



GROWING
HOPE
G L O B A L L Y

Annual Report 2022-2023





As a Christian response to hunger, we link the grassroots energy and commitment of rural communities in the U.S. with the capability and desire of smallholder farmers in developing countries to grow lasting solutions to hunger.

Letter from the President

God has surely blessed Growing Hope Globally and enabled us to reap a harvest of good once again this year. Ever since the first seed of our organization was planted twenty-five years ago, thousands have supported and enabled us to continue achieving our mission of growing lasting solutions to hunger.

We are so grateful to all of our Growing Projects, like the ones profiled in Pigeon, Michigan and Greenfield, Iowa, that have been faithful for so many years — and the new one in Midland, Virginia. It has been a blessing to travel and meet the many supporters who continue to make a positive impact in the lives of farmers around the world.

Together with our traveling team, I was able to meet Loemma and Uchesa in rural Tanzania as profiled later in this report. Their corn harvest quadrupled in yield and their children are no longer hungry because of the tools and training they received.

In Central America, I was thrilled to have many of our board directors travel to meet Marta and her fellow

Guatemalan farmers. Thanks to their vegetables and chickens and bees, they are building a future where their children are now well-nourished.

While the current situation does not look good as hunger increases and famine threatens once again, the people we are able to reach are doing better - thanks to your generosity. We have kept our promises to them through the years and their children's lives have improved. Your contributions have made it possible for them to eat, drink, be clothed, be healthy and not have to be a stranger or a prisoner.

So, as I reflect on the five years I have served with Growing Hope Globally, I am not weary in doing good. I have seen the reaping of wonderful harvests for God's children. Thank you and I am excited for what God has in store.

Gratefully,

Max Finberg

President



Let us not become
weary in doing good,
for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest
if we do not give up.

-Galatians 6:9





“What truly unites us is how Growing Hope Globally helps us help others around the world! What a blessing it is to be a part of bringing hope to families in extreme poverty.”

- Eugene Gascho



20 Years of Bringing Hope

The Pigeon, MI Growing Project, known locally as the Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project, began in 2003 when Merlin Yoder of Bay Port called for a meeting of farmers, agricultural suppliers and people from area churches. A whole roomful of people showed up, and the community was united in their vision to begin a Growing Project.

They began with 32 acres that first year, farming the field used by the Laker High School FFA chapter as their land lab. Planting and harvesting the crop was a challenge for the chapter. So, when the Growing Project agreed to take that burden off of their hands, while still providing a learning opportunity for the students, it was a perfect match.

Today, they continue to farm the Laker FFA land, as well as 10 other fields for a total of approximately 250 acres. Some of the land is contributed rent free, while cash donations help to cover the rest.

They have continued to find unique parcels to farm, including land owned by individuals, businesses, churches and schools. The latest

addition is a field owned by Meijer next to one of their newly built grocery stores. In the past they've farmed hospital land and even municipal land.

Local agribusinesses have been faithful contributors as well. The project has typically had nearly all of their costs covered through in-kind donations of seed, chemicals, fertilizer and other inputs.

A group of about a dozen farmers cares for the various fields, pitching in where needed to make sure everything gets planted, fertilized and harvested in a timely manner.

They have also teamed up with Michigan Sugar and most years they have a sugar beet test plot that is planted and harvested by the company, but from which they collect the proceeds.

The project operates like a well-oiled machine, requiring only two meetings a year to determine what is being planted where and who is doing what. In addition to farmers and seed dealers, the leadership team includes

agronomists, bookkeepers and grain merchandisers. With so many people selflessly stepping up to do their part at just the right time, the group has had an amazing impact.

Eugene Gascho, bookkeeper for the project, said, “I’m always inspired by this group of farmers when we meet and plan the work each year. Their donation of equipment, fuel, and time is so significant! What truly unites us is how Growing Hope Globally helps us help others around the world! What a blessing it is to be a part of bringing hope to families in extreme poverty.”

