

Fully Forward Together

ECHO Strategic Framework
2024-2029



ECHO



A Transformed World Honoring God

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Vision & Mission,
Motivation & Value Statements

The Benefits We Bring:
ECHO's Core Attributes

Regional Impact Centers

Impact Updates

Core Functions: ECHO'S Strategy

Global Goals for 2024-2029



ECHO

Abram J. Bicksler, Ph.D.
President/CEO

Global Team
87

Incorporated
1973

Impact Centers
Asia
East Africa
West Africa
North America
... with more to come!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a rapidly changing world, it is vital for organizations to define their identity and articulate their purpose with clarity. As ECHO continues to grow and evolve in a dynamic global landscape, we have developed a cohesive framework for setting biennial plans across our diverse Regional Impact Centers (RICs).

This document serves as a foundational guide to understanding who we are as an organization and how we aspire to serve the world around us to the glory of God. It outlines the key components of our overarching goals and planning, providing guidance and structure to ensure alignment and effectiveness in our strategic initiatives.

This **framework** is a tool for strategic alignment and collaboration, empowering our RICs to achieve their full potential and contribute to our collective success.

ECHO is defined not only by what we do but by who we are and the values we uphold. We are committed to remain steadfast in our mission to **defeat hunger and improve lives** worldwide. Each person and team is committed to honoring God by moving **fully forward together**, serving the world with passion, integrity, and purpose.

Thank you for joining with ECHO to bring about a **transformed world that honors God!**

Fully Forward Together,

Abram J. Bicksler, Ph.D.

Our Vision, Mission, and Motivation



OUR VISION

A transformed world honoring God

by...

OUR MISSION

Strengthening the capacity of a diverse global network to defeat hunger and improve lives through sustainable food and agroecosystem strategies.

because...

OUR MOTIVATION

As Jesus first loved us, as agents of restoration we seek to glorify God and love our neighbors.

OUR VALUES

We are followers of Jesus who value stewardship, partnership, and the dignity of all.





as Jesus first loved us... we are

Agents of Restoration

A photograph of a garden scene. In the foreground, there are several large, vibrant red flowers with yellow centers. A bee is captured in mid-flight, hovering over the flowers. The background is a soft-focus green garden with various plants and trees. A white curved banner with a black arrow pointing right is overlaid on the image.

Seed Banking is a global goal! Go to page 19 to read more!



ECHO Fills a Critical Niche in our World

The Benefits We Bring

These seven unique benefits differentiate us as ECHO, enabling us to meet critical needs worldwide.

1

FILLS A CRITICAL NICHE FOR OUR PARTNERS

ECHO's uniqueness and effectiveness is recognized globally! We fill critical roles in reducing hunger, improving lives and expanding the Kingdom of God! ECHO empowers and equips our partners with creative and contextualized responses to hunger, nutrition and livelihoods. Our work is on the *preventative end* of human trafficking, forced migration, conservation, restoration, climate change, and more.

2

BIBLICALLY HOLISTIC

Holistic mission is central to ECHO's work. ECHO accomplishes this through supporting the global Church, engaging in creation care and sustainable food systems.

3

SEEDS & SEED BANKS

We at ECHO believe seed banking is essential in addressing the needs of smallholder farmers tackling issues of cultural and cuisine preservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, agrobiodiversity conservation, and food security. The global demand for seed banking remains inadequately addressed.

4

"STANDS IN THE GAP" ON BEHALF OF THE POOR & MARGINALIZED

We seek not only to promote good agriculture practices and options, **but also** to take a strong position against injustice. We desire and pray to be worthy voices for the poor, the marginalized, and God's creation. We must safeguard and advocate on behalf of people who wish to provide for and protect their families, their culture, their land, and their future.

5

A DIVERSE GLOBAL NETWORK

ECHO's network is incomparable! We have an incredibly diverse network: permaculturists, missionaries, grassroots NGOs, Church leaders, farmers, leaders of mosques, academics, researchers, and government extension agents... nearly 19,000 global partners **and growing!** This variety allows us to discover valuable "options" for farmers. It is **our** job to verify those options, disseminate, and ask for feedback!

