

Strengthening the rights of women through fair trade and solidarity

BRAZIL
ELCA.org/hunger

In 1996 the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, was in a period of political and economic crisis with high rates of unemployment. Isabel Cristina de Souza Cunha and her husband, Harold, who lived in the city of Viamão, were two of the many people who lost their jobs.

Without income, there was no guarantee of either food on the table or the means to purchase necessities. As she looked for opportunities, Isabel heard about the fair-and solidarity-trade movement.

The Good Samaritan Child Nursery (linked to the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil), which Isabel's children attend, proposed that the parents form a business cooperative to support those affected by the financial crisis.

Starting and growing the cooperative – today called Cooperbom – required the hard work and persistence of Isabel and the other members. To bolster their efforts and address larger challenges – including operating a women-led business in a field



dominated by men – Cooperbom joined the Fair and Supportive Trade Network.

The Fair and Supportive Trade Network project was launched by the Lutheran Foundation of Diakonia in 2012 with partnership and support from ELCA World Hunger. The network brings together enterprises, focusing in the areas of food production, handicrafts, manufacturing and recycling. It provides training and support for women entrepreneurs.

“As a result of this support, we have improved the quality of our products,” Isabel says. “We are able to invest in improving our enterprise continually, and we have gained new consumers. The improvement of the income of Cooperbom's associates and their quality of life is a direct result of working with the Fair and Supportive Trade Network.”

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Chili peppers boost income for farmers in Indonesia

INDONESIA
ELCA.org/hunger



On a half-acre on the island of Nias, Indonesia, that belonged to his father, Yaatulo and his wife, Mariata, grow bananas to support themselves and their two children.

While they work hard, the income from the bananas wasn't enough to support the family, Yaatulo says. Bananas are only harvested once a year, bringing the family an income equivalent to about \$40 USD a month.

One day while working, Yaatulo heard about a development program of the Center for Disaster Risk Management & Community Development Studies, which is supported by gifts to ELCA World Hunger. He decided to join, and soon he had the support to borrow enough money for chili seeds. Over two months, Yaatulo and Mariata cleared their land and dug trenches to plant more than 1,000 chili bushes.

Chilis can be harvested multiple times a year and grow relatively quickly, giving farmers more opportunities to sell them at markets. One kilogram can sell for \$3 USD, so over three months the crop has the

potential to add up to \$200 USD in revenue. Now, Yaatulo and Mariata have diversified their income sources.

“I will pay [the loan] back in three months so that someone else can use the money,” Yaatulo says.

Through ELCA World Hunger, this church accompanies our neighbors like Yaatulo around the world as they work to end hunger and poverty. Thanks to your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, farmers like Yaatulo have improved access to the tools, training, livestock, seeds and more that will help their families increase farm production and have more to eat and sell on the market.

Yaatulo and Mariata have become an inspiration for others in their community and have helped their neighbors start their own farms. “We are listening and learning,” he says. “I feel very happy.”

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Earthquake recovery brings change to Nepali village

NEPAL
ELCA.org/disaster



In April and May 2015, earthquakes shook Nepal, where more than 8 million people were affected and 8,600 were killed. Lutheran Disaster Response worked through Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) companions in Nepal, first to bring relief to people suffering in the most remote places.

A second phase, which includes rebuilding homes, schools, a hospital and people's livelihoods, is now almost complete, bringing to conclusion a \$2.5-million effort by the ELCA and its global companions.

One result of this work is that the most vulnerable communities—ethnic minorities, members of the Dalit caste (also known as outcastes or untouchables in Hindu society) and women—are taking charge to bring about societal change.

Though the government promised assistance to everyone affected by the earthquakes, implementation delays, inaccessible territory and neglect of socially marginalized communities delayed much of the work, ELCA staff report.

In the small village of Suri in the Dolakha District, some 120 miles east of Kathmandu, Chandra and Bhagawati B.K. and their two children lived under a tarp for more than a year before they could start to build their new earthquake-resistant house with government

funds and supplemental funding from Lutheran Disaster Response.

With another loan of about \$240 from the ELCA, they were able to rebuild their small business. With better road access, greater mobility and more items to sell, the family can make as much as \$20 a day, almost double their income before the loan. Improvements have happened because villagers push for change. Further ELCA-funded programs have taught women about literacy, legislation that affects them, their rights and how to access services. As a result, 73 Dalit women were elected to fill a substantial percentage of the 200 open municipal positions in the entire Dolakha District.

“We have met and listened to stories of hope and transformation,” said Chandran Paul Martin, ELCA regional representative in Asia. “The ELCA's (tagline) ‘God's work. Our hands.’ has been visible and actual. Our accompaniment has been long, need-based and effective, and we continue to learn from these experiences to be prepared for the next challenge.”

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Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response help the church respond to the needs of people after a disaster strikes. Working in collaboration with other disaster response organizations and church entities enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response

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Community garden becomes a community mission

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, PA.
ELCA.org/hunger



A third-generation produce farmer in Pennsylvania, James Sandt started as a boy by pitching in on his family's farm, moved into the management of large corporate farms as an adult, and eventually made the dream of working for himself a reality by purchasing his own farm.

