

INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM

2015



BURUNDI | SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Creating Sustainable Livelihoods and Improving Nutrition

Burundi has one of the highest rates of chronically malnourished children under five (58 percent). Efforts to address Burundi's malnutrition crisis are complicated by a multitude of interconnected issues – political instability, high population density, a hilly topography prone to soil erosion, susceptibility to crop disease, poor seed quality and extreme poverty, with 66.9% of the population living below the poverty line.

Episcopal Relief & Development has collaborated with *Province de L'Eglise Anglicane du Burundi* (Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi, or PEAB) to develop an integrated program to create sustainable livelihoods and improve nutrition. The program actively engages a network of volunteer facilitators (*animateurs*) who are trained and provide assistance to their fellow community members to improve farming practices and strengthen seed quality and supplies, while combating erosion through a multi-pronged strategy that includes tree planting.

A robust partnership with the National Research Institute of Burundi has facilitated access to and distribution of 30 new and improved varieties of essential crops including maize, beans, cassava, banana, pineapple and sunflower. PEAB has also helped local communities plant nine million trees since 2008 – a significant contribution to protect and restore Burundi's forests following the environmental destruction that occurred during the long civil conflict.

By mid-2015, 19,425 households encompassing 87,413 individuals had participated in the food security and erosion control activities, a positive start toward surpassing a target of 98,233 individuals by 2016. An additional 21,924 individuals have participated in reforestation activities. Perhaps the greatest achievement is that participating households have increased access to higher quality food, with some households now being able to provide three meals per day instead of just one.



Training & Participation

112

VOLUNTEERS TRAINED

4,872

HOUSEHOLDS JOINED
REFORESTATION ACTIVITIES

19,425

HOUSEHOLDS IMPROVING
FOOD SUPPLY



Transforming the Landscape

30

VARIETIES OF IMPROVED
SEEDS DISTRIBUTED

9 MILLION

TREES PLANTED

890

KM OF TRENCHES DUG

Leading the Way with Local Volunteers and Global Research

The use of volunteer trainers or *animateurs* and strong partnerships with national and global research organizations contribute to the strength and success of the sustainable livelihoods program. The research entities reinforce the PEAB's and the *animateurs*' efforts by providing essential technical assistance on best practices and seed varieties.

In turn, the *animateurs* help PEAB and the research institutions by providing insights into how ideas work in practice in the community, which improves programming.

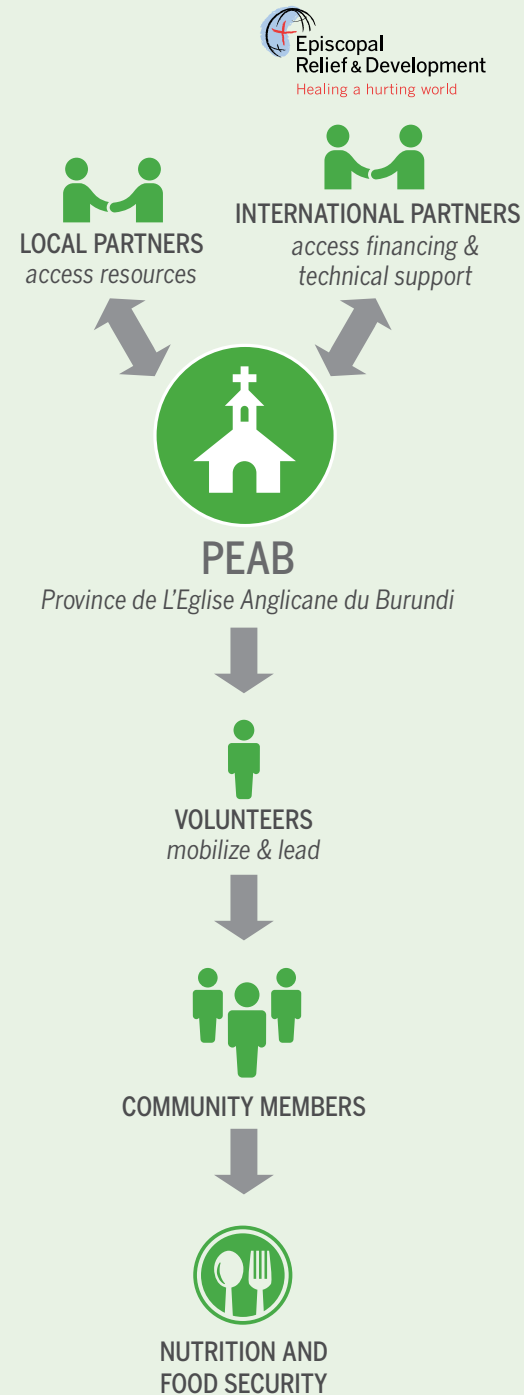
Investing in Local Leaders: As PEAB explores new partnerships with communities, its staff attend local meetings to discuss agricultural challenges and opportunities. In the course of this initial engagement, PEAB identifies community members who clearly understand the technical elements of PEAB's work and recruits them to serve as volunteer *animateurs* and leaders. These volunteers receive extensive training from PEAB and Episcopal Relief & Development, so that they can share knowledge with their fellow farmers. The *animateurs*' focus is largely on cultivation methods, fertilization techniques, sowing and planting techniques, crop maintenance, harvesting techniques and crop storage methods.

