

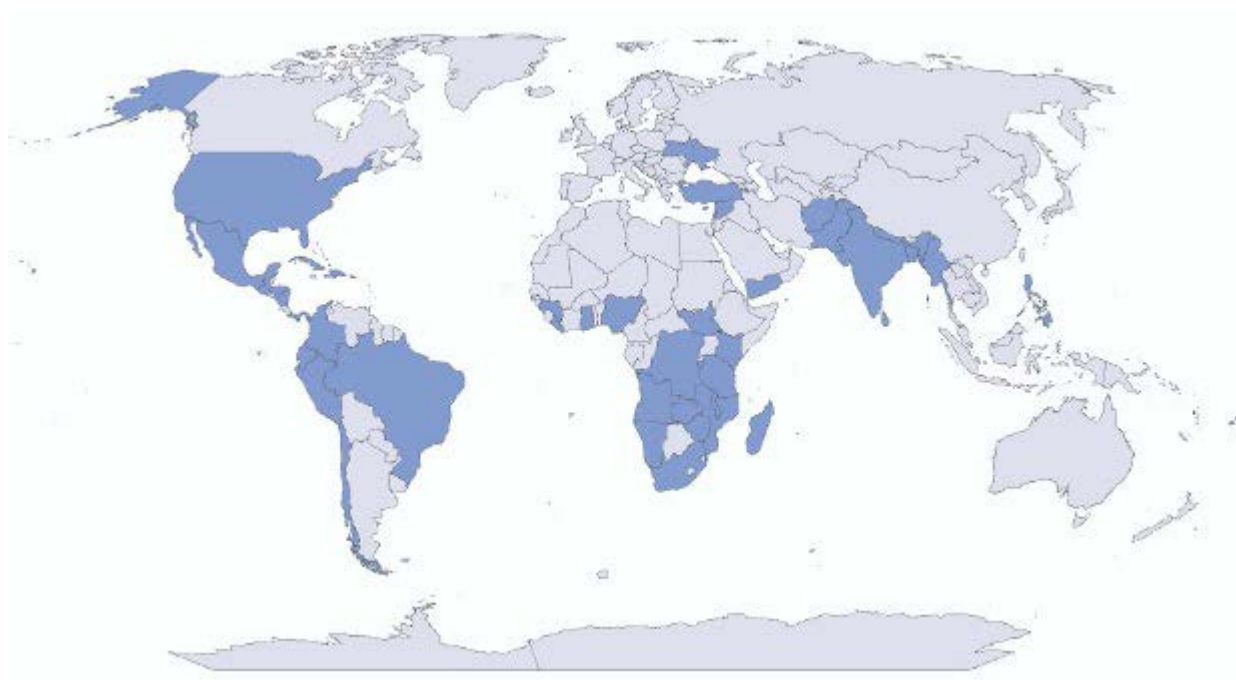
Fact Sheet – Disaster Resilience

Supporting communities to prepare for and respond to disaster

The past few years have been a period of significant global turbulence, driven largely by the COVID-19 pandemic and a cascade of mutually reinforcing crises, including conflict and climate-related disasters that have pushed hundreds of millions into a state of precarity. Since 2020, Episcopal Relief & Development has supported disaster- and crisis-affected communities in over 50 countries, reaching more than 5.3 million people with life-saving inputs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and with longer-term assistance to support recovery and strengthen community resilience. Our work in this area is in response to both natural disasters and human-made crises—such as conflict and war. Many of the disasters we respond to garner little international attention and are protracted, and, as a result, often go under-resourced. **We work through a global network local church and community-based partners to reach those most vulnerable to and are disproportionately impacted by disaster**, such as women, children, elderly people, persons with disabilities and those who lack access to government protections (e.g., migrants and refugees).

Where we work

Our current portfolio of humanitarian response and disaster resilience projects spans more than 50 countries, working across a network of 89 community-based partners to support some of the most under-served and hardest-to-reach communities.



Our approach to disaster resilience: preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery

We take a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disaster mitigation—coordinating an interfaith response, and working with, and strengthening the capacity of local churches and community partners to prepare for and respond to disasters, efficiently and effectively. Moreover, we remain present and invest in communities long after the crisis, supporting them to heal, recover and rebuild.