6

REGIONALLY CONTEXTUALIZED

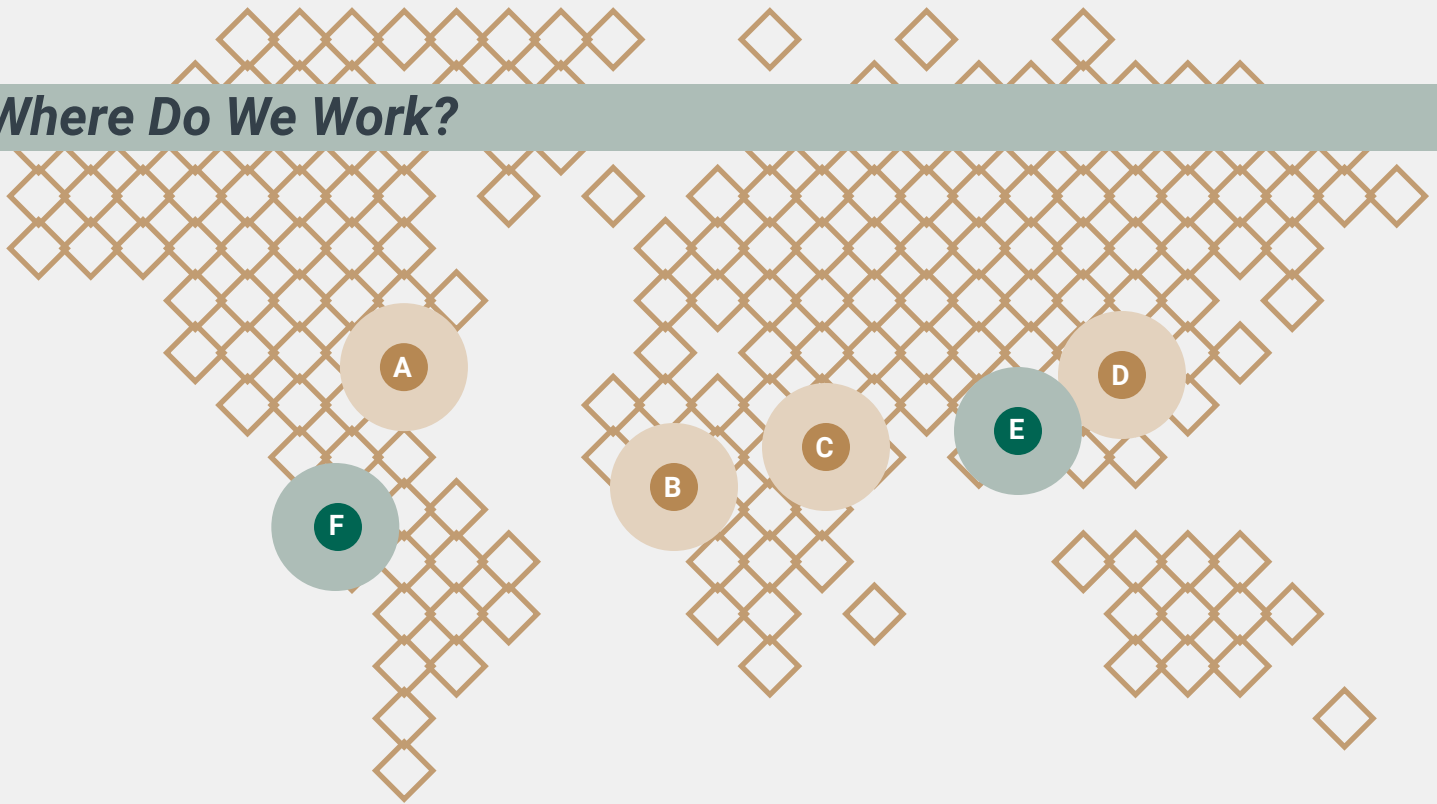
Regional Impact Centers (RICs) contextualize ECHO's work to the needs and context of specific network members and geographic locations. Staff work alongside partners, asking questions, learning, and sharing options that address localized challenges. Regional trainings, symposia, and consultations happen every month worldwide.

