

## Introduction

Despite much effort to advance women's empowerment, women all over the world remain vulnerable to inequality, insecurity and violence and are unable to experience enjoyment of their fundamental human rights.

Episcopal Relief & Development's strategic plan to address these problems for Women & Girls focuses on partnering with local leaders and supporting churches and other faith communities to strengthen and improve their efforts by:

- Promoting Women's Empowerment
- Creating Economic Stability
- Cultivating Women Leaders
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

*Every woman should live a life free from violence and be treated with grace, dignity and respect. Only then can communities truly heal and thrive.*

We have found that these goals are closely interrelated and that while each has distinct opportunities and challenges, development in one area promotes improvement in all of them. Strategic initiatives need to be undertaken within a framework of cultural competence and consideration of the health and well-being of women and girls throughout their lives.

We are involved in standing up for women and girls because of a strong imperative to promote peace and justice and to value the dignity and worth of all individuals. By doing so, we provide support to victims, educate our community about healthy relationships and challenge harmful societal norms that perpetuate violence against women within their communities and wider society.

As such, faith leaders are uniquely positioned to confront harmful social norms and behaviors and advance social changes and practices that improve the lives of women. This includes focusing on financial equality, social and emotional safety and the prevention of violence against women and girls everywhere.

*As a faith-based organization, we understand that faith leaders are among the most trusted members of society and their words and actions carry significant influence.*

This toolkit will help you find your way into this work. It includes resources to help you pray for those working to end violence against women and to amplify the leaders of all those working toward the empowerment of vulnerable women in their communities.

Thank you for joining us in this important work.