In 2022, the community celebrated 20 years and over \$2 million raised to support farming communities around the world. The project has supported more than 39,000 people with lasting solutions to hunger. To put things in perspective, the population of Huron County is less than 33,000.

Growing Project Leader Burt Keefer said, “It is great to see that the entire family often benefits from the sustainable agriculture training in these programs. By including the

children, we can stop the cycle of poverty and change lives forever.”

Merlin Yoder tragically passed away in 2011, but his enthusiasm for helping those in need lives on. A fund has been established in his honor so that those from the Growing Project who want to see firsthand the impact that they are making around the world can do so.

Cliff and Marie Maust travelled to Nicaragua. “We had our eyes opened to the rest of the world,” said Marie, “I was impressed at how they were using local experts to educate the farmers. They were so capable and very connected with the crops, climate and culture in that area. It was so much better than someone from the U.S. coming to give them advice! We saw how hard people were working to farm. They didn’t want a handout; they wanted a hand up.”

The Thumb Area Growing Project continues to unite the community in doing what they do best – farming – and bringing hope to communities around the world, helping them to provide for themselves.





A Spirit of Cooperation

Tim and Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey were co-pastoring the Hagerstown Church of the Brethren when they first got to know Growing Hope Globally. Their church was part of the Myersville, MD Growing Project and gathered with other participants each spring for a Blessing of the Seed and each fall for a Harvest Celebration. The Hagerstown worship team often provided the music for these events.

In 2019, the Hollenberg-Duffeys moved to Oakton Church of the Brethren. They were inspired to explore how they might start a new Growing Project after their previous positive experience. “The concept just made too much sense. Why would we try to solve the world’s hunger by shipping beans and rice? It makes such better sense to empower and equip local farmers to make sustainable change for their communities. It felt like we could be a part of a lasting difference.”

“When Audrey and I relocated to Northern Virginia in a suburb of Washington DC, we didn’t have a single farmer in our church. But I had heard that the northern Virginia

Churches of the Brethren had a history of partnership and wanted to get back to doing more together. I thought a Growing Project to tie our rural and suburban churches together in mission could be effective.”

So, Pastor Tim raised the idea with Pastor Richard Wehrle at Midland Church of the Brethren, thinking there might be a farmer in the church that he could explore the idea with. “He informed me that he not only had a farmer, but the church owned some farmland too!”

Things started to come together as the Holy Spirit stirred others to get involved. Jimmy Messick agreed to farm the land and Lorne Holmes, the missions committee chair at Midland, appointed himself the “Hype Man”. Tragically, Holmes passed away shortly after the launch, but his energy and enthusiasm for the Growing Project had already taken root and his efforts are now bearing fruit.

The Midland, VA Growing Project, known locally as “Field of Boaz”, kicked off with a Blessing of the

Seeds celebration in April 2022. The event featured a picnic at the project land where those present learned about Growing Hope Globally and the program they hoped to support in Guatemala, and prayed over the field. It was just before Easter, so there was also an egg hunt for the kids. “The day was about celebrating our new mission project, but even more so it was about reconnecting with friends and establishing new connections with people in our sister churches,” said Pastor Tim.

“We pulled in five Churches of the Brethren to sponsor 10 acres of barley for our first year and more than exceeded our goal. We sent more than \$13,000 to our selected program: Guatemala Nebaj Quetzaltenago.”

The Growing Project runs smoothly with a team of representatives from each of the churches coordinating together. Farmer Jimmy works with the treasurers at Midland Church, who are handling the finances.

“The biggest impact this far on our congregations is a spirit of

cooperation with our brothers and sisters in the area. There has been great joy to gather around a cause and celebrate,” said Pastor Tim.

The five congregations came together once again in the fall for a Harvest Celebration at Manassas Church of the Brethren. They had fellowship over a potluck meal, celebrated the accomplishments of first year, and had the opportunity to meet Andres and Sara from the Colombia Sincelejo Montes de Maria program.