7

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

ECHO provides innovative, hands-on learning opportunities through conferences, trainings, and field demonstrations at ECHO's RICs. Agricultural options and strategies are disseminated through a variety of appropriate formats including publications, radio, on-site conversations, videos, and webinars through ECHOcommunity.org.

Where Do We Work?



A

North America Regional Impact Center

Fort Myers, Florida, USA
established 1973

Fast facts: 20+ staff and interns serving local and global needs; 52 acre global demonstration, research, and teaching farm with seed bank; North American partners and those aspiring to work internationally visit and train on-site!

B

West Africa Regional Impact Center

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
established 2014

Fast Facts: Staff of 9 working alongside national trainers; hundreds trained monthly in topics including 21-day compost and homemade liquid fertilizer; new office will allow for better demonstration and training opportunities; common regional language is French.

C

East Africa Regional Impact Center

Arusha, Tanzania
established 2012

Fast facts: Staff of 14 with robust national intern program; one acre plant nursery and seed bank; supports work among pastoralists/herders and smallholder farmers (especially youth and women); recent and future regional trainings have reached into South Sudan and Malawi; resources and trainings conducted in Swahili, Portuguese, and Rwandan.

D

Asia Regional Impact Center

Chiang Mai, Thailand
established 2009

Fast facts: Staff of 20; Small Farm Resource Center includes training facilities for 200; agroforest and seed bank producing 200+ seed varieties; agricultural articles translated into 7 regional languages; regional workshops and trainings monthly; 5000+ seed packets distributed in 2023 alone!

E

COMING SOON: South Asia Regional Impact Team

Based in Chiang Mai, Thailand
to be established in 2024

Serving the needs and partners across the South Asian sub-continent representing nearly 4,000 people groups speaking 8 major languages and dozens more; 2 billion+ people of which 65% live in rural and farming communities.

F

COMING SOON: Central America & Caribbean Regional Impact Center

location TBD to best serve the region
to be established by December 2026

This Impact Center will focus on networking strategies in Spanish and local languages appropriate to the region. In this region, climate change and increasing population have made water scarce-creative solutions are needed!



Regional Impact Centers are the tool

Regional contextualization allows us to serve and strengthen our partners with joy!

IMPACT UPDATE:



ONE TRAINING MULTIPLIES TO HUNDREDS!

ECHO trainees come from all walks of life with a passion to help those around them **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP** through agriculture.

Samuel is one of thousands who have been trained by ECHO teams to freely share the knowledge entrusted to them.

My name is Samuel Souleymane.

I attended the ECHO training in Niger several years ago, around 2015. I'm a veterinarian, but also have for many years helped the NGO World Renew as a trainer on things like agriculture and animal husbandry.

Ever since the ECHO training, we have adapted much of our agriculture training to include the way that we were taught at ECHO, for example with liquid fertilizer and biothermal compost, along with of course Zai Holes (which we had been doing for years before the training as well). Through the partners that World Renew works



with, I have helped train more than 100 villages. I have even trained several Bible schools in agriculture, among other things.

Here is a testimony from a student at a Bible school that I recently trained on agriculture.

Keche is one of our participants at a Bible School who has received the agricultural training we offer the school's students. He is taking Bible courses with a view to becoming a pastor and is staying there with his wife and children. The school gives each student a field to help support his or her family. Keche tells us that he benefited from the agricultural training provided by World Renew.

Thanks to what he learned, he made liquid fertilizer and compost for his field. He also traced out his field and made Zai Holes. In addition, he soaked his grains before sowing.

Keche says, *'In past years, I didn't have enough crops, my production only covered needs for 4 months. I went into debt to pay my children's school fees. Now, thanks to the work I've done in my field, my harvest seems to be abundant and will cover our needs for 7 months. Today, even if I must borrow money, it won't be much. Agricultural training has helped me to overcome certain challenges, such as having enough food and paying for my children's education.'*



Building Container Gardens, Samaritan's Purse, Burkina Faso

"...more than 100 villages have received agriculture trainings. I have even trained several Bible schools in agriculture, among other things."

I (Samuel) have a great desire to continue training others in agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as experimenting with agriculture to the glory of God.



Thanks to your faithful support over the years, impact like this is possible! This story of shared impact from Samuel is just one of thousands of partners like him!

