



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

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Nigeria: Thresher Fabrication Workshop

Jos, Nigeria, was the location of a recent multi-crop thresher fabrication workshop.

The event on Jan. 11-18 was a collaboration between the GFI, SIL, and EYN, with the GFI and SIL providing funding, while EYN organized and hosted the training. Three fabrication trainers from Ghana traveled to Nigeria to represent SIL. Volunteers Christian Elliot and Dennis Thompson participated in leadership on behalf of the GFI. EYN selected people who already had experience with metal fabrication. SIL has provided trainings across Africa as part of its wider goal of strengthening the soybean value chain. This was the first workshop in Nigeria and was undergirded by an \$11,000 allocation from the GFI, with SIL providing \$9,000, plus the cost of bringing the trainers to Nigeria.

Eight trainees built two machines in seven days. The completed threshers will remain for the use of the EYN agriculture department. The newly trained fabricators are free to build and sell more threshers because the plans for the machines are non-proprietary, having been developed with support of the USAID and the University of Missouri. Another key aspect of the threshers is that they are made entirely from parts available within Nigeria.

Dennis Thompson also led several days of discussions/trainings with volunteer extension agents (VEAs) who are working for EYN on corn, soybean, and cowpea education for EYN members and their neighbors across northeastern Nigeria through a program funded by a grant from the GFI.



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Alaska: Arctic Gardening

After several years of a pandemic-induced reduction of gardening activities, Bill Gay of Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren in Decatur, Ind., returned to Circle, Alaska, for a summer of reconnecting to the land and people. Flooding on the Yukon River created challenges and

a partial evacuation of the town in the early part of the summer. Later, Bill was joined by his wife, Penny, and a group from the Pleasant Dale congregation to participate in a week-long vacation Bible school. Penny and Bill are already working with the elders of the village to make plans for a major gardening expansion in time for 2024 when Circle will be hosting representatives from Gwich'in villages in Alaska and Canada. The GFI has contributed \$11,500 to this project since 2014 for the purchase of fencing, tillers, and a greenhouse.



Dominican Republic: Brethren Global Communion

Leaders representing Church of the Brethren bodies from 10 different countries gathered Nov. 12-19, 2022, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, for a meeting of the Brethren Global Communion. This newly formed alliance of autonomous groups, with historical ties to the mission work of the Church of the Brethren, met to discuss how the leaders will work together doing the work of Jesus in the world (www.brethren.org/news/2022/global-church-of-the-brethren-meets-in-dr/).

On the final day of the event, the Global Food Initiative (GFI) sponsored a farm visit to spend time with Dominican Brethren farmers in Azua Province, located approximately two hours to the west of Santo Domingo. Most Brethren church leaders from across the globe are also farmers. Church leaders compared crop varieties and yields, land tenure issues, animal traction versus tractors, and marketing. The president of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), Joel Billi, couldn't resist picking up a hoe to remove a few weeds while visiting the cassava field of the treasurer of Iglesia de los Hermanos en la Republica Dominicana (the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic), Pedro Sanchez.

A special treat was the chance for all the visitors to see a demonstration of a multi-crop thresher in the community of Los Toros, on the farm of David and Renee Reyes. GFI volunteer Jason Hoover has been experimenting with the thresher that was built in Airville, Pa., through a collaboration between the GFI, the Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL, a Feed the Future Initiative of the United States Agency for International Development), Sunnyburn Welding (an Amish-owned company), and Harvest Chapel Mission (a Maryland based nonprofit dedicated to building appropriate technologies to support development work). Hoover demonstrated the machine utilizing corn. However using interchangeable screens, soybeans, dry beans, rice, and peanuts also can be threshed.



Maryland: School-Church Partnership

Martin Hutchison of Community of Joy Church of the Brethren in Salisbury, Md., reports that a long-awaited effort of the congregation's community garden outreach ministry has been realized. A high tunnel (unheated greenhouse) was constructed by volunteers on the grounds of and in partnership with Choices Academy, an alternative high school in the Wicomico County public school system. Eight beds of vegetables were planted in the fall of 2022 with cold-hardy

greens—some of which have already been served in the school cafeteria. The school focuses on students who benefit from a hands-on learning environment and who struggled in previous schools. The GFI supported this project with a \$3,500 grant.