The second year of the project is off to a great start. “It looks like we’ll be adding a sixth or even seventh church to our cooperative,” said Pastor Tim, “Our hope is that we can grow in multiple ways. We’re exploring a public celebration of our project at Messick’s Farm Stand, which already draws out the DC suburbanites for some agri-tourism. We’re exploring expanding the farms involved too, so that more farmers connect to the mission. And we hope to send some of our folks internationally, so that they can bring home the story of Growing Hope Globally.”



“Why would we try to solve the world’s hunger by shipping beans and rice? It makes such better sense to empower and equip local farmers to make sustainable change for their communities.”
- Rev. Tim Hollenberg-Duffey





“We still have many challenges to overcome, but you have given us hope that we can overcome them.”
-Loemma



Fields of Faith and Hope

In 2005, Dennis Lundy read an article about a Growing Project in Conrad, IA. He decided his community in Greenfield, IA needed to get involved with Growing Hope Globally, so he contributed some of his land to start the Fields of Faith Growing Project.

The community works together, getting the seed and chemicals donated and contributing their labor to plant, harvest and haul the grain. They often celebrate the harvest together with a winter soup supper.

They have hosted overseas guests from the programs they have supported and knew that the money they raised was making a difference in communities around the world. But, they had never had the opportunity to see firsthand how their contributions were being used.

They thought it was important enough that they set aside some funds so that Rolan Jensen, Dennis Lundy and Marlin Marckmann could travel with Growing Hope Globally staff to visit the Tanzania Hanang program in February 2023.

This program is implemented by Mennonite Central Committee and local partner, One World Sustainable Living. The program works with the Datoga people in the Manyara region. The local context is challenging as people are fairly isolated and have limited resources.

On the first day of their visit, the group was hosted by Loemma, who is chairperson of the local farmers group and mother of nine children. She shared how they had reached the point of desperation and were ready to give up. People from her community had heard about One World, and knew that they had Datoga extension agents, so they reached out for assistance.

Members of the community were trained in conservation agriculture. The goal is for each farmer to cultivate at least three acres using these methods in order to ensure that everyone has enough to eat.

Loemma is also learning about poultry production. At first, she thought it was strange to build a house for her chickens, but she tried it anyway, rounding up her chickens

each night and locking them inside the coop. Now that her flock is growing quickly and protected from predators, she sees the wisdom.

This training is just the beginning, but it is already making an impact. “We still have many challenges to overcome, but you have given us hope that we can overcome them,” said Loemma.

“Thank you for loving us without even knowing us,” said Loemma, “Many in the past have used our images to raise money and have helped us very little. Instead you come and visit us, which makes us think you will stay and help.”

The next day, the group met Uchesa, a 60 year old widow and mother of eight. Her husband passed away about ten years ago, leaving her to take care of the family on her own. She has risen to the challenge, learning about conservation agriculture, poultry raising, and fruit and vegetable farming.

She has used her chickens to help cover her emergency needs, selling them to buy seeds, food and

other essentials. Her children and grandchildren also enjoy the eggs as a nutritious addition to their diet.

She also learned how to construct and use a water tank to capture rain water. She had to provide the materials but was then shown how to build the tank. She uses it for emergencies, when no one can go and fetch water because of illness. She hopes to build a larger tank in order to eliminate the twice-daily 10 mile trek for water altogether.

Uchesa has also been practicing conservation agriculture. The results have been impressive. Using traditional methods, she typically harvested two bags per acre. With conservation agriculture, she recently harvested four bags from a quarter acre - an eightfold increase!

After meeting Loemma and Uchesa, the lowans were convinced their contributions are doing some good. Dennis Lundy said, “As farmers, we all feed the world. I am honored to meet farmers like you who are working through difficult situations to provide for your families.”



Our Global Impact



This past year...

106 Growing Projects in **21 states** supported agricultural development programs around the world.

289 individual donors also supported our work, including **20 Hope Planter** monthly donors. We also received grants from **7 generous organizations**.

