

2026 SPRING NEWSLETTER



Doribel, a Quality Protein Maize seed producer in San Isidro – Nueva Jerusalen, Nicaragua

SELF  HELP
INTERNATIONAL

information@selfhelpinternational.org
www.selfhelpinternational.org | 319-352-4040



Donate and support
a family today!



*Self-Help International's
Nicaragua staff,
January 2026*

A MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director



Friends,

As the weather warms and days get longer here in Iowa, we can feel the fresh breath of spring in the air. Whether in Iowa, Nicaragua, or Ghana, farmers and gardeners are plotting out what they'll grow when the rains come and taking the steps needed to prepare the land--hoping to achieve a bountiful harvest to nourish their families and communities.

Hoping because despite the best plans, challenges lie ahead that are beyond even the most masterful farmer's control. Climate change is a daily reality for farmers around the world. Delayed onset of rains and intensifying droughts create unpredictable conditions. New technologies exist to help predict weather patterns and plan accordingly, and improved seed varieties are being developed that can better withstand extreme conditions.

When farmers can access both timely information and productive resources, they can--and do--improve household and community food security. Yet access to these resources remains out of reach for many smallholder farmers, creating conditions for severe food insecurity. In the Upper West Region of Ghana, food insecurity affects 80.3% of the population, one of the highest rates in the country.

Our dedicated staff in Ghana and Nicaragua are working hard to change those conditions by extending training services to more farmers, and increasing availability of climate-tolerant seed - and it's working! Through access to better inputs and training, farmers such as Dorsah (pg. 4) are growing more food, and storing more of what they harvest. By working with Self-Help, Doribel (pictured on the cover), from Nueva Jureselun, Nicaragua has been able to access improved seed, financing, and coaching. When I met with her last month, she told me that by applying those improved practices, she increased her yields, and by shifting from growing commercial corn to becoming a seedcorn producer, she increased her family's income.

Earlier this year, in collaboration with Nicaragua's Ministry of Agriculture and the International Maize & Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico (CIMMYT), we were able to import a new line of corn into the country. This new line of Quality Protein Maize (QPM) is both more nutritious and takes fewer days to reach maturity, making it more suited for drought-prone environments. Doribel and her neighbors are eager to be among the seed producers helping to evaluate and multiply that seed for the nation.

While we know our services are working for the families we can reach, and demand for our services exceeds our current capacity. In 2026, we hope to work with 750 farmers, and we need your help to reach that goal. **A gift of \$135 equips one family with the training and tools to increase their harvest and better nourish their family. Too many families are still waiting for that opportunity. Will you help us reach one more family?**

Your donation today will make a meaningful and lasting impact for one more family to better feed and nourish themselves in the year ahead.

The need is great. Please join us.

Nora Tobin
Executive Director



“For the first time, I can sleep peacefully, knowing I’ll have a bountiful harvest to feed my family.”

DORSAH,
A FARMER IN GHANA’S UPPER
WEST REGION

IMPROVING YIELDS TO IMPROVE LIVES IN THE ULLO TRADITIONAL AREA

The people who live in the Ullo Traditional Area in the Jirapa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana largely rely on subsistence farming, but lack of rainfall and dry, hard-packed soils that are difficult to cultivate have led to high rates of food insecurity.

Women and smallholder farmers in the Ullo Traditional Area are at a particular disadvantage; larger fields and cash crop farms owned by men are often prioritized, which leads to less available labor and inputs for smaller plots. The result is limited and delayed planting, which reduces crop yields and income and contributes to the nutritional deficiencies seen in the area.

In April 2021, after two decades of success in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, Self-Help International was invited by the Paramount Chief to work with women and farmers in the Ullo Traditional Area.

To help increase crop yields, Self-Help International delivers training on good agronomic practices and conservation agriculture. Both theoretical and practical field days and training are offered to farmers. The training centers on sowing, fertilizer application, insecticide and weedicide application, and minimum and no tillage. Crop rotation and mixed cropping are also covered. To give practical lessons to clients, the Self-Help International team established three demonstration plots in the region.

To help ensure that farmers can put into practice the lessons they’ve learned, they are supplied—through a microcredit loan payable after harvest—with inputs including seeds, fertilizer, and the required insecticides and weedicides.

