



Brethren growing projects boost food security in 18 developing countries

Sustainable food development programs in 18 impoverished countries have received assistance from Church of the Brethren growing projects. The latest round of grants is helping build food security in Burkina Faso, Honduras, Georgia, and Peru.

Janis Pyle



Guatemalans in 24 mountain villages are learning greenhouse production.

Other developing countries with agricultural programs receiving support from the Brethren member account in Foods Resource Bank are Armenia, Bolivia, Colombia, Central Africa Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Palestine West Bank, Serbia, Tanzania, and Zambia. The grants range from \$750 to \$20,000. Fourteen other member denominations in Foods Resource Bank have invested similar amounts.

In 2007 the Church of the Brethren mounted 17 growing projects in eight states, enlisting one camp, one retirement community, and 25 congregations. The goal for 2008 is 25 Brethren-led growing projects.

For some growing projects, 2007 yielded a very good harvest

In a tally of 2007 reports, early returns indicate that at least five growing projects involving Church of the Brethren congregations each raised approximately \$20,000 or more for deposit in Foods Resource Bank. They are Grossnickle/Hagerstown/Welty/Harmony in Maryland, Elkhart Valley in Indiana, Ivester and South Waterloo/Hammond Avenue in Iowa, and Polo in Illinois. Polo achieved a record 233 bushels of corn per acre for its 30-acre crop grown at two sites.

Regnuh Poster Project: Kids' thoughts on turning hunger around

On the heels of senior high and senior adult campaigns on "Regnuh: Turning hunger around," the opportunity comes for younger folk to put forth their ideas on reducing global hunger.

Kids' Regnuh Poster Project invites children ages 6-14 to illustrate ways humankind can better respond to the world's one billion people who lack adequate food. While Regnuh (hunger spelled backwards) is the overarching theme, the posters may also illustrate biblical sayings, Brethren teachings, or health and environmental concerns related to hunger.

The drawings are to be on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper with the name and age of the child, congregation, and district legibly noted on the reverse side. Entries are to be postmarked by April 30 and sent to the Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Tentative plans are to display the drawings at Annual Conference or to post them on the Global Food Crisis Fund website.

A drawing from Heifer Youth Clubs in the Caucasus depicts youth joining hands for a peaceful world.



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Zimbabwe grant responds to immediate, long-term needs

A two-pronged effort to reduce hunger in Zimbabwe is being carried out by the ACT International coalition of churches. In Phase 1, food baskets of maize meal, cooking oil, and beans are currently being delivered to families in six southern districts. In Phase 2, subsistence farmers in the districts will be provided seeds and supplies this spring for planting community gardens. The farmers will also receive training in water and soil management.

The recent allocation of \$15,000 by the Global Food Crisis Fund to Church World Service /ACT for the Zimbabwe appeal marks the third hunger grant of Brethren for Zimbabwe since 2004. Earlier grants totaling \$32,000 were sent through Heifer International for land reclamation and livestock.

Political turmoil, spiraling inflation, and erratic rainfall have cut sharply into food production in Zimbabwe, a country that was once hailed as the breadbasket of southern Africa.

Malawi: A compassion that knows no bounds

A cluster of Christian denominations, including the Church of the Brethren, has applied proceeds from Foods Resource Bank growing projects to enable Malawi women in the predominantly Muslim community of Ng'oma to plant test plots of moringa, sell cassava, purchase maize mills, build grain banks, and reduce the incidence of cholera by constructing latrines. Their confidence bolstered by such enterprises, the women this past year took on an unmet need in Ng'oma—the care of orphans. The women planted and harvested a field of maize, sold part of the crop to purchase food and soap for the children, and engaged the community in molding 5,000 bricks to build an orphan nursery school. Last July, volunteers from North America teamed up with villagers to complete the building project, hauling water and sand, interacting with the orphans, and swapping stories and traditions.

As Part of the Malawi Nkhoma program of Foods Resource Bank, Ng'oma exemplifies how growing projects reach across cultures, across continents, across generations, and even across faiths.

Brethren fund effort to reduce infant mortality in Honduran villages

The Church of the Brethren is providing prime support for a project in southern Honduras that will offer training in financial management to poor families and establish a peasant cooperative for rural credit. Giving impetus to the economic programs is the goal of reducing child malnutrition and infant and maternal mortality in an area where infant mortality runs at 31 percent.

The project is enlisting 10 producer families from each of eight villages in the Northern Choluteca area. The Global Food Crisis Fund is underwriting the \$30,000 cost, working in partnership with Church World Service and Honduras' Christian Commission for Development (CCD).

“We rejoice in reconnecting with the Church of the Brethren through this ministry,” states Noemi de Espinoza, executive director of CCD, a long-time partner of the Church of the Brethren. “We give thanks for the opportunity to serve our Lord together and touch those who lives need hope.”

Howard Royer



Zimbabwe: Once but no longer the breadbasket of southern Africa.