We worked with **11 implementing organizations** and their trusted local partners to support **46 agricultural development programs** in **30 countries**.

These programs helped **169,360 people** in **659 communities** find lasting solutions to hunger and know the dignity and hope of providing for themselves.

States with Growing Projects

Delaware
Florida
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Maryland
Michigan
Minnesota

Missouri
Nebraska
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Dakota

Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin



Countries with Agricultural Development Programs

Bangladesh
Burkina Faso
Cambodia
Cameroon
Colombia
Democratic
Republic of Congo
Guatemala
Haiti

Honduras
India
Kenya
Lebanon
Liberia
Malawi
Mexico
Mozambique
Myanmar

Nepal
Nicaragua
Palestine
Paraguay
Peru
Rwanda
Sierra Leone
Tanzania
Timor-Leste

Uganda
West Africa*
Zambia
Zimbabwe

*Actual country
undisclosed for security
reasons





Guatemala Trip Enriches Board

In January 2023, Growing Hope Globally's Board of Directors and staff gathered in Guatemala for the first overseas board meeting in nearly a decade. It was a great opportunity for everyone to see firsthand the work they are supporting. Board members paid their own travel costs, further demonstrating their commitment to the organization.

Upon arrival, the group met in the city of Antigua where they held a regular business meeting, worshipped, ate and prayed together, and heard from guest speakers working in the region.

After their shared time together, they split into smaller groups to visit the programs Growing Hope Globally supports in Guatemala. They visited with local staff and program participants, and heard about the ways local communities are trained and empowered.

One group met Marta, who participates in the Guatemala Nebaj Quetzaltenango program. She explained that her family's patio garden, along with her mother's

weaving, has given her family the financial resources to allow her to finish high school. She and her mother are now working hard to ensure that her younger sisters have the same opportunity. Marta hopes to continue her education next year, going to university to study human rights law.

Patio gardens are providing an income for families like Marta's, but they are also providing a nutritious diet that is helping the local community to overcome chronic stunting, one family at a time.

Board member and Yakima, WA Growing Project co-leader Dan Snipes said, "We often think issues like global hunger and child malnutrition are too big for us to make a difference. But through the stories that were shared and what we were able to see through the gardens, animal husbandry, and weaving, lives are improved today and it has made a lasting impact for future generations."

Another group visited the Guatemala Sayaxché program. Javier Chapparo from World Renew

was with them and had visited the same community four years earlier. During his previous visit, none of the women had spoken. This time, the women were not only speaking, they were leading the meeting with the visitors and sharing drawings they had made depicting the past, the present, and their future hopes for their community.

Women in this community are working together to raise chickens. Once they sell the broilers, they set aside enough money to buy more chickens and then distribute the rest among the group. They use these funds to buy what they need for their households. These funds are essential to improving their lives, because there is no local bank that they can readily access.

Yet another group had the opportunity to visit an area where a new program is planned to start later in 2023. Toni Lundeen of the Sandwich, IL Growing Project was part of the group and said, "It's exciting because they are at the beginning of the program. Because it is new, it will be fun to hear stories of what will happen. They were such

wonderful people and I'll be praying for them every day."

Megan Swanson of the Winneshiek County, IA Community of Hope Growing Project shared an experience she had during a community visit. "A women was expressing her gratitude to Growing Hope for the support of the project. As she was speaking she said 'I know you've probably sacrificed for us, maybe you've gone without meals...' My heart jumped as I heard those words. I do not give sacrificially, I give out of the 'extra' once all the basic needs of my family are met. I sensed that the Holy Spirit was leading me into a season of reconsidering what the Lord asks of us. It was an invitation into loving His children around the globe more fully as my brothers and sisters in Christ."

Board members and staff alike came away encouraged and recommitted to their efforts to make a global difference.



"We often think issues like global hunger and child malnutrition are too big for us to make a difference. But... lives are improved today and it has made a lasting impact for future generations."

