

SPRING 2011

20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

INGEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS



PEDALS FOR PROGRESS TURNS TWENTY

BY DAVID SCHWEIDENBACK

During the looming Persian Gulf crisis of 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, demand for my carpentry skills dried to a trickle. I needed work, or at least something to do. I decided that if I couldn't find gainful employment I could at least volunteer to try to help someone else. I recalled my time in the Peace Corps and one man in Sucúa, Ecuador who had changed his life because he gained the mobility of a bicycle. I saw bikes every week out on the curb on trash day. Why not collect a dozen unwanted bikes and send them back to Ecuador? Seemed easy enough.

Fast forward twenty years and 129,477 bikes later. Nope, it wasn't easy. I was wrong about that, but it sure has been effective and fun. P4P has become the life's work I didn't know, back then, that I had been looking for. It's more than just collecting old bikes. It's economic development, small business generation, micro-credit financing, import/export regulation, international shipping and commerce... and the list goes on. We've made positive interventions in the lives of tens of thousands of families, helped lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, transformed local economies, encouraged education, and spawned a group of clone organizations now doing the same all over the world.

But what of the next twenty years? The immediate future of P4P is written in two parts. First is the highly specialized system that, with the help of many good people domestically, produces our initial product: containers of bicycles, parts, and accessories, along with sewing machines, for international shipment. The second is our overseas distribution partners and an insatiable demand for mobility. With funding, our domestic production system could easily produce more bikes in the next twenty years than it did the first and our partners, current and future, are ready and willing to take them all. There are dozens of good partnerships around the world, waiting—we just cannot produce enough to satisfy their needs.

P4P is a charity and charity requires donation. We have great

potential—but the total number of bicycles we can deliver overseas is very firmly based upon the amount of funds we allocate to collection, not our potential. Our greatest need by far is not assistance with the cost of shipping containers of bikes; those are the glamorous big-ticket items and are relatively easy to solicit funds for. P4P's needs lie with the costs of collecting the bikes initially. Basically, it is the cost of running a trucking company in New Jersey. It's not sexy; it's hard to raise funds for maintenance and diesel fuel, but it's the U.S. expenses that fill the containers we ship. Those production costs are eternally underfunded. This is the chief limit to what we can do internationally and is the greatest threat to P4P's future existence.

A longer reading of the future is hard to do. One thing is certain: an increasing percentage of our bikes have been heading East, as opposed to South, and this trend will continue. Central America has accounted for 67% of the bicycles P4P has ever shipped. But a bicycle market has been firmly established there now and normal "for profit" bicycle shops are beginning to be able to satisfy the market. Going forward, a smaller percentage of our bikes will go there. Meanwhile, Africa has accounted for 18% of our bikes shipped.

And even though shipping costs are higher, the proportion of bikes we ship going to Africa has increased dramatically in recent years. Likewise in Eastern Europe, which remains poor but is rapidly liberalizing. Only 2.5% of our total bike output has ever been sent there, but that percentage will significantly increase in the next ten years.

Looking back at the last twenty years it is natural to ask: was it worth all the effort? Yes, it was. In fact, it's felt like raising a child. I've been lifting and banging my knuckles on bikes for twenty years now. I don't believe I'll still be running P4P twenty years from now. However, we have put in place the necessary structure so the organization can and will continue regardless of who is doing the lifting and banging. P4P has been my third child, unruly and obstinate at times, but with a good heart. February 11th, 2011 will mark its 20th birthday. Happy Birthday. You're now an adult. Continue making us proud.

20
YEARS
35 COUNTRIES
129,447 BICYCLES
1,766 SEWING
MACHINES

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Congrats to the Peace Corps on their
50th Anniversary this year.
1961 - 2011



BIKES TAKE ROOT IN THE BALKANS BY JOLA FOTO

Throughout the cities of western and northern Europe public bicycle services have been established that encourage and increase the use of bicycles as healthy and ecologically-sound transport. Through these services subscribers can rent bikes in easily accessible locations throughout the city and when finished return them to any other convenient station in the network. PASS has long wished to emulate this type of system in Albania and by the end of December, 2010 we will have four stations set up around Tirana, the capital.

