with volume growing since 2020 and allowing AACE Foods to compete with foreign brands.

Certifications don’t just create business opportunities with other companies, they also strengthen one of the most important currencies a food business can have: customer trust.

“It’s a statement to let your customers know, ‘Yes, we do produce safe food,’” said PFS Nigeria Program Manager Toju Ukubeyinje.

PFS also provided consulting services to help AACE Foods launch a new snack, expanding their product offerings beyond raw spices and diversifying their revenue streams. Jaracrunch is a nutritious, cheese-flavored snack made of corn and bean flour. With the help of PFS, AACE Foods designed the packaging for the new product, expertise Okenwa said they lacked before the partnership.

AACE Foods’ board has directed the company to continue to diversify its product offerings, and two additional snacks are being developed with PFS. Okenwa said the company hopes to see the same success with these new products it has experienced with Jaracrunch.

The company’s expansion has allowed it to rapidly increase its hiring pace, growing from about 60 staff in 2019 to nearly 150 today. It also helps create employment opportunities outside AACE Foods, as it expands its distributor and merchandiser contracts. Most importantly, Okenwa says, it strengthens its ability to enhance farmer livelihoods.

“Our partnership is to grow these local farmers,” Okenwa said. “That is the mission of the founders of AACE Foods. Their main intention is how to reach the smallholder farmers, support them, and get money into their hands to continue to do agrobusiness. AACE Foods has done extremely well in this area.”



“Internally, quality awareness and engagement drastically increased and it has helped us to build the business.”

Obinna Okenwa  
Manager, AACE Foods

# CREATING LASTING IMPACT THROUGH CONTINUOUS SERVICE

The Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing (AINFP) was a six-year, \$20 million public-private partnership between PFS, Technoserve, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that wrapped up this year. It sought to boost nutritional outcomes for people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia, and create more profitable markets for farmers.

PFS committed \$10 million in in-kind volunteer contributions to AINFP, completing over 33,000 volunteer hours to fulfill that goal. PFS utilized staff and retirees from our seven corporate partner companies to solve technical and business-related challenges, with the most common service request from clients relating to food safety and quality. Volunteers also assisted with development of new products, business plans, marketing plans, financial management systems, and more.

Bill Boyden, a plant group leader with Ardent Mills who has volunteered with PFS for more than six years, served as a portfolio

team lead on the AINFP project, helping with scoping and ensuring expectations and deliverables were clear on all sides after Technoserve staff identified clients that would benefit from the expertise of highly skilled PFS volunteers.

“When you get the opportunity to work with a client either as a volunteer or in this role as portfolio team lead and to really hear the positive impact that has had for the clients, I was really blown away initially,” Boyden said. “That just makes you want to do more.”

Each country in the program had three portfolio team leads, who because of their extensive experience with PFS were able to translate the nuance and context of each project in a way corporate volunteers could understand. Boyden had volunteered with PFS for a number of years before taking on the role of portfolio team lead for Tanzania. It is a great fit for volunteers who have completed several projects with PFS and are looking for a new way to apply and grow their skills, he said.

PFS has worked with Technoserve since the very beginning, and the PFS now has its own staff in Africa, partnership programs like this one with USAID and Technoserve continue to give PFS access to expanded resources and staff which increased our country footprint, with programs in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi

that presented access to untapped markets and impact. Technoserve's long lasting presence in these countries meant they had comprehensive data on the food processing business, and could see where pain points were.

Technoserve staff were the "boots on the ground," said Boyden, providing invaluable scoping of companies to help facilitate projects with volunteers. This included data gathering, and taking pictures and video of facilities and equipment.

After a career at Cargill and Ardent Mills, Jim Madich became involved as a PFS volunteer in his retirement. He was looking for a meaningful way to give back as well as stay mentally challenged after his career concluded.

Madich saw his role as a portfolio team lead as a facilitator to make things easier on the volunteers, eliminating any barriers they may encounter when working with clients. It was fulfilling, he said, because he could quickly see the fruits of his labor in the impact the work had on African food processors he was supporting.

"The projects that we work on typically might be nine to 12 months. You have a very clear start, you have an end, and you can see if you've had an impact in solving their problem and helping their business move forward," Madich said. "It makes them a stronger company. And It allows them to access capital as a result. You can't go into a bank and say 'I'd like some money.' You have to go in with a plan."

"The true testament is that those clients come back and they want more from PFS," Madich added.

In total, through the AINFP program PFS supported 172 food processing companies with 360 customized services, with expertise shared by over 650 volunteers. During that time, PFS volunteers helped clients develop 90 new products and saw 16 companies receive quality and safety certifications.



