



# GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

[www.brethren.org/gfi](http://www.brethren.org/gfi)

Summer 2019



## Haiti: Soil conservation

Eglise des Freres d'Haiti has completed its first year of a soil conservation and income generation project. This project is part of a GFI – Growing Hope Globally (GHG) collaboration. A total of 250 farmers in 10 communities are working together to build terraces for soil conservation, as well as planting beans (for short-term income), raising small livestock or planting plantains (for medium-term income), and preparing to plant fruit and lumber trees (for long-term income). It is anticipated that this project will last at least three years, with new communities being added and farms being transformed for greater production and increased income for all involved.



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## Rwanda: Seven-year project impact by Etienne Nsanzimana

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus. I am glad to give an update on how this project has changed the lives of Batwa people that we serve in northwest Rwanda. Our ministry has been serving with the Batwa through potato farming the last seven years, with the support of the Global Food Initiative, and much has been achieved.

The Batwa learned a skill of raising potatoes (and peas). They used to be considered outcasts in the community because traditionally they lived by hunting and gathering, however without game to hunt they survived by begging and stealing. Now they are feeding themselves and being accepted socially, step by step. Spiritually, 36 of the adult Batwa accepted Christ and joined a church. They also formed a choir named Makerbui, or Cherubim, and are committed to spreading the love of Christ through their songs.

Child malnutrition among the Batwa people has decreased dramatically, and income has increased. Today the Batwa people we work with have built a good foundation for a better future. Children attend school and recently three students graduated from high school (a first for their community) with hopes of going to college. Thanks for joining us in this ministry.



## Dominican Republic: Animal health and nutrition visit

In April, Steven Petcher (Fruitdale, Ala.), and GFI manager Jeff Boshart were hosted in the Dominican Republic by Church of the Brethren Global Mission and Service workers Jason and Nicole Hoover. Visits were made to farms in the southwestern part of the country where Jason is working with families on a GFI-supported rabbit project. The team consulted with farmers on pasture management and forage trials for goats, sheep, and cattle.



## Nigeria: Soybean extension worker training

Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) is preparing for year three of its soybean value chain initiative. With ongoing funding from the Nigeria Crisis Fund and GFI, EYN's agriculture department held a week-long training for 14 newly-hired extension agents. In February Dennis Thompson, a private consultant and retired researcher from the University of Illinois, traveled to Nigeria to assist EYN's soybean value chain team for the event.

The overarching theme for the training was "Agriculture as Business." Agents will be placed in farming communities and provided with one-quarter hectare

farms to produce soybeans for teaching and demonstration. They are each tasked with reaching a minimum of 50 local farmers throughout the year. Along with Thompson, other presenters included Salamatu J. Billi and Kefas John Usman.



Dennis Thompson

## Book review: *Growing a Revolution*

What if one of the most powerful tools to reduce the impacts of one of our world's most pressing environmental problems, climate change, lay right beneath our feet? What if that tool was also good for rural economies, led to cleaner waterways, and improved resiliency to natural disasters such as drought or flooding? In his book, *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life*, author David Montgomery argues that when farmers focus on improving soil health, they are serving humanity in ways that go well beyond simply producing food.

Montgomery traveled the globe in search of practices and practitioners of conservation agriculture, which he defines as having three basic aspects: 1) no-till or minimum tillage, 2) carefully planned and diverse crop rotations, 3) utilization of cover crops and mulch. Conservation agriculture takes advantage of the same natural processes that built and maintained soils for millennia and relies on lessons learned from ancient agricultural practices as well as the latest research in soil science. Finally, this important book speaks of how both organic and conventional farmers are beginning to talk to each other, finding common ground in ways that readers will find both surprising and hopeful. Check your local library for a copy of this book, published in 2017 by W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

