

# LifeLines

For supporters of  
**ELCA World  
Hunger**

ELCA World Hunger is a ministry of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
to end hunger in the United States and  
around the world. [www.ELCA.org/hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger)

*Spring 2015*

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**ELCA World Hunger**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



## The Rev. Daniel Rift

Director,  
ELCA World Hunger  
and Disaster Appeal

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## Dear friend of ELCA World Hunger,

In my first letter for LifeLines newsletter six years ago, I wrote about how we're standing at the crossroads between hunger and hope. I am convinced that hope is winning!

We live in a time when hope might seem the road less traveled. Pressures on our food systems, global climate change, political unrest, the increased number of displaced people are all "sound bites" that shape the pathways of hunger.

Yet, closer examination shows that hope is a widening road. After many years of working in the church to address hunger, I am still confident in the promise that "hope abides."

The percentage of the world's population that experiences chronic hunger, the kind of hunger that robs children of their future, is on the decline. Even in the last decade it has moved from 17 percent of the world's population to about 12 percent. The church is doing its part and more.

In 2014 your gifts to ELCA World Hunger supported work through hundreds of projects and programs. Your gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign added to that work in 13 countries. In addition, Lutheran Disaster Response responded to over 50 crises in the United States and around the world. Each of these initiatives works together, and each includes a significant commitment to sustainable change.

In this country, the church continues to work for, pray for and speak out for the kind of change that we know is possible. Community-based feeding programs have been overwhelmed, but they have been resilient thanks to your support.

At the crossroads of hunger and hope, God brings us together as a pilgrim people, moving down a path of promise and possibility in overcoming hunger together. Thank you for your prayers, for your financial gifts, for raising your voice. Let us continue to work together for the day when every child's hungry cry can be satisfied.

With gratitude for your perseverance in the work of ELCA World Hunger,

THE REV. DANIEL RIFT  
DIRECTOR,  
ELCA WORLD HUNGER  
AND DISASTER APPEAL

**“The percentage of the world’s population that experiences chronic hunger, the kind of hunger that robs children of their future, is on the decline. Even in the last decade it has moved from 17 percent of the world’s population to about 12 percent.”**

## Meet Paresh

West Bengal, India



Lutheran World Service India Trust leaders engage in community development.



Paresh takes pride in the vegetables he produces, bringing in greater income for his family.

PHOTOS: FRANKLIN ISHIDA/ELCA

## Harvesting hope in rural India

Life as a migrant laborer was hard for Paresh Chandra Murmu and his family. Work was not available year-round in his village, Agaya Arabani, an impoverished community in the Indian state of West Bengal, and as a Santali (one of India's many tribal groups), Paresh and his family faced many inherent disadvantages. Migrant work took him away from home and his children didn't go to school, extending the family's challenges and decreasing the hope for the future.

With support from ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran World Service India Trust initiated agricultural projects around the Bankura district, including Paresh's village of Agaya Arabani. The partners worked with Paresh and his neighbors to introduce organic agricultural methods, strengthen community knowledge of growing techniques and develop irrigation systems. These improvements meant that Paresh and other growers could plant and harvest two crops a year instead of only one. Now Paresh takes prides in the vegetables he produces, bringing in greater income for his family. He no

longer needs to go away for work because he can successfully farm throughout the year. The vegetable plots are supplemented by mango trees, the fruit of which brings in as much as \$1,500 a year.

One benefit of this community's new-found stability is a renewed commitment to their children's education. "With our children now in school, we see the effect on us parents," said one member of the village. "It gives us more confidence when our children are receiving an education." Like parents everywhere, Paresh and other residents in Agaya Arabani can now see the value of education for their children – the next generation – and how their education plus community support from partners like ELCA World Hunger will make a sustainable difference in ending the cycle of hunger and poverty.

**Your support helps make projects like this possible.  
Thank you.**

# Spotlight on Tanzania: Local context, local ingenuity

One of our church's strengths in responding to poverty around the world is our connection to companion churches and other community groups. These partners, deeply rooted in their community, bring a keen knowledge of community trust, strengths and assets. Building on local context, local expertise and local ingenuity, as described in these two stories from Tanzania, is how we're making a long-term difference.



## Meet Florence

Northern Tanzania



"Now my children are healthier and don't get sick as often".

**FLORENCE GODBLESS NKINI**  
PHOTO: DEBORA TROESTER/ELCA

## Promoting healthy change in northern Tanzania

"Before I attended the community health seminar I did not know that some water contains germs that can make you sick," said Florence Godbless Nkini, a church leader from northern Tanzania. "I learned that it is necessary to boil water before drinking it. After attending the seminar, I started to boil my family's drinking water, and I have started teaching others to do the same. Now my children are healthier and don't get sick as often." Florence said that her family and neighbors are now healthier thanks to the training she received.

Florence was chosen as one of four congregation members to attend a seminar on community health offered by Mwangaza, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. In addition to safe-water practices, she also learned about women's health issues, gender-based violence, overcoming the stigma of HIV and AIDS and conflict resolution.

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Thank you.**



## Meet Hawa

Dodoma, Tanzania



Nearly 2,000 grape farmers in Dodoma, Tanzania, receive agricultural training, supplies and marketing support to boost business and create sustainable livelihoods.