- Dan Snipes





“Success is a form of motivation for other communities and it motivates us to support other families.”
- Pedro



Success Motivates Success

Growing Hope Globally has been partnering with Church World Service and Mennonite Social Action Commission (CASM) in western Honduras since 2008. Throughout the years, more than 10,000 people in 41 communities have benefitted from programming focused on addressing the challenges of changing weather patterns.

Pedro and Ruben live in La Guama. Their community has been working with CASM for about five years. They have learned how to diversify their crops, and now grow squash, oranges, chaya, tomato, lemons, banana, chayote squash, cacao, coconut, sugarcane, aloe, coffee, eggs, onions, beans, corn, and more.

Their families eat what they grow and they share some with their neighbors, but they also sell some of their produce to people who come to the community to buy their products.

They’ve diversified their farming operations in other ways too, raising chickens, cows, pigs, sheep, fish and even worms! They use the worm castings and composted animal

manure to fertilize their crops and sell the fertilizer to earn income, which they reinvest in their animals by building shelters. Participants are encouraged to pass along the offspring of their animals to others, so that they can also reap the benefits of ownership.

They have cut down on the use of firewood by adopting eco-stoves or even eliminated it completely by using biodigesters to generate methane gas for cooking. They have built solar dryers to help process their grain and coffee harvests and silos for pest-free storage. And they have improved their households by adding latrines and sinks.

Pedro said, “Success is a form of motivation for other communities and it motivates us to support other families.” One person’s success leads to another’s and the impact continues to expand as program participants share their learning with others.

Ruben was the first one to join the program in his community. Now he teaches other families to implement the same activities that

improved his life. His community has a collaborative mentality. They want to teach others what they've learned, then work together to sell their products as a community.

In another community, Nuevo Amanacer, each farmer grows a different crop and they all work together to avoid competition, ensuring that each will make a good profit. They grow a diverse array of chiles, corn, yucca, tomato, pineapple, papaya and plantains.

CASM has trained them how to build and use hoop houses and how to make organic fertilizers using five locally available ingredients: dirt from ant mounds, calcium, sand, ash from their eco-stove, and cow manure. Making their own fertilizer allows farmers to avoid the expense of conventional fertilizer, so their farming operations become more profitable.

Another farmer, Alex, is now passing this knowledge on to others, including his own children. He said, "It is important for us to teach our kids to take care of the environment and eat healthy products."

Antonio, a community leader in Buenos Aires, said, "This program has changed our life economically. I am so grateful for this project." He and his wife are raising pigs, cows and chickens and are proud of what they have accomplished.

Wilmer is a newcomer to the program. He got connected through his cousin and is learning from community leaders like Antonio. "I am grateful for this program because it keeps me busy! I am excited to start my own projects."

And so it continues with the good things learned through this program expanding from one person and one community to another.





Continuing To Do Good

Growing Hope Globally began partnering with World Renew and North East India Committee on Relief and Development in 2009 with the India Patharkhmah program. Over the course of six years, 1,707 households participated, increasing their average food availability from six months worth to a full year.

The program included training on the System of Rice Intensification, Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, kitchen gardening, animal husbandry and water harvesting, but it was also part of a larger community development effort which involved forming self-help groups and then bringing them together to form federations.

The federations are a way for the community to unite and advocate for themselves, ensuring access to government programs, and other opportunities. Federation leaders continually learn new skills and provide training to their fellow community members.

In 2015, funding was completed for the work in Patharkhmah and the

federation took the reigns in leading their community forward. Six years of investment in community leadership and agricultural training were just the beginning. With local leaders who were organized and had the skills and confidence to learn, innovate and teach others, the impact continued to multiply.

As the program ended in Patharkhmah, a new phase began 50 miles away, building on the successes and lessons learned. The Umsning program included similar activities and not only helped families to increase their food availability, but also to diversify their diet and improve their nutrition.

The Umsning program worked with 1,548 families over seven years, concluding in June 2022 as the federation leadership once again took the reigns. Participants were pleased with the changes they saw.