Please consider how you might help ECHO over the next 5 years to increase this impact!

ECHO's "Options" are shared!

200+
ECHOcommunity.org
Number of countries served every month!

11,998
Trial Seed Packets
Number of packets distributed in 2023!

8,968
Trained
Number of people attending ECHO events in 2023!

40
Multiplier
Average number of people with whom ECHO training participants share their knowledge

Options & Solutions Conceived & Shared

In partnership with the network and farmers



It starts here with identifying "options" for farmers

"Core Functions" ECHO's Strategy

These approaches describe our strategy for achieving the global goals depending on the unique needs and assets of our network.

Each "core function" is applied as a strategy for attaining the global goals.

These core functions occur within the context of the ECHO network of diverse, yet like-minded people.

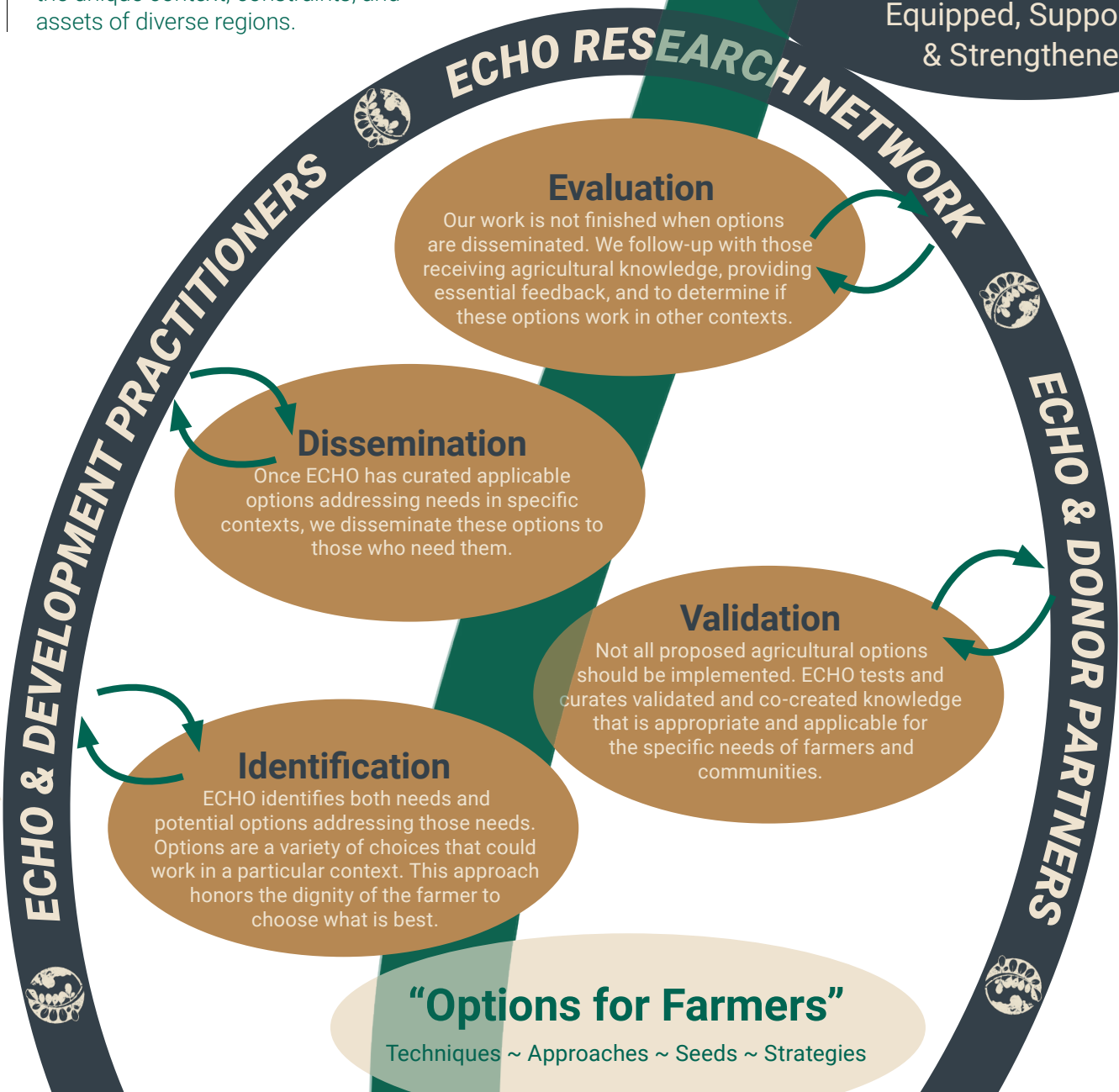
Our Impact Centers allow us to carry out the mission of ECHO adapted to the unique context, constraints, and assets of diverse regions.