Support Function	Intervention
 <p>Fostering a culture of preparedness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming disaster committees that reflect the diversity of the community and inclusive of traditionally excluded groups, including youth, people with disabilities and the elderly • Training local church partners, disaster committees, and communities in disaster planning (preparedness, mitigation, and response) • Prepositioning resources so partners are able to access funds and supplies when an emergency develops • Investing in sustainable early warning and communication systems • Identifying and socializing evacuation routes and community drills • Developing household disaster preparedness kits • Conducting resilience assessments to assess hazards, vulnerabilities and community capacity and assets to adequately mitigate and prepare for the potential risks associated with disaster situations
 <p>Providing relief in the wake of a disaster</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting post-disaster community assessments, including rapid social inclusion, and vulnerability assessments to identify households and community members disproportionately impacted by disasters—e.g., women, children, persons with disabilities, older migrants and other marginalized groups • Distributing food aid in the form of food baskets, cash for food and vouchers • Facilitating cash transfers where appropriate via physical and digital distribution • Providing other emergency inputs such as access to shelter and water, hygiene and dignity kits, survival kits, generators, transportation, fuel and other essential services • Delivering trauma-informed psychosocial supports (e.g., pastoral care, counseling) in response to trauma and to promote resilience • Ensuring staff care and support to safeguard the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of those working most proximate to the disaster • Accompanying partners to establish institutional contingency plans in instances where the partner has been adversely impacted by the disaster (e.g., compromised infrastructure, lack of staff availability)
 <p>Supporting long-term recovery & resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating linkages to government and private assistance (e.g., public benefits and schemes and social support programs) to help stabilize households • Strengthening livelihoods aligned with local market realities to increase economic stability and resilience • Coordinating with other recovery actors (e.g., other international and local NGOs) to build resilience links/collective impact for the most marginalized • Providing cash and asset transfers to stabilize households • Establishing savings & lending groups to promote financial inclusion and access to capital, particularly for marginalized groups

Foundational to our disaster resilience efforts is the Pastors and Disasters Toolkit. The toolkit is a resource manual and workbook of practical tools designed to strengthen partners' capacity to respond more effectively to the increasing severity and frequency of disasters, especially within the context of local Anglican or Episcopal churches and organizations. The Toolkit is unique in that it accounts for and builds upon churches' existing human, technical and structural assets and resources—thereby heightening awareness of available networks and improving monitoring mechanisms that enhance and increase local capacity.

*"We always make it a point to include disaster preparedness in our organizing phase. The toolkit guided us on what to do to be able to come up with committees, tasks, data, etc. **It opened our ideas on things we can do to maximize our local assets in preparing and strengthening our disaster plans.**"*

*— Regional Officer, E-CARE Foundation,
The Philippines*

Pastors & Disasters: A Toolkit for Community-Based Disaster Resilience

The Pastors & Disasters toolkit strengthens partners' capacity in **four disaster resilience competencies**:

1. **Community mobilization:** Supporting and encouraging community members, including establishing Disaster Committees that represent that diversity of the community. Disaster Committee members are trained in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.
2. **Resilience assessment:** The assessment builds on the skills, knowledge and resources available within and outside the community and takes into account existing vulnerabilities. A variety of community members are engaged through the assessment, such as civic leaders and historically marginalized groups, including but not limited to women, elderly people, people with disabilities and children.
3. **Disaster resilience implementation:** Developing and carrying out a resilience management plan to increase resilience to disasters, utilizing existing possessions, property, networks, local resources and other assets to reduce risk and increase resilience.
4. **Disaster response:** Executing added-value relief and recovery activities that address both short-term and longer-term needs in collaboration with other humanitarian actors.



Photo of partners in Zimbabwe conducting a post-disaster community assessment

Working together for lasting change

CENTRAL AMERICA EMERGENCY FOOD RELIEF & RESILIENCE PROJECT (CENTRAL AMERICA, 2021-PRESENT)



In 2020, hurricanes Iota and Eta, layered atop of the COVID-19 pandemic, devastated the region and exacerbated already deep social and economic challenges faced by rural communities in Central America. Responding to these challenges, particularly food insecurity and corresponding health declines, Episcopal Relief & Development established the Central America Emergency Food Relief & Resilience Project with support from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation, a component fund of The Inland Empire Community Foundation, and a private donor. Episcopal Relief & Development partnered with the Episcopal Diocese of El Salvador, the Episcopal Church of Guatemala's

Diocesan Development Office, the Anglican Agency for the Development of Honduras of the Episcopal Church of Honduras (AANGLIDESH), and the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD), to procure and **deliver 4,468,610 meals to 28,430 people within 6,649 households** through 20 food distributions across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (data from year one of the project).

Beyond alleviating hunger, the project had a positive impact on household expenditure patterns. The endline evaluation determined that:

- **Household food expenditures decreased.** At endline in all four countries by an average of 33% and total household expenditures fell by an average of 13.3%. Household expenses such as education (25%), health (9%), fuel (8%) and farming (23%) increased in all countries. Project qualitative survey responses suggest this increase is due to households' reduced food expenditures.
- **Household saving patterns improved.** At project close, monthly household savings increased in all four countries by an average of 163%. Partners reported participants had been able to save in food procurement and use the savings to purchase planting supplies, buy medicines, pay for school fees, purchase clothes and shoes for their children and make repairs their homes.

To learn more about Episcopal Relief & Development or the Central America Food Relief & Resilience Project, visit our [website](#).