



PROJECT OVERVIEW

RISE – Resilience and Income Strengthening through Support and Empowerment

Implementing Organization: Lutheran World Relief, a Corus International organization, in coordination with local producers and partner organizations

Duration: August 2025 – July 2026

Location: Cobán y Cahabón, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

The **RISE project** strengthens the economic and environmental resilience of cocoa-producing families in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, through technical training, income diversification, and the professionalization of community nurseries. By improving seedling quality, promoting value-added cocoa processing, and offering tailored technical support, the project aims to increase household income, strengthen local organizations, and foster sustainable agroforestry systems that contribute to more stable and lasting livelihoods.

RISE is one of the winning initiatives of the **2025 Empower Innovation Challenge (EIC 2025)**, an initiative of the Network for Innovation and Impact, supported by the U.S. Department of State through Tandem Global.

2025 EMPOWER INNOVATION CHALLENGE

The objective of the Empower Innovation Challenge (EIC) is to support innovative projects to be implemented in Central America, aimed at providing competitiveness tools, training, and opportunities to scale their businesses with equity funding directed to civil society organizations (CSOs) and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the awarding of grants. These grants will be awarded to organizations that support MSMEs in Central America, enabling the design and implementation of innovative local solutions that foster the growth of small businesses and job creation in emerging economies.

Through its participation in EIC 2025, RISE integrates best practices in innovation, business management, and environmental sustainability, enhancing the project's impact in local communities and strengthening the capacity of cocoa-producing families to generate stable, diversified, and sustainable income over the long term.

KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS

- **Technical and Productive Strengthening:** Training and direct support for producer families to improve cocoa management, enhance bean quality, and apply sustainable agricultural practices on their farms.
- **Professionalization and Equipping of Community Nurseries:** Upgrading community nurseries with tools, inputs, and training in management, seedling production, and quality control.
- **Income Diversification and Value Addition:** Developing capacity in cocoa processing and promoting new productive alternatives such as artisanal chocolate, by-products, and short marketing chains.
- **Organizational Strengthening and Market Linkages:** Supporting local organizations to improve management, commercial coordination, and access to markets with better sales conditions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- **200 producers trained in improved agricultural practices:** Cocoa-producing families adopt better techniques for agricultural management, seedling production, and sustainable agroforestry practices.
- **4 community nurseries strengthened:** Nurseries operate with improved infrastructure, tools, and technical expertise, ensuring the cultivation of 18,000 high-quality seedlings.
- **Income diversification and value-added products:** 30 MSMEs develop skills to transform cocoa into higher-value products, creating new sources of income.
- **Stronger, market-connected local organizations:** Cooperatives and associations improve management, market access, and negotiation capacity, strengthening economic sustainability.
- **More stable and sustainable livelihoods:** Participating families increase their income and capacity to adapt to changing environmental and economic conditions.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

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The Corus Effect

Lutheran World Relief is part of Corus International, an international development organization that unites an array of nonprofit organizations and businesses, each with specialized expertise — from health to technology to economic development to emergency response.

Alongside communities and local partners in fragile settings, our expert teams integrate disciplines, approaches and resources to overcome poverty and suffering for those living in the world's toughest and most difficult circumstances. Our traditional and nontraditional approaches bring together the multi-dimensional, holistic solutions needed to truly achieve lasting change.



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