



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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Puerto Rico: Recovering from Maria

In November 2018, Global Food Initiative (GFI) manager Jeff Boshart visited recipients of GFI grants in Puerto Rico. Boshart was hosted by Jose Acevedo, disaster response coordinator for Brethren Disaster Ministries in Puerto Rico. The total amount allocated in 2018-19 from the GFI for long-term recovery of farmers exceeded \$88,000. These funds were provided through the Puerto Rico District of the Church of the Brethren to both church members and those outside the church. Farmers receiving these funds live in the western mountains of the island, near the Castañer and Rio Piedras congregations. Funds were used to replace lost fruit trees such as citrus, banana, plantain, and coffee, as well as to purchase livestock and build greenhouses in some cases.

Hurricane Maria caused major crop losses and most farmers in Puerto Rico do not have any crop insurance. Acevedo worked for many years as an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and offers solid advice to farmers looking to not only replant, but to begin new agricultural ventures that will be profitable in both the short and long term.

Farmers expressed their thankfulness to the GFI for the seed money that allows them to start over, as well as the spiritual lift that comes from knowing the funds came to them with much love from church people who live on the US mainland.



Church of
the Brethren
1451 Dundee
Ave. Elgin, IL
60120

800 323-8039,
ext. 332.

Jeff Boshart,
Editor

Nigeria: EYN Soybean Project

Dr. Dennis Thompson is a retired researcher from the University of Illinois and is currently acting as a part-time consultant for the GFI and Brethren Disaster Ministries in conjunction with the soybean value chain project of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN – the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). Thompson's reflections on the project were published by Seed World and can be read at <https://seedworld.com/soybean-helps-rebuild-nigeria-post-conflict/>.



Small-scale Farm Equipment Partnership

In December 2018, GFI manager Jeff Boshart met with Mark Fisher, executive director of Harvest Chapel Mission, to discuss possible collaboration in the development of small-scale farm equipment for GFI's international partners – primarily grain threshers and hammer-mills for grinding grain into flour. Joining Boshart and Fisher were Church of the Brethren pastor Christian Elliott (Knobsville, Pa.), GFI review panel member Jeff Graybill (Manheim, Pa.), and Global Mission and Service worker in the Dominican Republic, Jason Hoover. The gathering was held at the Sunnyburn Welding shop in Airville, Pa.



James Therrien

New Mexico: Solar Refrigeration Project

Lybrook Community Ministries (LCM) in Cuba, N.M., received a \$3,000 GFI grant for the purpose of purchasing one complete solar and refrigeration unit. This would be the first step in what is planned to be a larger project to provide electricity and refrigeration to members of the Navajo community served by LCM. Refrigeration will allow senior citizens on the nearby Navajo reservation to keep and conserve fresh produce provided by LCM's community garden, as well as medicines. Families with infants will be able to store milk and other perishable foods.

The long-term plan is to purchase and install 10 more units in 2019. This first unit will be installed at LCM in a cabin used for guests visiting the ministry. According to LCM's director Jim Therrien, several Navajo men received training in the installation and maintenance of this system. Once experience is gained with this model unit, other units will be bought in bulk, thus reducing the price per unit.

New Grants: Ohio, Spain, Nigeria

The GFI continues to focus on supporting the work of church-based community gardeners. A grant was awarded to New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren in the amount of \$15,000 for the purchase of a small garden tractor and implements. The Gijon and Aviles congregations of Iglesia Evangelica de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in Spain) received \$4,455 for the purchase of vegetable seedlings, seeds, and gardening tools, and to help pay rent for the garden space. Both projects provide fresh produce to families in need in their respective communities.

In Nigeria, a \$5,260 allocation was provided to the Integrated Community-Based Development Project (ICBDP) of EYN. This allows for the construction of a fence around a newly planted two-acre fruit tree orchard located at EYN headquarters in Kwarhi, Adamawa State. ICBDP plans to install drip irrigation to raise vegetables between the fruit trees while waiting for the trees to reach fruit-bearing age. The orchard will



serve multiple purposes: demonstration, production, and income generation for ICBDP, principally from sales of produce to the new EYN conference center and cafeteria. ICBDP's director Rev. James Mamza writes that this orchard is "in line with the EYN Agriculture Department's effort to combat the menace of climate change." Along with a tree nursery in Kwarhi, ICBDP also operates tree nurseries in Lassa and Garkida.