In 2011, Sandt attended a four-day educational event hosted by ELCA World Hunger. Soon after, he was motivated to begin a community garden.

In collaboration with his congregation and its social ministry committee, Sandt began God's Garden of Grace with a goal of supplying fresh food to their local food banks.

A small venture by Sandt and St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Plainfield Township, Pa., quickly became a community effort, involving and inspiring other organizations and residents. A contractor supplied them with a 3,000-gallon water tank for irrigation, and the fire department fills it as often as three times a week.

The garden has almost doubled in size since its first harvest. In 2017, it yielded 15,000 pounds of produce. Since the

expansion of God's Garden of Grace, Sandt now also uses his own property to grow crops for food bank distribution. Last year his 120 fruit trees yielded an additional 5,000 pounds of produce, harvested by food stand owners and food bank volunteers.

Over the years Sandt has received requests from other congregations and communities that wanted help starting a garden. Together, six new community gardens have been started in the area.

A venture that was once subsidized solely by St. Peter's and its members is now entirely funded and supported by the community. “We have become self-sufficient in that we don't require our own social ministry to support us anymore,” Sandt said. “This garden and this mission only exist because of the great volunteers that help it and make it happen,” Sandt said. “And for that I thank them.”

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The educational support project provided 136 children with money for school fees and supplies in the first half of 2017. The project includes training and support in agriculture for parents and caregivers to address the deep poverty that keeps many children from going to school. Also, more than 100 families received livestock and training in animal husbandry to increase their capacity to provide food and income. By providing a stable income, families will have the resources they need to provide for food, health care and education.

With the support of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda through ELCA World Hunger, Frank's story isn't over. Today, he and his neighbors can tell a different story, a story of education and agriculture, of livelihoods and resilience that will point the way to a hopeful future.

Frank and Angeli are active members of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR), a young church founded in 2004 with 6,000 members in 20 parishes. Genocide in the mid-1990s left thousands of children orphaned, and today nearly 1 million children are considered "vulnerable," living in poverty and often without parents or other caregivers. The LCR decided to begin an ambitious "Integrated Child Support and Welfare" project focused on accompanying children like Frank and their families. Frank's good grades qualified him for a scholarship through the project, allowing him to start secondary education and, in 2017, begin his second year. Angeli's tears of fear were turned to tears of hope and joy when she heard the news. "I hadn't thought that my son [could] continue with his education," she says.



'Indeed, God is great'

RWANDA
ELCA.org/hunger


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Reproducible Stories 2018

Use these stories in your Sunday bulletins, newsletters and other communications to highlight the lifesaving work made possible by gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Visit ELCA.org/hunger/resources for these and additional stories.

Reproduce the piece below on the back of your favorite story or as a stand-alone update about ELCA World Hunger.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

More than 800 million people in our world today are undernourished. As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we are called to respond. Working with our neighbors in the United States and in more than 60 countries around the world, we start by listening and learning about how we can accompany them to help break the cycle of hunger and poverty – for good. From water wells to animal husbandry, microloans to health clinics, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support innovative solutions that get at the root causes of hunger. And they don't stop there. We engage Lutherans in advocacy and hunger education to act and speak in ways that can make a difference. We rely on your gifts. ELCA World Hunger is funded solely by gifts from ELCA members and congregations like yours. Thank you for making this work possible through learning, action, prayer and giving.

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In addition to taking home food that has been gleaned, refugees are also connected with other services through the network. At food preservation workshops, participants can practice their English skills and share recipes and techniques from their home countries. It's a perfect example of ELCA World Hunger's integrated philosophy in action – integrating food security, agriculture, education and more.

"It's not going to be home, but we can help refugees weave a new fabric of a new home," Eiswerth says. Today, Souad is 27, and while she works most weekdays, she still spends her Saturdays volunteering, picking and sorting produce. To her, volunteering is part of the fabric of her life.



Weaving a new fabric

TUCSON, ARIZ.
ELCA.org/hunger

Growing food security in Nepal

NEPAL
ELCA.org/hunger



On their 1,500 square meters of land in Jayaprithvi, Nepal, Kala and her seven other family members must grow enough food to feed themselves. But their production was only lasting six months, leaving them looking for other jobs to survive the rest of the year. Everything changed when Kala began to participate in an agricultural training program and joined a related women's farming group. The program is organized by United Mission to Nepal, supported in part by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger.

"It gave me energy and motivated me to start vegetable cultivation," Kala says. Kala can now feed her family throughout the year and has more to spare to sell at the market. With this comes not only food security but also greater income so she can send her

children to school and build a safety net for things like medical expenses. The additional income is about \$1,000 USD, a significant boost in a country where the gross domestic product per capita is about \$730 USD, according to the World Bank.

"I am very much pleased with the regular support and would like to thank all the helping hands ... for showing me the way of income generation and building up my confidence level by organizing and delivering training in the group," Kala says.

Thanks to your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, farmers like Kala can access resources that make it possible for their families to have a brighter, healthier future.

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