By investing in individuals from its partner communities, PEAB builds sustainable local capacity. The *animateurs* are motivated by an enthusiasm to share their own experiences as early project participants, and also by the incentives they receive, such as bicycles, raincoats and boots.

Improving Seeds and Nutrition: As crop diseases have reduced yields for staple crops such as banana and cassava, the need for new and disease-resistant varieties has become acute. PEAB has played a key role in giving local communities access to the latest and best varieties through a seeds-for-work program. Farmers and others dig anti-erosion trenches on Burundi's many hills. In exchange for their labor, the volunteers receive improved seeds. By the end of 2014, program participants had dug 890 kilometers of trenches. As these seeds yield crops and then new seeds, the early adopters pass along improved seeds to other community members.

PEAB and its network of *animateurs* supports farmers in the establishment of kitchen gardens. These small gardens are designed to provide crops that strengthen the household diet by increasing access to nutrient-rich vegetables. From an initial pilot of 60 gardens, PEAB now counts over 1,900 gardens. Facilitated replication by *animateurs* accounts for 70% of the gardens, but perhaps even more significant and attesting to the sustainability of the project is that 30 percent can be characterized as "spontaneous" copying of neighbors.

Bringing Global Research and Local Actors Together: In Burundi and globally, Episcopal Relief & Development and PEAB are actively seeking partnerships with other organizations in order to engage with outside experts and share the results and innovation from the sustainable livelihoods program. PEAB has active partnerships with the National Research Institute of Burundi, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and Cornell University's International Agriculture and Rural Development Program.



Launched in 2013, the partnership with Cornell illustrates the mutual benefit of combining research and community-based efforts. Cornell supports the sustainable livelihoods program with three core objectives:

1. Introducing kitchen gardens to improve household food security and diets;
2. Testing and documenting good practices for kitchen gardens to prepare for growth of the program; and
3. Facilitating creation of a sustainable seed supply system.

In addition, Cornell and Episcopal Relief & Development are collaborating on a research study to measure improvements in household food security and diet diversity following the introduction of kitchen gardens. This research will inform the wider development community about effective ways to alleviate chronic malnutrition, while providing Cornell's professors and students with examples and data from real-life application of theoretical concepts.

Looking Toward the Future

PEAB has a strong commitment to monitoring specific measurable indicators, such as seeds distributed, trenches dug, kitchen gardens created, number of communities participating and number of *animateurs* trained. As of October 2015, PEAB had trained 112 *animateurs*, who are well-placed to navigate and support implementation of the sustainable livelihoods program in their own communities. Beyond trained *animateurs*, the most important program impact has been a vital increase in food security with participating households consuming more and better calories each day.

In looking toward the future, PEAB has ambitious goals, including reinforcing the program in existing communities and expanding to other communities. PEAB also seeks to develop solutions to complex issues. For example:

- How can PEAB scale the program while providing sufficient training for an ever-growing network of *animateurs*?
- What is the best system for incentivizing the *animateurs*?



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