A resident of Sohpdok village said, "The program helped us to have better harvests which will last longer and we have multiplied food sources and we can buy food from the market during the lean season."

A farmer in Umsohliat village said, “Our diet has become more diverse and the project has increased our income, which influences our diet and food availability.”

Soil health has also improved as farmers have begun composting and using hedgerows to control erosion. A farmer in Umsohliat village said, “Earlier there was a lot of soil erosion as this land was barren. When it rained, the topsoil washed away. After attending the training, we started growing fruit trees and started permanent cultivation. Growing fruit trees, and planting nitrogen fixing trees has improved soil fertility and helped to stop erosion.”

Danghun is one of many farmers who have benefitted from the System of Rice Intensification. She said, “Earlier, our harvest lasted for four to five months, but now it lasts for seven to eight months. Once we finish up our stored grains, we buy food from the market using income from the sale of vegetables and fruits and livestock.” SRI has other benefits too. It requires less of an investment in seed than the

traditional method and the wider spacing makes the weeding process much easier.

Omita was particularly engaged in the program, participating in a self-help group as well as attending training on Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, kitchen gardening, health and nutrition. Her family previously relied on her husband’s income doing carpentry outside the village, but after she began earning an income selling pineapple and vegetables and started a grocery shop, thanks to a loan from her self-help group, he was able to join her in working at home. He said, “This program has been a great help for our family. It enables us to eat nutritious and diverse food and provides a better income. My wife has also changed. She is more knowledgeable, well-connected and aspirational than she was before.”

In July 2022, a new phase of programming began in Dimoria, further building upon the lessons learned in Patharkhmah and Umsning and continuing to do good in more communities.



“This program has been a great help for our family. It enables us to eat nutritious and diverse food and provides a better income.”

- Omita’s Husband



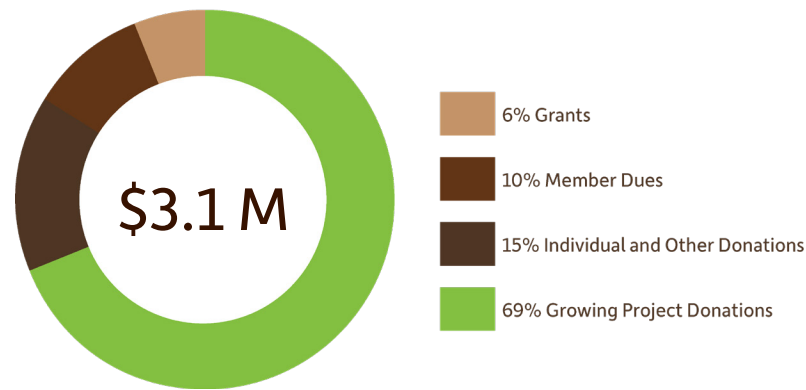


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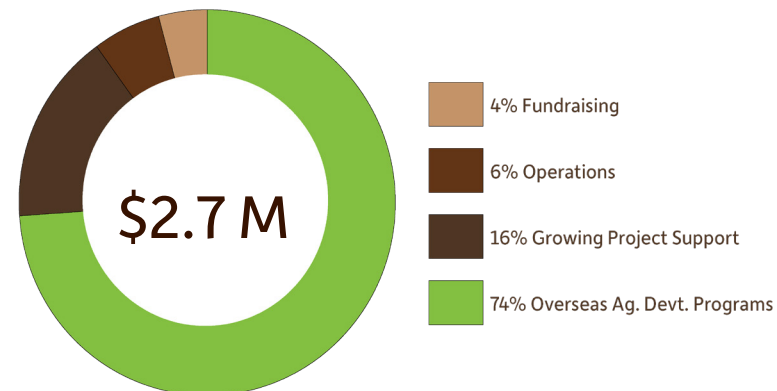


2022-2023 Financial Report

Income



Expenses



Our Partners

Implementing Organizations



Supporting Organizations



Affiliated Organizations



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HOPE**
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