PHOTO: LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

## Strengthening grape farmers in the Dodoma region

Hawa is a mother and a grape farmer living in the Dodoma region of central Tanzania. Grapes have been a popular cash crop in the region for decades. But recently the region experienced a drought, and farmers like Hawa struggled to grow enough to earn an income to support their families.

With support from ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran World Relief worked with a farming cooperative in the region to help 2,000 grape farmers increase grape production and strengthen the entire cooperative. Agricultural experts helped the grape farmers improve irrigation systems, market their grapes better, connect to buyers more efficiently and secure better prices.

Through the project, farmers established a seedling nursery to get plants off to a healthy start, and they learned improved agricultural techniques, like pruning. Farmers also were

trained in various post-harvest handling techniques, including how to extract grape juice.

Hawa was trained to take a leadership role and now is the cooperative's chair. Thanks to the training, she produces more than six tons of grapes where she once produced only three or four. She hopes to soon produce 10 tons.

Sustainable development projects, like this one funded by ELCA World Hunger with Lutheran World Relief, strengthen the capacity of small-scale farmers around the world to make a long-term difference in the quality of life for their whole community.

**It's your generosity that helps make this work possible. Thank you.**

## Meet Joaquin & Margarita

Colombia



Facing the challenges of life in Colombia — together.

PHOTO: RYAN CUMMING/ELCA

## Reclaiming human rights and restoring livelihoods in Colombia

Near the bright-blue walls of his home, Joaquin and his wife, Margarita, proudly show off the vegetables and herbs growing in their garden. The couple planted the garden themselves. And as leaders in the community, they've helped their neighbors do the same. With their homes tucked into a lush mountainside in northern Colombia, the community relies on these home gardens to provide the food they need to survive.

Amidst the idyllic setting, it is easy to miss the challenges the Christian Kogui and other indigenous peoples face in Colombia. As Joaquin, Margarita and others in their community became Christians years ago, they were forced to leave the traditional Kogui community and lost the protection for many of their rights, including rights to land, education and health care.

But they weren't alone, and they did not give up. With the support of ELCA World Hunger and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, the Christian Kogui were able to return to land near their traditional reserve — land they could live on and farm while practicing their faith. Joaquin and his community have since built two schools, other homes, gardens and a church called Jate Shama ("God Is here").

Margarita was one of the first teachers in the community's school. Since its early days, the school has grown significantly, from five students in 2004 to more than 40 students in 2014. In addition to learning math, reading and Spanish, students learn about other religions, a topic that traditional schools do not cover. The good reputation of the school has spread throughout the region, and Christian and non-Christian parents alike are eager for their children to enroll. In fact, many members of the Christian community have provided a home away from home for children who could not make a long, dangerous journey through the mountains each day.

The Christian Kogui community still faces many challenges. Teachers like Margarita are not fully paid for their work, and students often can't access all the things they need. But with support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and ELCA World Hunger, the Kogui teachers are learning more about how to meet these challenges. And with your support, you are too. Together, we will continue to be a part of the amazing things that God is doing — and will continue to do — through people like Joaquin and Margarita, who face the challenges of life in Colombia with joy, faith and tenacity.

**It's your generosity that helps make this work possible. Thank you.**



Teachers at an elementary school in Iowa City, Iowa, were finding scraps of food in their students' backpacks. When asked about the reason for this food hoarding, one student replied: "I'm saving the food for my little sister who cries at night because she is hungry."

PHOTO: MINDA DAVISON/SOUTHEAST IOWA SYNOD

## Responding to childhood hunger in Iowa City, Iowa

Over half of the children at this school in Iowa City's Goosetown neighborhood qualify for free or reduced lunch, and many eat most of their meals at school. Community leaders wondered what happened on the weekends.


In response, members of Zion Lutheran Church in partnership with the HACAP Food Reservoir developed the Goosetown Operation Backpack Program. Supported in part by gifts to ELCA World Hunger, this operation now sends home a small supplemental backpack of shelf-stable, kid-friendly, healthy food each weekend for 30 elementary students. The program continues in the summer to help children who attend summer school.

This program's success has brought to light the reality of hunger in this community, spurring more interest and action in responding to the problem. The Goosetown Operation Backpack Program plans to expand next school year to help even more children. Through your support of ELCA World Hunger, fewer children in Iowa City and communities across the country are hungry.

**Your support helps make projects like this possible. Thank you.**

## Spotlight on: Lutheran Disaster Response

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is known as a church that rolls up its sleeves and gets to work. Lutheran Disaster Response is one way our church gained this reputation. Following Christ's call to bring hope and healing to our neighbor in need, Lutheran Disaster Response is currently responding to 50 emergencies around the world and in the United States, including many that have never made headlines.

 Denotes areas where Lutheran Disaster Response was at work in 2014.

**TEXAS:** Working with Lutheran Social Services of the South, we are helping support foster-care programs and a children's shelter to assist unaccompanied and migrant children.

**GAZA:** Working with The Lutheran World Federation, we are providing medical assistance through Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem and through deployed health teams in the Gaza strip.

**LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE:** Operating through our partners and companion churches, we supplied personal protective equipment, food assistance, health education and other support to assist those affected by the Ebola outbreak in 2014. We will continue to listen to our companions' new priorities as we together look to recovery post-Ebola.

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PHOTO: MINDA DAVISON/SOUTHEAST IOWA SYNOD

What happens to children who rely on free or reduced school lunches when they're at home for the weekend?

See inside to learn how your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make sure that fewer children go hungry.