

History: Episcopal Relief & Development

*"I trust that this General Convention will call upon our people to take their full part in relief activities, wherever they are practicable under the conditions of war, **not only as an obligation, but still more as a Christian privilege.**"*

—Presiding Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, 53rd General Convention, Kansas City, 1940



A Tradition of Saving Lives

For over 75 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has been working together with supporters and partners for lasting change around the world. Each year the organization facilitates healthier, more fulfilling lives for more than 3 million people struggling with hunger, poverty, disaster and disease. Inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 25, Episcopal Relief & Development leverages the expertise and resources of Anglican and other partners to deliver measurable and sustainable change in three signature program areas: Women, Children and Climate.

Originally called the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (the PB Fund), the organization was established in 1940 by The Episcopal Church. Its initial mission was to assist refugees fleeing Europe during World War II. Soon after the war, the agency's efforts expanded to include additional humanitarian assistance, focusing mostly on disaster relief.

Responding to World Crises

During the 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing awareness in the US of the challenges facing people worldwide, such as hunger, disease and disasters. With increased funding, the PB Fund took efforts to the next level by increasing its operational capacity and expanding programming to incorporate sustainable development. In the 1980s, major fundraising initiatives supported responses to famine in Ethiopia, an earthquake in Mexico and a volcano eruption in Colombia. In 1988, Episcopal Migration Ministries was formed, founded out of the PB Fund to meet the growing needs of refugee ministries, allowing the Fund to focus on long-term development work.

Rebuilding Communities – and Lives

After Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the PB Fund undertook innovative disaster relief work in Honduras that focused on integrated community development. Over four years, an entire community was constructed, with 200 houses, a school, a clinic and a church. Micro-finance activities and agricultural projects were launched to create economic opportunities and improve food supply. The combination of rebuilding and development through micro-finance and other initiatives helped spur economic growth in the devastated region. This integrated approach became a core element of the agency's disaster relief work.

New Name, New Focus

In 2000, the PB Fund was renamed Episcopal Relief & Development to emphasize its disaster relief work and its increased programmatic focus on integrated community development. Two years later, Episcopal Relief & Development was incorporated as an independent, 501(c)(3) organization. In 2003, the Board of Directors decided to shift from administering small grants for domestic and overseas projects to implementing long-term development programs and partnerships

worldwide. For a greater global impact, the organization formally endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight benchmarks developed by the international community to reduce extreme global poverty by 2015. Episcopal Relief & Development's programmatic reach extended dramatically with the MDGs, from 250,000 in 21 countries in 2004 to 3 million people in 40 countries in 2015. The organization continues support the work through the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) by 2030.

From Adversity to Advantage

Since the early 2000s, Episcopal Relief & Development has been involved in several major efforts. In 2004 and 2005, large-scale disaster responses to the Indian Ocean Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina expanded the organization's capacity, partnerships and visibility. *NetsforLife*®, a program partnership to fight malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, began as a pilot in 2006 and soon was established in a growing number of countries. When a major earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, Episcopal Relief & Development partnered with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti to offer immediate aid to those affected and then shifted to focusing on long-term recovery programs in the areas of sanitation, shelter provision and employment creation, assisting more than 40,000 people in 2011 alone.

Since 2010, the US Disaster Program has expanded its programs to support preparedness by equipping Episcopal Church leaders to prepare for and respond to disasters in their communities.

Asset-Based Community Development

In 2012, Episcopal Relief & Development began incorporating the asset-based community development approach into all of its work. This model of development affirms the gifts and talents that people already possess, facilitating solutions rather than directing them. This

method supports community-driven strategies that are sustainable, empowering people to improve their own lives.

75 Years of Healing a Hurting World

In 2014-15, Episcopalians, friends and partner agencies around the globe celebrated Episcopal Relief & Development's 75th Anniversary. The 75-week celebration invited supporters to learn more about the organization's programs and get involved in campaigns to raise \$7.5 million to sustain its vital work. Elements of the celebration included a traveling photo exhibition, the 75 Stories Project and five campaign areas to invite dioceses, congregations and groups to learn more and get involved.

New Strategic Plan Approved

At the end of 2016, Episcopal Relief & Development's Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan for 2017-2021 that affirms and expands the organization's programs in three key strategic priorities:

- [Women](#): helps communities promote the rights of women and move toward the vision that everyone deserves a life free from violence in a society where they are treated with dignity and respect.
- [Children](#): supports and protect kids under age six so they reach appropriate health and developmental milestones critical to helping them reach their full potential and become future contributing members of their communities.
- [Climate](#): focuses on how families and communities can work together to adapt to the effects of rapidly changing weather patterns as they prepare for and recover from climate-influenced events such as hurricanes and floods.

These key priorities leverage the unique role and reach of church partners around the Anglican Communion to complement existing efforts and drive the focus on asset-based community development.