SUSTENANCE

Newsletter of the Global Food Initiative

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A new name! Thanks to everyone who gave insight into a new name for the Global Food Initiative (GFI) newsletter. Sustenance reflects that we are mindful of how God sustains us, how we sustain our bodies through food and nutrition, and how GFI supporters sustain this ministry through prayer and financial giving.

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Jennifer Hosler, Editor

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A nutritious breakfast for school children in Honduras, provided by GFI Partner Proyecto Aldea Global (Project Global Village).

One of my beloved Psalms is Psalm 104, where the Psalmist describes God as Creator and Provider, establishing the foundations of the world, creating ecosystems for all creatures, and providing sustenance for all animals, plants, and people. Verses 14 and 15 declare God's provision: "You make grass grow for cattle; you make plants for human farming in order to get food from the ground, and wine, which cheers people's hearts, along with oil, which makes the face shine, and bread, which sustains the human heart" (Common English Bible).

As Christians, we give thanks to the God who sustains us, who provides for our needs, and who calls us to be part of that provision by 1) sharing what we have, and 2) empowering others to meet their needs. GFI is the primary way that the Church of the Brethren addresses hunger and food insecurity around the world. GFI has been part of our denominational ministry for more than 40 years, empowering our siblings in Christ to meet their nutritional needs, farm sustainably, feed children, and create livelihoods. Through the power of grantmaking, donations support food security and hunger-related initiatives around the world. GFI also funds local church projects in the United States, through congregations seeking to make community gardens or to address hunger in their communities.

Thank you for sustaining GFI by signing up for this newsletter, by holding this crucial ministry in prayer, and by providing generous financial donations. Read more below about how GFI is bringing sustenance to communities in need around the world.

Your partner in Christ,

Jenn Hosler,
GFI Manager

Jennifer Hosler

Homemade bread

Jennifer Hosler

Guinea Corn in Nigeria.

Brethren Porridge

Bread. Naan. Chapatis. Injera. Tortillas. Arepas. Tuwo, Oatmeal. Porridge. These foods are staples around the world, made from diverse grains (wheat, teff, maize, rice, oats, and others). Grains are the "staff of life" - central to almost every culture on earth. Grains are often used as the first solid food for babies, mixing rice or oatmeal or ground up maize to make a porridge. My own child started solid food with a blend of oats, amaranth, and quinoa. In northern Nigeria, small children sometimes eat kunun gyada, a rice-based porridge with groundnut (peanut) butter and tamarind, for a nutritious and protein-filled breakfast.

Continued on page 2

Chris Elliott

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(Left to right) President Expert Bukene with the grain mill funded by GFI. Bukene with Abavukanyi Porrige. Porridge packets for sale.

Continued from page 1

Since grains are crucial to diverse cultures and nutrition around the globe, the GFI deals with grains in many ways when working to end hunger and promote food security. Grants equip farmers to grow food (including staple grains) sustainably, using fewer resources and methods that benefit the farmer and the environment. GFI also funds grinding machines and mills, to help local communities grind and utilize the grain that they grow. For many places around the world, subsistence farmers grow their own grains and take that grain to a local grinding machine or mill when it is time to use it.

The Church of the Brethren in Burundi is seeing the ministry benefits of a local mill funded by GFI. At the 2024 Annual Conference, founding pastor Expert Bukene, president of the Church of the Brethren in Burundi, shared about the Abavukanyi Porridge or "Brethren Porridge." Using the new grinding machine, the church leadership has developed a nutritional blend of grains that they are selling as Brethren Porridge in the community and also using it in the church's nursery school. Brethren Porridge is known for its nutritional value; the proceeds from its sale go to support the church ministries. Beyond the Brethren Porridge, the grinding machine provides affordable grain grinding to the surrounding community, meeting a community need while also providing income to help sustain the church's ministries.

Jesus declared himself to be the Bread of Life (John 6:35) - that which is central, nourishing, fulfilling, and empowering. Jesus also told his disciples to feed hungry people, saying "They need not go away; you give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16).

When we eat oatmeal, bake some bread, or otherwise use grains, nuts, or seeds in our households, we can consider our neighbors around the world who are subsistence farmers, whose livelihoods and nutrition depend on the grain that they grow by hand and grind in their local mill. I am grateful for the ministry of GFI, that we can walk alongside these neighbors - neighbors who may be across the globe, neighbors who may differ by ethnicity, language, or religious practice - and help give them something to eat. Thank you for supporting GFI through prayer and financial donations - we are doing this work together!

Jennifer Hosler

Bundles of Guinea Corn

Grant Opportunity for Congregations

Looking to address hunger in your community? Congregations are invited to apply for a GFI grant to support efforts to address domestic hunger and homelessness. In the past, grants have supported congregation-based garden projects, soup kitchens, food pantries, and more. If you have an idea for a grant-funded project and would like to discuss it or apply for a grant, please contact the GFI Manager Jenn Hosler by email to jhosler@brethren.org. Grant application forms are provided on request, via email. Applications are available in English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole.

For more information about the Global Food Initiative go to **www.brethren.org/gfi**

All GFI funds come from gifts specifically designated for GFI. To donate, visit https://www.brethren.org/gfi/ and click the Donate button or send a check by mail with Global Food Initiative in the memo (address in the Newsletter header).