

## Episcopal Relief & Development History

### ***A tradition of saving lives.***

Since 1940, Episcopal Relief & Development has been *healing a hurting world*. As the compassionate response of the Episcopal Church to human suffering, the agency takes its mandate from Jesus' words found in Matthew 25:30-40. Episcopal Relief & Development embraces the Episcopal Church's principles of compassion, dignity and generosity and helps Episcopalians answer God's call to serve Christ in all persons—caring for the sick, feeding the hungry and welcoming the stranger.

### ***Supporting refugees worldwide.***

Initially established as the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (PBFWR) in 1940, the organization assisted refugees fleeing Europe during World War II. The agency went on to support Palestinian refugees, children in Estonia and displaced persons in Germany and Hungary before the Episcopal Church formed Episcopal Migration Ministries in 1988 to carry on the mission of refugee resettlement. During this time, PBFWR also responded to disasters both at home and abroad and supported small development projects around the world.

### ***Rebuilding communities—and lives.***

After Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the PBFWR undertook innovative disaster relief work in Honduras that focused on community rebuilding. In 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 the food supply. The combination of rebuilding and recovery initiatives helped to spur economic growth in the devastated region. Integrated community rebuilding became a core element of Episcopal Relief & Development's disaster relief work.

### ***New name, new focus.***

In 2000, PBFWR was renamed as Episcopal Relief & Development to emphasize its disaster relief work and a new programmatic focus on integrated community development. Two years later, Episcopal Relief & Development was incorporated as an independent, 501(c)(3) organization.

### ***A priority to reduce poverty.***

At the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention in 2003, the Episcopal Church formally endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight benchmarks developed by the international community to reduce extreme global poverty by 2015. In 2006, at the 75<sup>th</sup> Convention, the Church vote to make the MDGs a mission priority over the next three years by supporting Episcopal Relief & Development's Millennium Development Goals Inspiration Fund. At the 76<sup>th</sup> Convention in 2009, the Church renewed this commitment and pledged its support of the *NetsforLife*<sup>®</sup> Inspiration

Fund, which will raise money through the triennium to fight malaria through Episcopal Relief & Development's *NetsforLife*<sup>®</sup> program partnership.

All of Episcopal Relief & Development's international programs have been designed to work toward achieving these goals, and the MDGs are used to assess progress and impact.

Episcopal Relief & Development's programs follow an integrated program model, implemented through a network of partnerships between Episcopal Relief & Development, members of the worldwide Church, ecumenical agencies and local community members. Through these partnerships, the agency supports initiatives to:

- Alleviate hunger and improve food supply
- Create economic opportunities and strengthen communities
- Promote health and fight disease
- Respond to disasters and rebuild communities

Over the last few years, Episcopal Relief & Development's programmatic reach has extended dramatically. In 2004, the agency worked in 21 countries, assisting nearly 250,000 beneficiaries. By the end of 2009, Episcopal Relief & Development expanded its work to more than 40 countries and touched the lives of more than 2.8 million people.

More than 70 years later, Episcopal Relief & Development is still saving lives and working to heal a hurting world.