Shared Impact
of reduced hunger & improved lives!



Partner Implementation

Network Partners
Equipped, Supported & Strengthened



Evaluation
Our work is not finished when options are disseminated. We follow-up with those receiving agricultural knowledge, providing essential feedback, and to determine if these options work in other contexts.

Dissemination
Once ECHO has curated applicable options addressing needs in specific contexts, we disseminate these options to those who need them.

Validation
Not all proposed agricultural options should be implemented. ECHO tests and curates validated and co-created knowledge that is appropriate and applicable for the specific needs of farmers and communities.

Identification
ECHO identifies both needs and potential options addressing those needs. Options are a variety of choices that could work in a particular context. This approach honors the dignity of the farmer to choose what is best.

"Options for Farmers"
Techniques ~ Approaches ~ Seeds ~ Strategies

FIVE GLOBAL GOALS

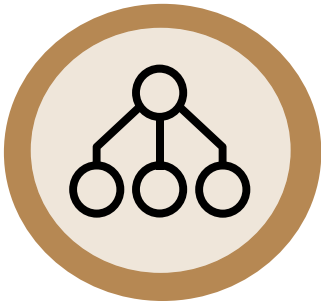
To Defeat Hunger & Improve Lives

The vision, mission, and motivation have guided the development of these global goals.

These goals are the outcomes towards which ECHO strives. The goals leverage ECHO's core attributes to achieve the mission of defeating hunger and improving lives. This is done in a way that is consistent with ECHO's values and Christian identity that can lead to **a transformed world that honors God.**

Network Capacity Goals

These global goals seek to strengthen and expand the Regional Impact Centers to contextually support and equip the network through a number of options, plans, strategies, and approaches.



Goal One
**STRENGTHEN
AND GROW THE
ECHO NETWORK**

Goal Two
**INCREASE THE
NETWORK'S
CAPACITY TO BE
EFFECTIVE**



Cross-Cutting Thematic Goals

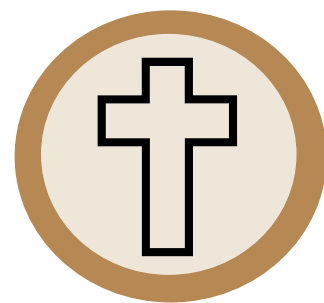
These global goals take into account our core attributes, our "DNA", and are meant to be executed across all of ECHO's programs and work.



