



The Sower's Hands

Newsletter by Hope Seeds International Inc

Issue 72: **SUMMER 2023**

Seed Security is the Cornerstone for Food Security

Just as Jesus is the cornerstone of our salvation, seeds are the cornerstone of food security. Access to good quality, open pollinated seeds and seed saving education, is critical to ensure a good foundation for food availability worldwide, especially in the developing world.

Wheat, maize, rice . . . these three starchy plants provide about half of all the calories we consume. There are around 12,000 plant species that can be used for human consumption, but only about 150 of these are cultivated and many of the varieties within these species have been hybridized. This is problematic since seeds saved from hybrid plants will not reproduce the same plant variety. The heavy reliance on a limited number of crops and the problems with hybridized seeds poses a serious risk when it comes to our food security. We can look back to the devastation of the Irish potato famine to see the importance of crop diversity.



Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

Genesis 1:29 (NIV)

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 75 percent of plant genetic diversity has been lost since the 1900s, when farmers started to grow crops that would offer greater yields and more salable produce. Hybrid seeds have increased world food production; however, they have left many more vulnerable. In the developing world it's created dependencies on hybrids, that have often become too expensive or unavailable due to supply interruptions. Since the art of seed saving has been lost in many cultures, it has left many more reliant on food being shipped from international sources and not grown locally.

This is why Hope Seeds International is focused on finding open pollinated varieties, reintroducing these varieties of food plants, and providing education on saving seeds to be passed down from generation to generation. It all starts with a seed.



Seed saving and seed starting training being conducted in Nicaragua.



Haiti - There is Hope!

When we think about the political situation in Haiti it's easy to get discouraged. Work has been conducted for years in development and economic growth for stabilization. We often get the question at HSI, is it time to leave Haiti to its own fate? However, if we understand the mission, the answer is simple: **No!** In Galatians 6:9 (ESV), Paul writes to the churches, ***“and let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”***

Recently, Allen Speer, CEO of Agape Flights which is one of our vital ministry partners to Haiti, said, *“now is the time they need us the most, there is still Hope for Haiti, we will continue to fly.”* At HSI we are not serving in Haiti for political reasons or even for economic development and education, we are there out of obedience to God and to build His Kingdom by making disciples and by serving his people. Development in itself is not enough; it takes a change of Heart for real lasting change. Due to recent political events, many families have been left more vulnerable than ever before. They find themselves helpless to change their daily struggle to provide for their families. However, there is Hope! And as long as there is a need, Hope Seeds will continue to work with our partners flying hope to Haiti.

Love A Child is another example of our many partners in Haiti. Working through their Agriculture Training Center, they are changing lives for Christ. It would cost Love A Child over \$100,000 annually to purchase seed. This isn't even including the cost of the gospel messages sent. And they are just one of the 60 organizations we work with annually in Haiti, and many also share seeds and the gospel messages with other organizations. Last year over 50,000 family packs along with the message of Hope were sent to Haiti alone, at a fair market value of 1.5 million US dollars. We do this on a very limited budget thanks to the enormous amount of volunteer hours. By providing seeds and education and reaching the people through such tangible means,

doors are opened to share the gospel and live out the compassion of Jesus.

Josias J. Romeus, our country coordinator for Haiti, is also busy on a daily basis doing such work and spreading Hope. Josias is currently conducting this summer's VBS program, Bible Garden School, teaching the next generation about gardening and our Lord. Josias also travels throughout the year supporting families with seed, technical knowledge, and sharing the faith. Josias is now reaching even more through Uranus Radio, teaching on agriculture and God's Word. These uncertain times in Haiti have not discouraged Josias from completing the mission that the Lord has laid on his heart. Even in the face of danger, Josias continues to serve faithfully. Pray for the safety of Josias and his family and all who have dedicated their lives in Haiti to carrying out the mission of our Lord.



Seeds have just been delivered to Agape Flights, are in the hanger, and are ready to fly to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and The Bahamas for 56 mission organizations to provide hope to those who hurt physically and spiritually.