Nati Larrea, General Mills



Jim Madich, Cargill Retiree



Bill Boyden, Ardent Mills



Nati Larrea served as portfolio team lead in Malawi. She has worked for General Mills for over 20 years in a host of roles related to food safety and quality. She became a volunteer mindful that she had valuable expertise to share, but also knew she would benefit from the experience, as well.

Larrea developed relationships with other volunteers who work for other corporate partners, and exchanged information about best practices at different companies.

“I am really grateful for this opportunity to have supported the different individuals and different companies,” Larrea said. “We might think that we do not have enough expertise or enough knowledge to support the different clients, but then you realize that just sharing a bit of your knowledge is a big deal.”

Volunteers say the experience is incredibly fulfilling, with client relationships evolving into friendships as they learn about one another’s lives beyond the project. Since the AINFP program has ended, Larrea has become a PFS ambassador at General Mills, speaking about her experience with her colleagues to encourage them to become involved and volunteer.

And there are plenty of opportunities for new and returning volunteers. PFS is taking lessons learned and scale its impact across the continent through a new project with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Supporting African Processors: Deploying Industry Expertise and Knowhow project focuses on priority value chains that have the capacity for domestic market growth as well as providing nutritional benefits. The project focuses on rice processors in West Africa to reduce the \$3 billion importation bill and fortify the crop for school feeding programs. In East Africa, the project will support avocado, onion, and potato farmers.

With hundreds of clients served, the AINFP program has succeeded in helping African food processing companies not only survive, but to thrive.





# FY24 Metrics

## DASHBOARD OF TARGETS & RESULTS

### ACTUAL



## SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS FOR FY24



### CLIENT SERVICES

33%	PROJECT
31%	MENTORING
18%	ASK AN EXPERT
7%	APPRENTICESHIP
5%	EQUIPMENT CONSULTATION
3%	CLIENT FINANCING
2%	CERTIFICATION
1%	PFS CONSULTATION
1%	FINANCE CONSULTATION



### VOLUNTEER EXPERTISE

33%	QUALITY AND REGULATORY
10%	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
10%	MANUFACTURING AND OPERATIONS
9%	BUSINESS STRATEGY
8%	MARKETING AND BRAND DESIGN
5%	FINANCE
5%	PROJECT ENGINEERING
4%	PROCESS DEVELOPMENT
3%	EDUCATION AND TRAINING
3%	NUTRITION AND FORTIFICATION
3%	HUMAN RESOURCES

# Board of Directors

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# 2024 PFS VOLUNTEERS

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Nadia Ahmad	Sylvester Asiamah	Luana Batista Maia	Emil Bogdanov	Kenny Byers	Steve Clawson	Aiesha Dempster	Thierry Duvanel
Mohamed Ait Chaib	John Athanatos	Florence Baylou	Mircea Boistean	Jacinta Byrnes	Brandon Coleman	Kamy Devaguptapu	Shelagh Dwyer
Funso Ajigbo	Kirsten Aune	Anne-C Bayne	Celia Bokesa	Grant Cable	Chris Collin	Abhishek Dhall	Eric Dy
Morenike Akinkoye	Ebenezer Baah Konadu	Mark Beakhouse	Will Bonifant	Jacob Cafilin	Benoit Commeny	Anil Dharmadhikari	Nat-Edem Dzamefe
Nathaniel Akowuah Gyasi	Rita Baeza	Simon Béatrix	Vera Boor	Chloe Calvert	Halla Congress	Dafne Di Sciorio	Katie Eaches
Abdelkrim Alahiane	Mukasa Bagonluri	Mike Becker	James Borek	Dianne Campbell	Rick Conner	Valerie Diehl	Andrew Echlin
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Illeme Amegatcher	Ronald Bandt	Kaity Berg	Barry Brakenhoff	Catherine Carville	Claire Daley	Jordan Donmoyer Donmoyer	Jeff Enz
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Christopher Owens	Ruben Quimbayo	Oscar Rodriguez	Sarah Schramke	Madalina Stan	Meghan Thue	Jason Wilds	Marian Van Vlack	Jason Wilds
Mary Padasak	Roberto Quintana	Neal Rogers	Peter Schreiber	Xin Stannard (Liu)	Cory Thyfault	Matthew Williams	Farah Varisco	Matthew Williams
Nikki Pangilinan	Roy Rahal	Tamara Rogers	Shamonique Schrick	Philip Steinbrunner	Biniam Tiezazu	Brian Williams	Moises Vazquez Ramirez	Brian Williams
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	Natalie Rau	David Roubain	Madison Sendlock	Terry Stevens	Salifou Traore	Ksenia Yakubovskaya	Mike Viland	Ksenia Yakubovskaya
	Victoria Rau			Erica Story	Monique Tredoux			



# FY2024 Donors

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