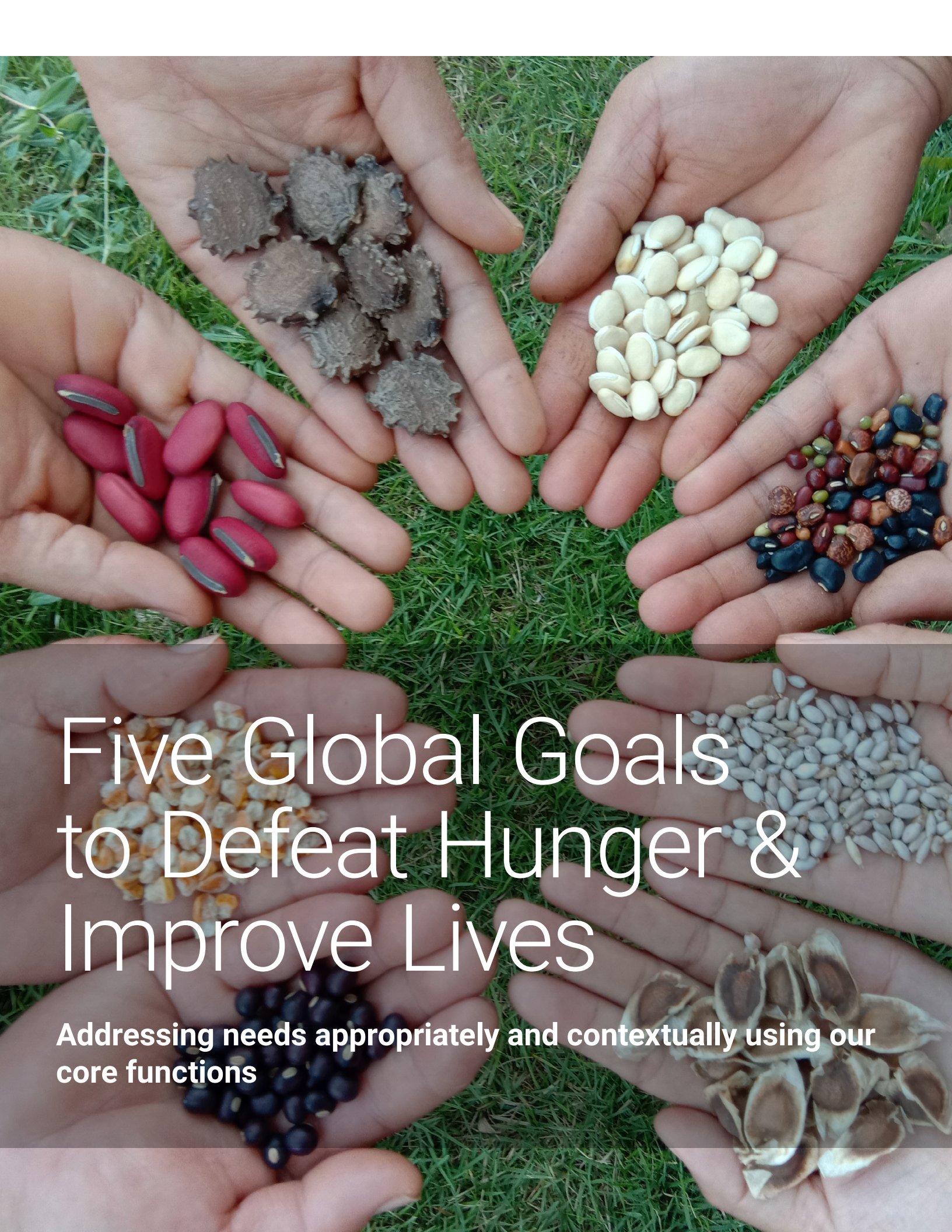
Goal Three
**ADVANCE
GLOBAL SEED
BANKING**



Goal Four
**CHAMPION
AGROECOLOGY**



Goal Five
**PARTNER IN BIBLICAL
HOLISTIC MISSION
WITH THE GLOBAL
CHURCH**



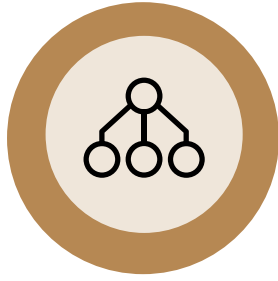
Five Global Goals to Defeat Hunger & Improve Lives

Addressing needs appropriately and contextually using our
core functions



Digging Deeper

A closer look at our global goals and strategies for monitoring progress and determining effectiveness



Digging Deeper:
Goal 1 focuses on increasing the *breadth* of the network



Goal One
Strengthen & Grow the ECHO Network

ECHO's network is growing daily in number and in the regions where they are working.

ECHOcommunity.org is accessed by 200+ countries with an average of 70k users every month! Through our online resources and in-person trainings we will continue to grow in regions where the need is great.

This goal focuses on our core functions of identifying, validating, disseminating, and evaluating options for our network to use in their implementation strategies.



There are often areas we cannot travel to because of safety amid frequent terrorist attacks.

We pray for safety and we will keep on doing our work, the work God called us to do.

With the Lord's guidance we will do it.

Robert Sanou
West Africa Director

Mid-term Target --> December 2026

Launch network ecosystem tool



Monitoring & Evaluation

Core Function Focus

The bulk of our work has been on the validation and the dissemination of "options for farmers," the testing through research or network partners' research, and the sharing of these "options" (techniques, seeds, plants and breeds of merit, approaches, technologies, etc.).

