

## Frequently Asked Questions: Agriculture

### **Why does Episcopal Relief & Development focus on agriculture?**

Almost one billion people are affected by chronic hunger and poverty worldwide. Each year, more than 10 million children under age five die from malnutrition and hunger-related causes.

Episcopal Relief & Development and its partners work to alleviate hunger and improve food supply through agriculture programs that diversify and increase harvests while protecting the environment.

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the local economy with the vast majority of people owning or working for small farms and relying on food production to feed their families and generate income. A single meal provides food for today, but sustainable farming practices empower families to be self-sufficient and maintain a consistent, abundant supply of healthy and nutritious food.

### **What do the agriculture programs offer communities?**

Along with Church partners and local organizations, Episcopal Relief & Development empowers communities to improve food production by providing training, tools and resources. Using the value chain model, its programs help farmers gain access to credit, learn about improved agricultural techniques and inputs, grow food, and find create ways to access local markets and increase their income.



### **How do programs improve nutrition while protecting the environment?**

Our programs improve household nutrition and protect the environment by increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of crops. Our partners cross high-yield plants with hardy local varieties that are more drought resistant and require less chemical fertilizer and pesticides. They also use permaculture techniques such as intercropping and innovative irrigation practices to improve the soil and conserve water.

### **Why do programs focus on supporting women?**

Women play a major role in small-scale agricultural production and ensuring their children have enough food. Yet they are less likely to have access to oxen and ploughs, modern technology, or credit -and are consigned to long hours of labor and low productivity as a result of having to work with hand tools. To empower women farmers to reach their full potential Episcopal Relief & Development and our partners reach out and encourage their participation in training and increase access to credit and improved seeds, tools, and technology.