



# GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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

Summer 2023



## Global Food Initiative Anniversary



In 1983, denominational leaders challenged Church of the Brethren members to respond to hunger and development needs in the Horn of Africa. The outpouring of financial support for this proposal led to the establishment of the Global Food Crisis Fund (the name was changed to the Global Food Initiative Fund in 2016). Forty years and nearly 8 million dollars later, the Global Food Initiative (GFI) continues to work with friends and partners around the globe to provide funds for agricultural production, nutrition education, and advocacy on hunger issues. Happy 40th Anniversary, GFI!

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## Venezuela: Second Chances

GFI allocations given to the **Asociación Iglesia de Los Hermanos Venezuela** (ASIGLEH or Church of the Brethren in Venezuela) for agricultural projects in 2017 and 2020 did not meet with success. Drought led to the poor harvest of crops in 2017, and, in 2020, two members of the communal farming project sold the harvest and kept all the proceeds for themselves, bringing great shame on the entire leadership of the young denomination. National church board members made the difficult decision to remove the offending individuals from all positions of leadership and recovered a small portion of the lost funds. The board was reorganized in 2022 and approached the GFI review panel to inquire about receiving another opportunity to submit a proposal for consideration of funding. After deliberation and prayer, and a face-to-face meeting in Colombia by GFI manager Jeff Boshart, the GFI panel members agreed. The panel allocated \$12,000 in September 2022 to support a plan calling for decentralization of the agriculture work with micro-projects spread out across the country. In the ensuing months, national board members regularly visited each project, providing visual and written updates. With great relief and rejoicing, the leadership of ASIGLEH reports that the poultry, maize, beans, carrots, and rice harvests were bountiful. Only one project, a cassava project with indigenous people in southern Venezuela, did not meet expectations due to drought. Some of the harvest will be shared with families in need and some sold to support the ministries of the national church. ASIGLEH's national board expressed thankfulness for the grace extended to them by the GFI review panel to try again.



Rafael Gonzalez

## Africa Great Lakes Workshops

**D**ry season vegetable production is uncommon in much of Africa with the exception being flood irrigation near rivers. Recent workshops sponsored by the GFI in Burundi and Uganda (a third workshop is in the planning stages for the Democratic Republic of Congo) aim to change that. Through the introduction of techniques such as drip irrigation, raised bed construction, and composting, approximately 60 farmers learned new skills. Each participant received drip irrigation hoses to take home at the completion of the two-day events. Instruction was provided by Joseph Edema who lives in Uganda and works for Healing Hands International – a Christian development organization based in Nashville, Tenn.



Expert Bikana



Victor Javier

## Canary Islands: Grocery Store

**L**anzarote is one of the Canary Islands, located in the Atlantic Ocean near the coast of north Africa. In

2018, the GFI awarded a \$7,445 grant to the Dad Y Se Os Dara (Give and It Will Be Given to You) ministry of the Lanzarote congregation of Iglesia Evangelica de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in Spain). The goal was to open a small community grocery store, which would provide a service to the immigrant community (predominantly from the Caribbean and Central

America) on the island through the sale of culturally preferred food at affordable prices. The store was meant to complement an existing gardening project of the church. Funds were used to purchase freezers, a refrigerator, and bulk dry goods. The local congregation provided matching funds to cover rent, utilities, and local taxes. Five years later, the store and the garden are thriving, supplying healthful food, a place of connection for the immigrant community, and income to the local church to support local ministries. More of what the store, known as La Finca, has to offer can be found at [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090442977112](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090442977112).

## Nigeria: Soy-based Food Processing

**S**taff from the agriculture department of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN – the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) continue to provide training activities in soy-based food processing as part of the department's larger soybean value chain project. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the GFI review panel, the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren approved an allocation of \$25,000 from the GFI at its March meeting to provide continued support to EYN. Funds in excess of \$110,000 have been allocated to this project since 2018 (\$80,000 from the GFI, and more than \$30,000 from Brethren Disaster Ministries via the Nigeria Crisis Fund). Other activities of the Soybean Value Chain project include the following: training opportunities for 15 volunteer extension agents (VEAs), provision of farm inputs for VEA demonstration plots, and marketing.



Kelias Urann