Tirana Community Bicycle, the first bicycle-sharing program in the Balkans, is an initiative of the PASS organization undertaken with funding



support from the Open Society Foundation of Albania [note: OSFA is a Soros Foundation democratization program for Albania] and a generous contribution from Pedals for Progress which donated the first 500 bicycles. Thanks to P4P's contribution, our project was stimulated and we were encouraged to advance and expand it.

The city of Tirana, and especially its center, is quite suitable for transportation by bicycle. The downtown area is dense, the terrain is flat, and the climate is mild. The short distances and easy conditions make cycling a fast and practical way of moving in the center of the city, and may be the best means of meeting the needs of the citizens of Tirana. Given the heavy traffic situation in the center of the city and air pollution from CO2 emissions, we believe that this service will be a valuable contribution to the community.

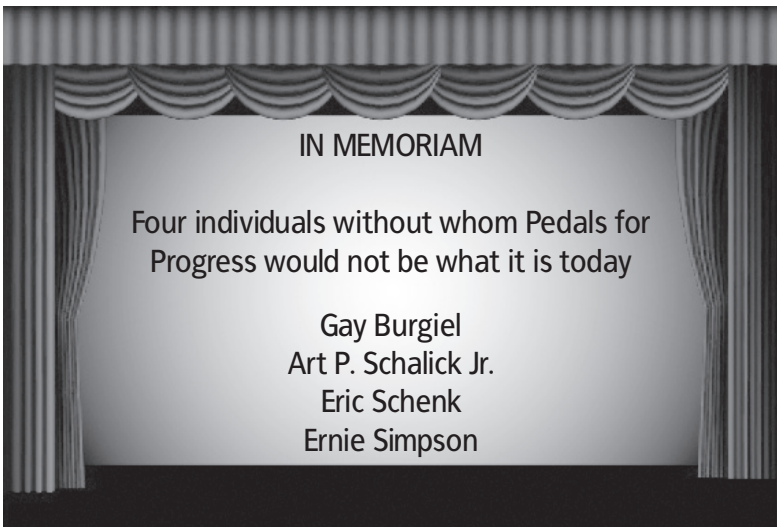
PASS has been promoting the new system for some time before the placement of the public bicycle stations. In the course of our other social activities, and in conjunction with our P4P-supported bike retail shop Eco-Bicycle, we have involved the citizens of Tirana by soliciting suggestions regarding form, logo, and slogan. We have also organized awareness activities with the young people of Tirana. For instance, on September 22nd, a national activity day called "A Day Without Cars," we distributed over 200 bicycles in the Youth Park, Mother Theresa Square, and the Ministry of Education for the "transport by bicycle"

learning activity. In January, we will donate 30 bicycles and organize bike training for the children.

We hope that the Tirana Community Bicycle service will be properly consolidated in 2011, with a targeted number of daily uses of the public bicycles by citizens. By doing this we wish to promote the use of bicycles as a mode of transport for commuting or performing other daily activities and increase their use in our city.



Bev Merchant, our office manager, participated in several alternative gift fairs this past holiday season! Thanks Bev for all of your hard work.



You don't have to wait for your InGear to learn what Pedals for Progress is up to! You can sign up for our email newsletter by visiting www.p4p.org and clicking "Subscribe."

MISSION STATEMENT

TO DELIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AID BY
RECYCLING BICYCLES AND SEWING
MACHINES IN THE U.S. AND SHIPPING THEM TO
THE PEOPLE OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD



A big thank you to the Tohikou Middle School in Doylestown, PA for their great collection efforts over the past 7 years! This fall they collected 75 bicycles and \$2,000.

You can donate to Pedals for Progress immediately! Please visit www.p4p.org and click "DONATE NOW"