We now want to build further capacity among our network to improve their monitoring and evaluation processes. Our shared impact will be demonstrated by shared follow up, collaboration, and data collection.

Goal 1 Approaches:

- ➔ **Launching network ecosystem tool allowing for better interaction and collaboration**
- ➔ **Direct training in new areas where need is greatest and resources are scarce**
- ➔ **Upload and translation of new data, options, and media**



Resources:

ECHO Publications

- ECHO Development Notes (EDN)
- Online Index (EDN)
- ECHO Asia Notes (AN)
- ECHO Asia Note Articles with Translation
- ECHO Latin America and Caribbean Notes
- ECHO East Africa Notes
- ECHO West Africa Notes
- ECHO Best Practice Notes
- ECHO Technical Notes



Digging Deeper:
Goal 2 focuses on increasing the depth & success of the network

Goal Two
Increase the Network's Capacity

To build capacity among our network members, ECHO must actively pursue new ways and places to identify options for and with farmers! The creative capacity of our network (that includes the farmers themselves) is often limitless! Working regionally, ECHO and our partners can discover and promote solutions that "use what you have to make what you need." Additionally, follow-up and resources for oral cultures are crucial!

At ECHO West Africa, the team takes the following steps: "After each training, we create a flow for the follow-up activities, creating [online] groups, so that we can call each participant, ask what is going on and learn about the challenges."
 –Robert Sanou, West Africa Director



I am most excited to see expansion and growth, specifically our forthcoming South Asia Impact Team, which will be based out of the Asia Impact Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

South Asia is home to the largest number of undernourished people globally, the largest number of farmers, and the largest number of unreached and unengaged people groups.

We have a monumental task before us, but **this only highlights the relevance and importance of what we do**, so it is a privilege.

Patrick Trail
Asia Director

Mid-term Targets --> December 2026

End-term Targets --> December 2029

Target 1

Creation of **two additional** Regional Impact Centers

Target 2

Creation of **100 media tools** for use across all regions

Target 3

Creation of **250 media tools** for use across all regions



Goal 2 Key Approaches:

- ➔ Opening new Regional Impact Centers to identify and amplify local options and provide more in-person training
- ➔ On-going appropriate technology development at the grassroots level
- ➔ Capturing these trainings and appropriate technologies via print and video to share widely



Digging Deeper:
Beyond tools and training, we are providing resources people need to grow a brighter future.

Goal Three Advance Global Seed Banking

ECHO will advance global seed banking by strengthening and building the capacity of a seed banking network. This goal is in response to specific unmet needs for access to, utilization of, and protection of appropriate seed options in many global contexts.

Our Seed Strategy works because we're approaching agriculture differently. We promote seeds that are:

- ➔ **Underutilized:** According to the United Nations, more than 75% of the world's food supply comes from just 12 different crops. By focusing on underutilized crops, we're giving farmers more options that make sense for their environment and cultures.
- ➔ **Adaptable:** Small-scale farming is different than commercial production. Many farmers need to grow in difficult areas or drought-affected regions. We select and highlight seeds that can be used in a variety of difficult growing situations to improve food security and bring healing to the land.
- ➔ **Sustainable:** Sustainability is good for everyone. By teaching restorative methods and providing locally appropriate seeds that produce reliably, we're helping people create a future that works with the land, not against it.
- ➔ **Accessible:** Through our Seed Banks, workers, farmers, and missionaries may request up to 10 free trial seed packets. These seed varieties can help families diversify their crops, improve nutrition and boost incomes.



At ECHO we are trying to dispel this notion that small farmers don't have a very important role to play in seed saving...especially the neglected and underutilized species.

Our goal is to work with farmers to have seed banks in each country in the region.

Erwin Kinsey
East Africa Director



Seed banking is not only the actual physical seeds, the germplasm, the cuttings or the trees, but also about the database.

God made 350,000 species of plants!

