

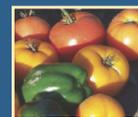
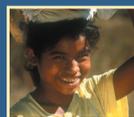


GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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Summer 2022



Nigeria: Crop Consultation

International agricultural development consultant **Dr. Dennis Thompson** traveled to Nigeria in May to represent the GFI and facilitate meetings between leadership of the agricultural department of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and representatives of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF). AATF works with various international development institutions and private seed companies across Africa on the development and release of drought-, disease-, and pest-resistant staple crops such as maize, cowpeas, and rice. The supply of seeds is currently limited, but AATF is considering working with

Kefas John Usman



reliable local partners in Nigeria to operate demonstration plots of new varieties. Having great familiarity with both AATF and EYN, Thompson believes there is great potential for future collaboration between the two entities. The meeting took place in Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, with the two sides becoming acquainted and discussing prospects of deepening the relationship that has great potential to increase crop production among EYN farmers and their neighbors in northeast Nigeria.

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Jeff Boshart,
Editor

Ecuador: Community Gardens

A reunion of sorts has occurred in Ecuador. Two parts of the Church of the Brethren legacy in the country will reunite through a GFI grant. The development organization Fundacion Brethren y Unida (FBU—Brethren and United Foundation), received a \$4,500 grant to initiate a community gardening program with a church that grew out of Church of the Brethren work in the town of Llano Grande more than 60 years ago. Leaders of this congregation, now affiliated with the United Methodist Church, fondly remember the American Brethren missionaries and volunteers who worked with them on a wide variety of ministries. FBU also was founded by the Church of the Brethren, but the two groups had diverged decades ago. A former Brethren missionary to Ecuador, Dale Minnich, encouraged GFI manager Jeff Boshart to look for ways that FBU and the GFI might serve the Llano Grande congregation. Boshart led a visit by a US delegation in February 2022 that included a meeting between the leadership of the local church and the executive director of FBU, Alfredo Merino. From this encounter a proposal was drafted that established a plan for a community garden on church property that will serve to train local youth in organic vegetable production as well as providing marketing assistance. The grant also includes funds for a community garden and training program for children and youth to be installed at a congregation near Cayambe—about one hour north of Quito.



Colorado, Illinois, Maryland: Community Garden Grants

Church-based community gardening grants continue to be available to congregations wishing to establish or expand their community gardening ministries. Brethren recipients of grants in 2022 include the Prince of Peace (Littleton, Colo.) and Friendship (Linthicum, Md.) congregations, along with the non-denominational

Five Gates Church (Rockford, Ill.). These congregations have developed community partnerships with local non-profit organizations that will enhance the impact of their gardening projects. Since 2012, the GFI has given more than \$250,000 to 54 community gardening efforts of Brethren congregations, camps, and retirement communities, as well as several non-Brethren congregations.



Geill Erisman Valeta

Alaska, New Mexico: Native American Gardening Ministries

The GFI recently awarded grants to two Native American gardening groups: one in Circle, Alaska, in collaboration with Bill and Penny Gay of the Pleasant Dale (Decatur, Ind.) Church of the Brethren, the other in New Mexico with Lybrook Community Ministries (LCM). These partnerships began in 2015 and included gardening exchanges between gardeners in 2016 with Gwich'in gardeners traveling from Alaska to New Mexico and Navajo gardeners traveling to Alaska. This year's grant of \$2,400 to the project in Alaska



Bill Gay

supports the purchase of a hobby green house, fencing, and gardening tools. In New Mexico, LCM's new co-directors, Erik Dennison and Marlene Thomas, are working with a local Navajo senior center and chapter house—the most local form of government on the Navajo nation—to construct a hoop house and a mini greenhouse to grow produce with an emphasis on utilizing heirloom seeds.

Burundi: Dryland Farming Workshop

A workshop on dryland vegetable production will take place in July in Gitega, Burundi. The event will be hosted by Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) at its training center. The workshop will be led by staff from Healing Hands International and will include local farmers that have already received training from THARS in Farming God's Way (mulch-based, conservation farming) techniques as well as a delegation from Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and the Church of the Brethren in Burundi for a total of 25 participants. Drip irrigation will be introduced in combination with raised bed construction. Participants each will be given drip irrigation kits upon completion of the two-day workshop and asked to set up demonstration plots on their own farms. A video of the techniques can be found at www.hhi.org/media/videos/survival-gardening-drip-irrigation.