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PUTTING USED BIKES TO

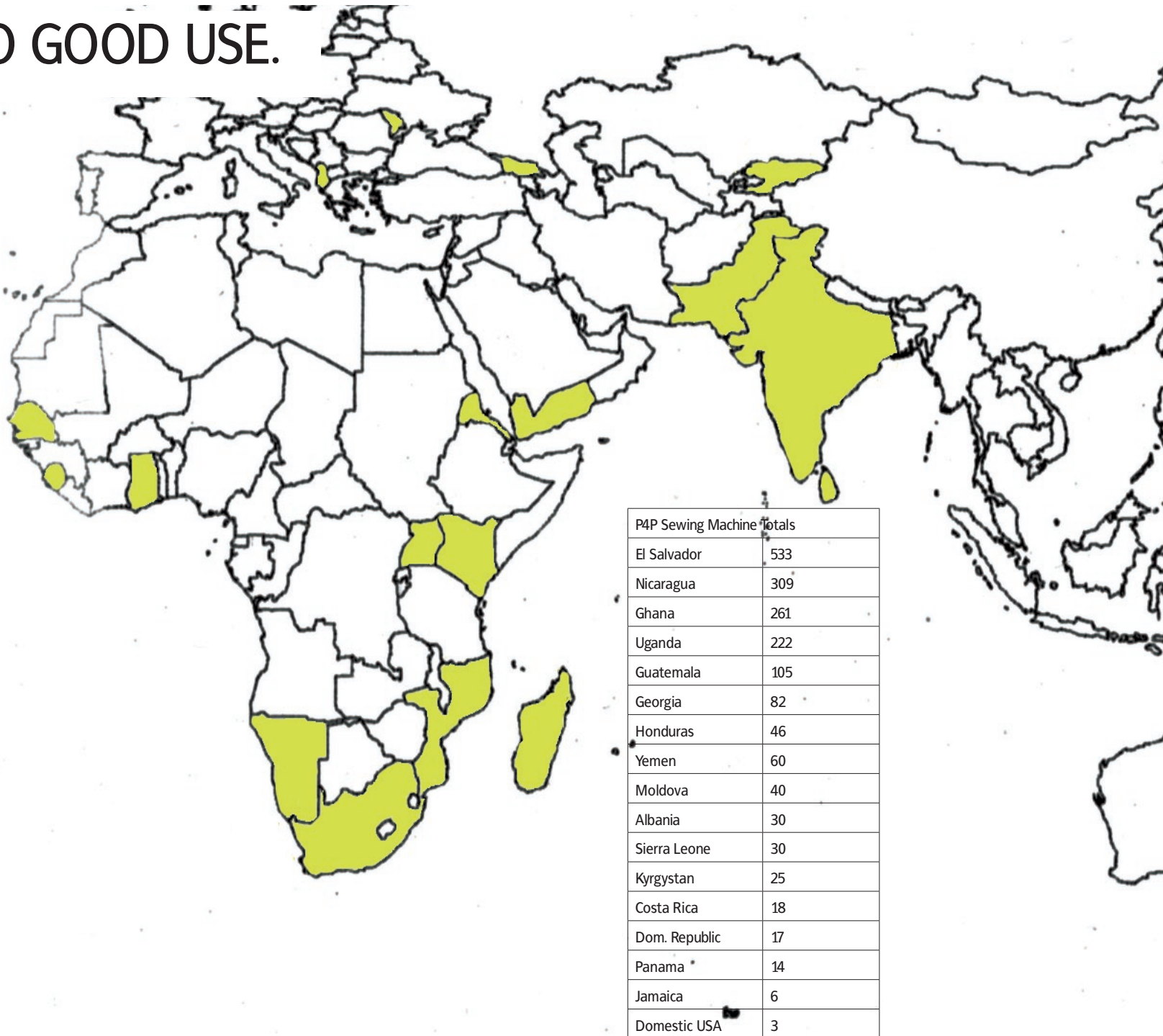
Nicaragua	37,072 - Active
El Salvador	23,881
Ghana	10,690 - Active
Barbados	7,876
Honduras	7,376
Panama	6,520
Guatemala	5,777 - Active
Uganda	3,698 - Active
Dom. Republic	3,560
Moldova	2,770 - Active
Eritrea	2,761
South Africa	2,180
Colombia	1,699
Ecuador	1,555
Fiji	1,012
Sierra Leone	938
Senegal	890
Namibia	824
Mozambique	800
Solomon Islands	623
Jamaica	600
Mexico	553
Haiti	523
Sri Lanka	487
Albania	463 - Active
Venezuela	411
Kenya	403
Pakistan	400
Domestic USA	220
Peru	143
Madagascar	60
India	18



2010 PEDAL WRENCH AWARD WINNERS



GOOD USE.