Dr. Grace Ju Miller
North America Director

Key Approaches

- ➔ **Create a community/NGO Seed Banking Network that shares successful options**
- ➔ **Increase capacity and amount of seed bank research**
- ➔ **Share seed banking options through events, trainings, publications, and videos.**
- ➔ **Evaluate seed banking options through the network.**

All approaches seek to give farming communities the opportunity to determine what plants have merit and value in order to reduce hunger and improve lives. By saving seeds, communities gain control: lower input costs, preserving high yield specimens for the following season, as well as preserving their culture/cuisines.



Digging Deeper:
**Goal 4 will seek to support farmers
 beyond the farm so sustainable
 improvement of lives
 is achieved.**

**Goal Four
 Champion Agroecology**

Agroecology is a holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems —systems that are fair and just.

Going forward we must not only address problems in crop production, but also human health, management of the land and animals, market systems, and more. Looking at crop production in a vacuum is unsustainable. Crop production must be considered alongside animal production, cuisine and foods and culture. This extends to looking at markets, market access, and the larger systems in which food is embedded.

In Asia, ECHO partners are regularly requesting options to better equip farmers in managing farms and knowledge of market systems. *“We regularly come across the need for ‘post harvest’ innovations, specifically related to the challenges of record keeping, money matters, and marketing/value addition of agricultural product,”* says Asia Director, Patrick Trail.

Agroecology serves as a comprehensive approach for ECHO’s core functions due to its holistic options for the network and its collaborative knowledge creation within a contextualized people-centered framework.



Agroecology looks at sustainable food systems through the lens of ecological principles and concepts....

...and we find that it is all connected.

Dr. Abram J. Bicksler
ECHO President/CEO

Key Approaches

- ➔ **Communicate agroecology principles and practices among ECHO staff, donors, volunteers, and the global network.**
- ➔ **Connect ECHO's agroecology practices across all other goals. The principles and concepts of agroecology must be considered and implemented into everything we do.**



Goal 4 & 5 terms defined

Holistic Mission

Addressing the spiritual, social, and physical needs of communities and individuals

Creation Care

Caring for and stewarding our earth sustainably and restoratively— following God’s charge to the first man

Global Church

Christians coming from every region, country, language, race, economic status

Global South/Majority World

Underdeveloped and economically disadvantaged regions/countries including Africa, India, Brazil, Mexico —an overwhelming majority located in or near the tropics

Global North

Countries with high level of economic development including USA, Western Europe, Australia, Japan & Canada

Digging Deeper:
ECHO has a history of and is well-positioned to...

Goal Five Partner in Biblical Holistic Mission with the Global Church

The global Church is centered in the Global South, where the majority of small-scale agricultural producers are located. Engaging with the global Church to accomplish Goals 1-4 will increase the capacity of the global Church to practice holistic mission.

God seeks to work through his people and the Church to serve others and share his plan of reconciliation, including creation. We desire to partner in Biblical, holistic mission with the global Church which has shifted to the Majority World.

It's our joy to partner alongside the church under the Lordship of Jesus around the world. In so many places where the church is strongly rooted, pastors are also farmers, congregations are made up of farmers, and regional/national church leaders are farmers. In the Global South, some seminaries train people not only to become pastors, but also farmers. We want to serve and partner with them more.



We're seeing such a hunger among Church leaders for practical agricultural techniques relevant to hunger-related needs in their communities.

What an opportunity for ECHO!

Dr. Tim Motis

Global Research & Publications Director



Key Approaches

- ➔ Promote Biblical Holistic Mission among ECHO staff, donors, volunteers and the network.
- ➔ Strengthen the Global Church to practice Holistic Mission.
- ➔ Connect this valuable goal to all other goals.
- ➔ Strengthen our ability to engage with the Global Church to accomplish our Global Goals!



Dignity in Farming

The first job God gave mankind was to care for and be a good steward of His creation.

JOIN US!

ECHO is launching into new regions and developing new partnerships everyday. The impact made on smallholder farmers and their families is tangible, real, and is only possible through collaborative support with our partners worldwide... YOU!

Please consider partnering with us for greater impact around the world!



To learn more:



echonet.org

For Technical
Resourcing:



echocommunity.org



**A Transformed World
Honoring God**

Follow us:



@echofightshunger

Shared Impact

of reduced hunger & improved lives!





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