



# GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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

Fall 2023

## Ecuador: Venezuelan and US volunteers

**F**our volunteers, three from Venezuela and one from the United States, are currently in Ecuador serving with Fundación Brethren y Unida (FBU - the United and Brethren Foundation). The Venezuelan volunteers, Gilbert Gilberto Borjas, Ewgles Susanne Padilla, and Victor Gerardo Fuentes, were selected by the leadership of the Asociación Iglesias de Los Hermanos (ASIGLEH – Church of the Brethren in Venezuela) as part of a work-study arrangement with the goal of learning more about agroecological farming practices. The volunteers will return to Venezuela and be asked to offer their services as part of the ongoing agricultural work of ASIGLEH. The US volunteer, Marianne Fitzkee, is working through Brethren Volunteer Service to help on the FBU farm, be involved with teaching English in the nearby community of Picalqui, and aid FBU with its web presence and fund-raising activities.

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Jeff Boshart,  
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## Democratic Republic of Congo: Dry-season Vegetable Production

**F**ollowing successful trainings in Burundi and Uganda, a third workshop was held in the Great Lakes region of Africa. This time the host was Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo). Joseph Edema, a trainer from Healing Hands International – a US-based Christian nonprofit organization, who resides in Uganda, provided leadership for all three trainings in 2023. Twenty participants attended the two-day session and upon completion, all attendees received drip-irrigation kits to take home with them to set up their own vegetable gardens. The focus of the trainings revolved around building raised beds using readily available tools, organic material, and setting up the drip irrigation kits.



John Lukwago

## Mexico: Tijuana Coffee Start-Up

The GFI funds predominantly rural, agricultural projects, focused on food production and training. Finding ways to impact food insecurity in urban areas where land is not readily available is an ongoing challenge. Recently the GFI approved a grant allocation for \$3,500 to a community group in Tijuana that is associated with the Mount Horeb Church (soon to be Church of the Brethren – pending government recognition) and Bittersweet Ministries, for a coffee start-up venture. Unroasted coffee beans, purchased directly from farmers in Colima, Mexico, will be stored in a repurposed room at a restaurant associated with Bittersweet Ministries. Community members will receive training in roasting, marketing, and selling coffee. The fledgling business enterprise will seek government permits for selling and distributing the coffee.



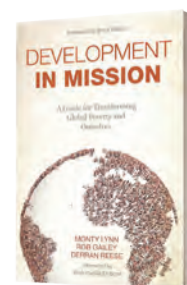
## Nigeria: Seed Company Visit

A fact-finding visit to Nigeria was recently undertaken by GFI manager Jeff Boshart and GFI consultant Dennis Thompson. The purpose of the trip was to investigate the possibility, raised by the agriculture steering committee of Ekkesiyar Yan'owa a Nigeria (EYN – Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), to initiate a seed company. The itinerary of the trip included meetings with EYN's standing committee and the agriculture steering committee as well as visits to EYN's business enterprises Kulp Water, Crago Bread, a cement block-making factory, and a

microfinance bank. At the completion of the week, the director of EYN's Integrated Community Based Development Program (ICBDP), Yakubu Peter, presented a plan for a seed company to EYN's standing committee for its approval. If accepted by the standing committee, it is anticipated that a proposal will come to the GFI for consideration. Other sources of funding from within and outside of EYN will also be sought.

## Book Review: *Development in Mission – A Guide for Transforming Global Poverty and Ourselves*

A recent book, *Development in Mission*, is at once a primer about, a reference guide for, and a critique of Christian responses to global poverty alleviation efforts. Authors Monty Lunn, Rob Gailey, and Derran Reese offer advice to individuals and congregations seeking greater engagement with the world's greatest challenges. Their words calling for humility and simple living will resonate with Brethren readers. The book mentions numerous familiar organizations such as Church World Service, Heifer International, SERRV, Bread for the World, World Council of Churches, and even Brethren Disaster Ministries and the Global Food Initiative receive a mention in their list of organizations to investigate to help guide those wishing to discern ways to engage tough issues more deeply. The theological reflections will also resonate with Brethren readers, with a focus on respecting the image of God in all, prayer, and Spirit-led planning to undergird any forays into community development work from a Christian perspective.



## GFI Manager Concludes Service

After nearly 13 years as manager of the Global Food Initiative for the Church of the Brethren, Jeff Boshart will be stepping down at the conclusion of 2023. Boshart previously served the denomination as coordinator for the Brethren Disaster Ministries' Haiti response, community development coordinator in the Dominican Republic along with his wife Peggy, and three years as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker in Ohio (Camp Woodland Altars), Kansas (Trees for Life), and Oregon (Camp Myrtlewood). His plans include spending more time on his family's farm in Wisconsin.