These efforts have enabled program participants—like Dorsah (*above*)—to increase their crop yields as well as the variety of crops that they cultivate, ultimately providing better food security and reducing the risks associated with anemia and malnutrition.

Work is ongoing to increase women’s participation in the family decision making of what to plant, what to save for family consumption, and when to sell their crops for the best return.

Why Self-Help works in the Ullo Traditional Area of the Upper West Region:



61%

of households are food insecure



51%

of pregnant and lactating mothers are iron-deficient or anemic



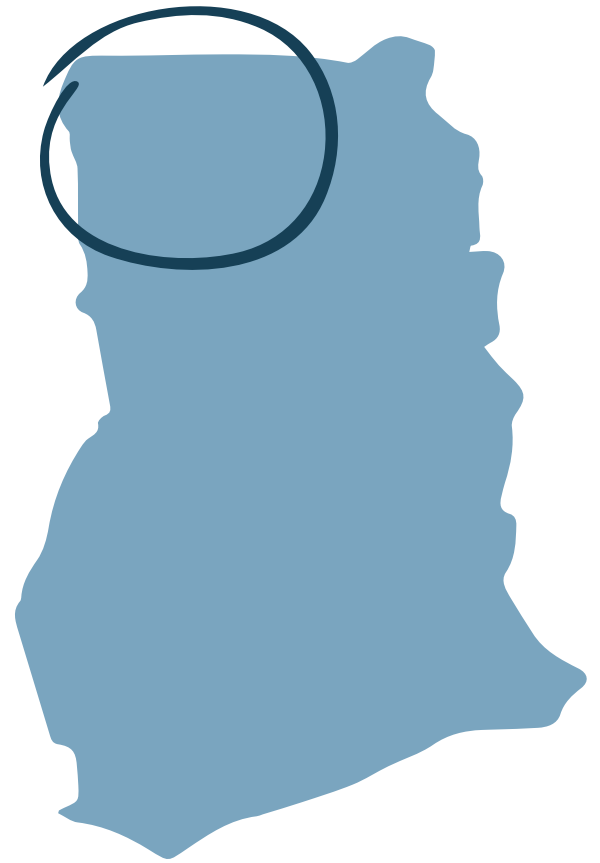
83%

of infants (ages 6-23 months) fail to meet minimum dietary standards



27%

of children (ages 0-36 months) have severe, high-risk or moderate acute malnutrition



Land preparation will begin in the Upper West Region next month. You can make an impact on the success of this seasons's crops with your gift today.

\$10

can purchase a soil test kit

\$35

can buy a grain moisture meter for a group of farmers

\$250

can purchase a single row hand-push planter

\$1,653

can purchase a diesel-powered tiller

Working Hand-in-Hand with Self-Help International, Idania Achieves Her Goals

Idania is a 34-year-old mother of three who lives in La Pedrera, Río San Juan, in Nicaragua. She describes herself as an enterprising woman with a strong desire to improve herself.

When her husband became unemployed, Idania began selling perfume and other products door-to-door in her community. A customer introduced her to Self-Help International's Women Empowerment Program, and after attending several training sessions, Idania applied for and received her first loan of 5,000 córdobas (\$136 USD), which she used to strengthen her perfume business.

Idania quickly saw increased profits, and was able to repay her loan. She used a subsequent loan of 15,000 córdobas (\$409.56 USD) to start a small chicken farm, and an additional loan of 18,000 córdobas (\$491.48 USD) to expand the operation.

Now, she says, "My whole family is involved in keeping the chickens. With the chicken sales, I can repay my loans, contribute to household expenses, and reinvest in both businesses."

Idania continues: "Challenges are constant, but I believe that if we continue working this way, my biggest dreams will come true."



HOW YOU CAN HELP

\$25

can educate a woman about self esteem, basic budgeting, and good business practices

\$150

can build a fuel-efficient oven to start up a baking business

\$500

can host a skills-based or business training session for an entire community

"Because of Self-Help, now I feel like a successful woman who has grown both personally and financially. My sincere gratitude to Self-Help International."

IDANIA,
A SELF-HELP INTERNATIONAL
CLIENT IN LA PEDRERA, NICARAGUA



Idania prepares to vaccinate her chickens.



Felicia, a Self-Help International client in Asakrarka, in Ghana, stands in front of her house.