Kitale, Kenya: The Widows' Garden Outreach Perseveres

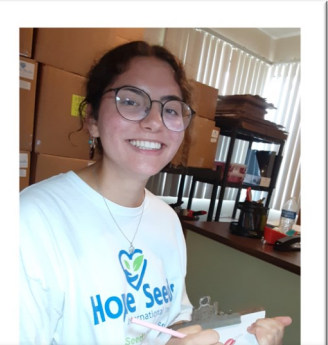
Our HopeCorps missionaries, David Blinn and Ben Newcomer, journeyed back to Africa in May of this year. Focusing on widows and orphans in 5 communities, we are working with our partners to establish wells and gardens, provide training in the method *Farming God's Way*, and follow up with a discipleship program. It's very difficult for these widows to provide for their families. Many of the children end up on the streets or sold into human trafficking. Our goal is to help widows provide nutritious food for their families, along with a source of income, in the hope that they will keep their families together. In the spring newsletter report we had 136 widows in this program. We now have over 500! And we have just learned of an amazing story from Sinyereri village. They had to break through several feet of rock by hand just to establish a well for the widows. It took weeks to accomplish. Perseverance and determination to bring Hope to those who thirst physically and spiritually are changing lives in Kenya!



HSI's Summer Intern

Introducing Carmen Villalba, a very bright, energetic, mission minded young lady with a servant's heart. She recently graduated from Colorado College with a degree in Biology and has a strong interest in Biblical Apologetics and in working with plants. Carmen is conducting research for HSI growing selected heat tolerant varieties that have potential to grow in South Sudan and Northern Uganda and she has established a perennial garden demonstration. She is also involved with creating various brochures, Spanish translation, the trading card outreach, and invoicing and preparing boxes of seeds for shipment. We are grateful for the funding of this intern position provided by a grant from the Zella I. and Junius F. Allen Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. Carmen's future plans are to wait on the Lord, pray, and allow God to lead her through life's journey, possibly even serving at HSI fulltime!!!!

"I'm so grateful for the time I have had at Hope Seeds so far. Through the internship program, I have had the opportunity to use many of my talents and have learned so many new skills, such as growing and maintaining our Hope Gardens! I have gotten to be part of an organization with a mission to reach the lost and feed the hungry, which gives me a sense of purpose each day. Every day is different and exciting, and I am pumped to see what God has planned for the future!"





Remembering Martyrs:

Cheryl Beckett was a member of the medical missionary team killed by the Taliban on August 5, 2010. After three weeks of providing medical care in Nuristan, the 10-person team was hiking through the mountains to return to Kabul when they were surrounded by Taliban insurgents. Team members were shot to death one by one, accused of being spies trying to spread Christianity.

Beckett, 32, lived in Afghanistan for almost six years and had a passion for community development projects and working in women's clinics, all the while sharing Jesus whenever opportunities arose. She once told a friend: *"I want to walk in faith in this place. We are not promised safety . . . but I know that there will also be beauty and fruit due to walking in obedience to God."*

By: Voice of the Martyrs



Remembering Cheryl

Cheryl Beckett had an incredibly sweet spirit and impacted many lives for Christ. Cheryl was one of David Balsbaugh's, (HSI CEO), missionary interns years ago and volunteered for Hope Seeds. Her impact is still felt today and she is greatly missed.

Mike McKinney loved to volunteer for Hope Seeds and had a mission to spend his time helping those in need of growing their own food. Mike spent many hours at home working on special projects for HSI. He attended Bradenton Christian Reformed Church. Mike went home to be with the Lord in the spring of this year. He is greatly missed.



2023 \$eedX2 Generosity:

Our deepest gratitude to everyone who participated in 2023's \$eedX2 Matching Fund Campaign, praying, sharing the opportunity, and giving. What an amazing outpouring of love and generosity from both donors and matching fund sponsors, whose support surpassed the goal of matching up to \$20,000, allowing Hope Seeds International to expand our outreach to even more people in need of Hope!!! Praise the LORD!

\$eedX2 Donations: \$29,352.60

\$eedX2 Matching Funds: \$26,500

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Memorials & Honorariums

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Orville Tompkins
Cheryl Beckett

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Thank you for these precious gifts!



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**Plant A Seed!
Feed A Soul!**

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