Every year, Pedals for Progress likes to give out its prestigious Pedal Wench of the Year Award to volunteers who, through outstanding individual and group effort, have collected large numbers of bicycles for us to ship overseas. This year we are pleased to have three great honorees. In 2010, P4P would like to honor (from left to right) Warren Rorden, Henry Hansen, and Gerry Agasar. A significant amount of our annual bicycle volume is collected by Rotary Clubs—over 35 percent of our bikes pass through the hands of Rotarians. These three men are the coordinators for the P4P projects of their individual clubs; each of them has been consistently running collections on behalf of P4P for over a decade. Each of them have led their clubs to collect well in excess of a hundred bikes for us every one of those years. It's a fantastic accomplishment, one that has required a great deal of effort for them individually, as well as for their clubs.

A RECIPE FOR COLLECTING BIKES IN NORTHERN VERMONT

BY JOANNE HEIDKAMP

The relationship between the Green Mountain Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (GMRPCV) and Pedals for Progress began in the summer of 1999, when David Schweidenback approached us for a donation to P4P. We donated \$100 and also decided to hold Vermont's first P4P bicycle collection. That first year we collected 88 bikes and drove them down to New Jersey in a rented U-Haul.

Twelve years later, the GMRPCV is still holding annual collections for P4P and, although the number of bikes varies considerably from year to year, our average collection yields 200 bikes and about \$1900 for shipping, as well as many sewing machines. In the last three years we've added sewing machines to our outreach, and have collected many of those as well.

Here are some of the key elements that help ensure our continuing success:

One huge factor is the support of the local FedEx station, which has provided free shipping from Vermont to New Jersey since 2002. The day before our collection, FedEx drops off a semi truck with four empty containers. When the collection is over, FedEx delivers the containers to New Jersey on a space-available basis. The bikes will arrive at the P4P warehouse anywhere from two weeks to two months after they've been collected.



Green Mountain Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Vermont

Although the GMRPCV has been the main organizer of the collection each year, a number of local groups have come on board to help promote it, and also help process bikes during the four hour event. Local Motion, a local bike-pedestrian group, has been steadfast in its support. Several regional solid waste districts have also promoted the collections on their websites and through their newsletters. And we've had assistance from teen organizations at high schools and congregations, and from a few local Rotary clubs.

Since the original collection, all of our outreach and announcements for the event have stressed the need for a cash donation, which is critical for shipping, along with each bike or sewing machine. Posters at the collection reinforce the idea that a donated bike is useless unless we can raise enough money to get it to our partners in the developing world, and we always remind people that if they don't have a bike or sewing machine to donate, donating money for shipping is also a good way to get involved.

We have learned that coverage in the local newspapers is essential to getting lots of bikes donated. For a few weeks before each collection, the group sends out lots of press releases, emails, and posts on Facebook. The area's largest newspaper, the Burlington Free Press, usually runs a photo and caption about the bike collection during the week before the event; and a number of "hometown" papers will run an article if we focus the story on a volunteer who lives in the community. We also mail a postcard to everyone who donated a bike during the collections of the previous two years. Contacting people via various email lists has also become more important with each passing year.

The group gets a big boost every year from a "one man collection" organized by Gene Bianco, who runs an independent chimney cleaning and repair business in Randolph, Vermont, about an hour from Burlington. Bianco heard about the event in 2004, and started to collect bikes and donations in his community. That first year, he arrived with 31 bikes and \$310. His efforts have expanded—in 2009 his truck and trailer were loaded with 75 bikes.

The bike collection has been held in eight different locations in or near Burlington – including Burlington High School, the county fairgrounds, at recycling centers, and in the parking lot of a large chocolate company. In 2010 the Burlington Electric Company hosted the collection in their parking lot, and informed all of their customers about the event. This has expanded the visibility of the event in the community.

Lastly, since 1999, six individuals have formed a solid nucleus of expertise for each year's event. Joanne Heidkamp takes charge of publicity and outreach to partner organizations. Dorsey Hogg recruits other members of the GMRPCV to staff the event. Paula Thompson lines up high school students to help out. Paul Demers makes the arrangements with FedEx, and also oversees the bike processing. Bob Thompson and Matt Hogg have mastered the art of loading three layers of bikes into each container, always striving for a load that doesn't shift.

The Green Mountain Returned Peace Corps Volunteers plans to continue holding annual bike collections for Pedals for Progress. In September, 2011 we'll ship our 3,000th bike from northern Vermont.