How a \$66.60 Loan Sparked Felicia’s 15-Year Journey with Self-Help

In 2010, Felicia, who lives in Asakrarka, a community in Ghana’s Ashanti Region, was struggling just to survive. Each day carried more worry than hope, her thoughts consumed by financial hardship and a lack of support.

That all changed when Felicia discovered the Self-Help International (SHI) Microcredit Program. With her first loan of GHS 100.00 (\$66.60), she established a modest tabletop business.

Step by step, with determination and the support of SHI’s mentorship and training, Felicia grew her business. Today, she owns and operates a provision shop, which supports her entire family. Her income enables her to repay her loan and has put her children through school.

Felicia has also achieved what once felt unimaginable: she built her own home.

She shared, “Fifteen years ago, I wouldn’t have known what my life would have been, but thanks to SHI, I have a place I can call my own. This dream felt impossible, but look at me now. Thank you, SHI, for your unwavering support over the past 15 years.”

Felicia’s journey is a testament that a small loan can spark extraordinary change.



Around the world, women farmers have significantly less access to, control over, and ownership of land and other productive assets compared to their male counterparts (*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*).

By providing microcredit loans, training, and support, your gift to Self-Help empowers rural women to determine their own economic futures.

Farming in Northern Nicaragua

Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the Americas. 48% of the population live below the poverty line, and 80% of the population live on less than \$2 per day.

In the north of the country, the terrain is rugged and prone to erosion. Most of the people do not own their land, and those who do have very small plots. The weather conditions are extremely dry, to the point that even drinking water is limited at times. In addition, native seeds often have poor yields, a problem which is exacerbated by traditional planting methods.

Since 2023, Self-Help International has been helping farmers in Palacagüina and Condega, two municipalities in northern Nicaragua, improve yields and crop nutrition through Quality Protein Maize (QPM) and other biofortified seeds. QPM has 90% of the protein found in a glass of skim milk.

The biofortified seeds promoted and distributed in northern Nicaragua by Self-Help International are drought and pest resistant, and, with agronomic training and support, yields and nutrition are both dramatically increased. Families are able to grow enough for their own consumption and to feed their livestock, and often have enough left over to sell for a profit.

The farmers who have been successful partnering with Self-Help International have already begun to spread the seeds and methods to their neighbors and to nearby communities, allowing even more people to benefit.

Because of your support, farmers and families in northern Nicaragua—like José—have increased food security.

José and his father farm 24 acres in the north of Nicaragua, growing corn, beans, and wheat.

Since joining the Self-Help International agriculture program, every one of his harvests has been better than the last.

In fact, José is doing so well that he no longer has to seek work in Costa Rica to earn extra money.

His wife also likes the QPM corn the family plants, because it makes good tortillas and cornbread, and because she knows it is more nutritious.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- \$10 can provide seed to cultivate a half acre of Quality Protein Maize (QPM)
- \$135 can teach one farm family about improved cultivation practices
- \$230 can support the production and dissemination of biofortified seeds to one family



GIVE TO SELF-HELP INTERNATIONAL:

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Send checks, made payable to Self-Help International, to:

Self-Help International
207 20th St. NW Ste. A
Waverly, IA 50677

BY PHONE

Call us at 319-352-4040

ONLINE

Visit selfhelpinternational.org/donate or scan the QR code.



QUESTIONS?

For more information about all the ways you can give to Self-Help International, contact Kassi at kassi@selfhelpinternational.org or call us 319.352.4040.



DID YOU KNOW?

Your donation to Self-Help International could be eligible for a 25% Endow Iowa state tax credit! To qualify, make your donation directly to the Self-Help International - Iowa Operations Fund ID: (494904) held at the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines.



GIVING TO SELF-HELP INTERNATIONAL THROUGH A DAF

Supporting Self-Help International with your donor-advised fund (DAF) is as simple as contacting your account's sponsoring organization and recommending a grant. Self-Help International's Tax ID is 42-0844679.

As a reminder, DAFs cannot be used to make a contribution if you will receive a personal benefit in return, such as event tickets.



"Establishing my donor-advised fund over a decade ago has allowed me to make impactful annual gifts to SHI, ensuring my support aligns perfectly with their evolving mission and needs."

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Skilled advisors share their knowledge and expertise on an ad hoc basis, and participate in quarterly committee meetings of the Board of Directors to advise on organizational strategy related to financial management, fundraising, and program impact. If you'd like to get more involved, please reach out to Nick Taiber at nick.taiber@gmail.com or 319.242.3542 to learn more.

MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

November 4, 2025 - February 27, 2026

In memory of Dorah Asamoah and Kofi Asenso

By Afua Asenso

In honor of Reldon and Margaret Beck

By Edith Norris

In memory of Paul and Doris Beetz

By Leslie and Richard Althaus

In memory of Robert Bode

By Tom Pierson

In memory of Bob Coonradt

By Delores Coonradt

In honor of Ella Doerge

By Nora Tobin

In honor of granddaughters Stacie, Angie and Gabi

By Dave and Janice Dressel

In honor of William Edwards

By Doris and Chuck Montgomery

In honor of Celeste Egger

By Robin Kline

In honor of Will Erken

By Dr. Ronald Erken

In honor of Will and Gabby Erken

By Anonymous

In honor of Bill Graham

By Robert Wootten

In memory of Alfred and Norma Happel

By Larry Happel

In memory of Dr. Dale Harpstead

By Merry and David Fredrick

By Marvin and Marcia Schultz

In memory of Mary Harpstead

By Elizabeth Walch

In memory of Kent and Earlene Hawley

By Beth Hawley

In honor of Keegan Kautzky

By Kate Garst

In memory of Debra Kem

By Rev. Robert Kem

In memory of Dr. K. Robert Kern

By K. Robert Kern

In memory of John Walter Kidd

By Eunice and Bruce Bassler

In memory of Deborah (Dee) Legvold

By Steve Legvold

In memory of Lags

By Teri Edman

In honor of Elyse Lyons DeVilbiss

By Nora Tobin

In honor of Pat Martin

By Barbara Gregg

By Mary Hultman

By Elizabeth Kennedy

By Donna Paulsen and Tom Press

By Margaret Wellbrock

In honor of Erika McCroskey

By Doris and Chuck Montgomery

In honor of Bob and Terri Metcalf

By Brenda Meade

By Ann Schiefelbein

In honor of Brad Mock

By Pat Martin

In memory of Fred Kirschmann

By John Moreland

In memory of J. Howard Mueller

By Anonymous

By Monte and Laura Bowden

By Merry and David Fredrick

By Dave and Laura Frerking

By Frances Johansen

By Cordell Lageschulte

By Richard and Linda Moeller

By Steve and Jaci Mueller

By Kathe and Michael Sherer

By Ruth Sutton

In honor of Richard Neal

By Steve and Margaret Hickle

By Wesley and Jerusha Neal

In honor of Tyson Neukirch

By Paul Neukirch

In honor of Mary Jane Oakland

By Pat Blair

By Dot and Steve Prater

By Rae Reilly

In honor of Jerry and Peggy Perkins

By John Perkins

In honor of Dennis and Elizabeth Popplewell

By Liane Nichols

In memory of Brad Schmidt

By Mark Bohner

In honor of Wendy Sherer

By Anonymous

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By Merry and David Fredrick

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By Robin Kline

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By Lori and Robert Mitchell

In honor of Sydney Swanson

By Florine Swanson

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By Jonathan Taiber

In honor of Kelly & Irene Tobin

By Esther Willham

In honor of Nora Tobin

By Liz Beck

By Mary Butler

By Rae Reilly

In honor of Nadine Weisbrod

By Pamela Bleckwenn

In honor of Jim Willer

By Julie Pennington



"Thank you for supporting us. You have helped me more than you know."

CLAUDIA,
A MEMBER OF
THE SELF-HELP TEEN GIRLS
CLUB AT DANTIE ISLAMIC
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE
ULLO TRADITIONAL AREA.

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SPRING LUNCHEON

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

12:00 Noon

Waverly Area Veterans Post

For more information and to purchase
tickets, visit:

selfhelpinternational.org/spring-luncheon



Join us to
hear first-
hand updates
from staff and
volunteers such
as Nick and
Michele Taiber
highlighting the
impact Self-
Help is making
in Ghana and
Nicaragua.

Alleviating hunger by helping people help themselves since 1959.

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Cadbury Hall
Kumasi, Ghana

IN NICARAGUA
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IN THE UNITED STATES
207 20th St NW Suite A
Waverly, IA 50677

3100 Ingersoll Ave
Des Moines, IA 50312

(319) 352-4040

information@selfhelpinternational.org

www.selfhelpinternational.org

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