CONNECTICUT CHECKS IN

BY JACKIE JOHNSON

I was prompted to call Pedals for Progress in September of 2002 after I read a small article in Hope Magazine (long since out of business). The article told the story of Dave Schweidenback launching Pedals for Progress following his experience in the Peace Corps and referenced the 57,000 bicycles that had, at that point, been shipped to partners in sixteen countries.



Jackie Johnson with collection crew.

This was a year after the 9/11 attacks and our nation was on the verge of war. I felt a burning need to do something positive and meaningful, ideally involving my husband and two children (who were then 10 and 12 years old). The article so inspired me that I immediately called Pedals for Progress and said I wanted to organize a bike collection. Even though, being in northwestern Connecticut, my location was considerably farther from their base in High Bridge, NJ than they had ever previously held a collection the response was positive.

Because the fall collection season was already underway, I was encouraged to organize my collection the following spring. But I felt I had to act immediately. I ultimately spoke to Dave and explained why I couldn't wait until spring. He was reluctantly convinced and our first Pedals for Progress collection was held at Holcomb Farm, an arts and environmental center, in Granby, CT on December 7, 2002. An enthusiastic group of volunteers collected and processed a very chilly 42 bikes that day. They are still the core group of volunteers who have shown up every year since.

May of 2011 (yes, we've since switched to spring) will mark our 10th annual collection and will bring our count to over 1500 bikes collected. It would never have been possible without our amazing bike-processing guru/crew leader Tony King, Bruce and Bobbi Sullivan who always remember to bring everything I forget, and the King and Johnson families.

Over the years, we've added many new regular volunteers—the Mayock Family, the Desiderato/Raggio Family and groups of students interested in community service. Sometimes people just happen to see what we're doing and stay on to help. The greatest joy is that a bike collection truly is an inclusive community event. Anyone at any age can take part, and donors and volunteers alike share in the joy of knowing they're making a difference in the lives of others. And often the stories donors tell us about the "lives" of the donated bikes are amazing!

Frequently these days, when I'm in the Center (a New England term for downtown) of our small town, someone stops me to ask when the next bike collection is. I feel so fortunate to have noticed that article back in 2002. While we're a few hours away from High Bridge by car and much farther still from many of the places our donated bicycles have gone, Granby, Connecticut is blessed to have a thriving Pedals for Progress community.

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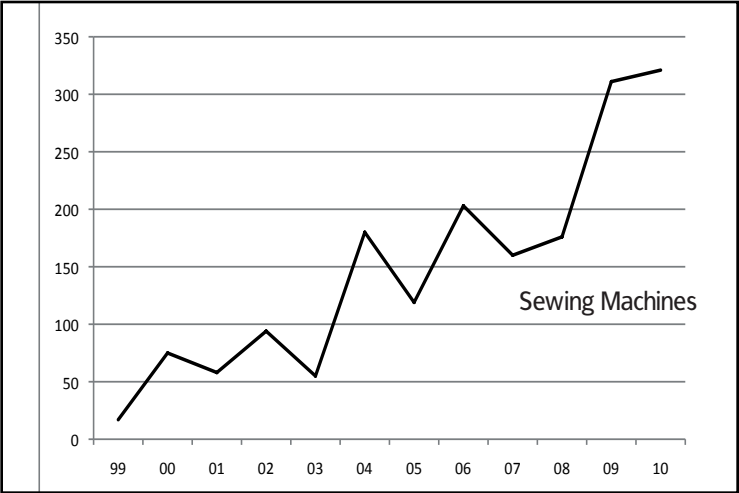
SOWING PEACE BY SEWING PROSPERITY

P4P's long practice of supplementing our bicycle shipments with sewing machines has been a great success. Where we ship, little opportunity exists for people to find the employment that will enable them to earn a living wage. So sewing machines are a great way for us to make a difference—they are simple to operate and easy to maintain. With access to electricity, their owners can create their own opportunities to generate work.

We've been able to distribute over 1,700 of them worldwide to help give thousands of people the opportunity of self- or full-time employment. They used to be just an extra goodie we could slip into our bike shipments, but now we are able to develop stand alone sewing programs that we are sometimes able to supply by air freight.

Consider this chart: since we began shipping them in 1999 our sewing machine production has seen an overall increase, despite the challenges of the moribund economy. We need your help to keep this life-changing initiative growing. Sow peace by sewing prosperity, donate today.

ANNUAL SEWING MACHINE PRODUCTION BY YEAR



For more information visit www.p4p.org.



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