



## LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF INDIA

**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF** has been working in India since the 1950s, and today operates in three of India's poorest states, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, where farming is a primary means of income for families. Our programs in agriculture and food security, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and emergency response break the cycle of poverty for rural, marginalized populations, including tribals, women and Dalits<sup>1</sup>.

### AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY

Lutheran World Relief is an internationally-recognized leader in transforming poor rural economies. In India, our experienced staff and partners develop and implement programs that create linkages along value chains that benefit smallholder farming families. We work alongside communities to help farmers replace decades-old farming methods with climate-smart sustainable solutions so they can grow nutritious food — such as vegetables and pulses — and improve yields and quality to ultimately generate higher income.

We coordinate farmer-to-farmer exchange visits and community demonstration plots for sharing techniques among peer groups. And we develop innovative information communications technology so that farmers can access technical information and weather forecasts.

<sup>1</sup> *Dalit is a designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. Dalits are a mixed population, consisting of numerous castes from all over South Asia, who speak a variety of languages and practice a multitude of religions.*

Our application of Systematic Rice Intensification (SRI) and Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) techniques, which require less water and are less labor intensive, especially for women, than traditional approaches, have prompted impressive food security gains. SRI has doubled crop yields, increased food security by six to seven months on average, and led to year-round rice availability in target communities. A similar technique applied to wheat production has resulted in three additional months of household food supply per family per year.

With the understanding that development gains increase as gender equity increases, Lutheran World Relief empowers women from farming families in India to take on leadership roles at both the household and community levels. At the household

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for LWR's India country office.



**Lutheran World Relief**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Since 1945, Lutheran World Relief has been successfully tackling poverty in some of the world's hardest-to-reach places. We provide relief in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies that are beneficial to the poorest farmer. By investing in people, their skills, and strengthening their ability to adapt, we help them build the resilience they need to thrive.

level, we work with both women and men to ensure women are valued for their knowledge and skills, and that they are able to equally contribute to family decisions, especially about finances, division of labor and nutrition. At the community level, we provide the training they need to establish micro-enterprises for homestead vegetable cultivation, animal husbandry and collective agriculture on leased land. We also encourage women to form Self Help Groups (SHGs)<sup>2</sup> so they are better able to access credit, enter more lucrative markets, and collectively purchase farm inputs and market crops.

SHGs bring farmers together to increase crop productivity, quality and post-harvest processing and storage to ultimately secure higher prices for their produce. Our staff and partners work within the SHG structure to provide training on business, leadership and management skills, as well as guidance on organizational governance and networking to ensure SHG sustainability. In one program in Bihar, female project participants increased their income by up to 40 percent, allowing them to send children to school, afford basic and much-needed health care services and meet their families' basic needs.

We also work with communities to establish Water Users' Groups, which manage water usage and infrastructure for irrigation. Women are encouraged to participate in the Water Users' Groups to further involve them in community leadership and decision-making.



We partner with universities to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to poverty. Our partnership with the engineering department at the **University of Colorado – Colorado Springs (UCCS)** resulted in improved ventilation for indoor, wood-burning stoves for households in Bihar. A team of UCCS engineering students and faculty used locally-procured and very low-cost materials to develop a smoke exhaust system for stoves that previously had no ventilation. Our partners continue to install the exhaust system in homes across Bihar by request.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

India is vulnerable to frequent natural disasters, including flash floods, landslides and earthquakes. And poor, rural communities have few resources to prepare for or mitigate the effects of these hazards and even fewer resources to recover. To reduce the impact of these hazards, Lutheran World Relief helps communities develop disaster risk management plans and form village-level Disaster Management Committees. We also partner with local universities to provide flood-tolerant rice and wheat seed varieties to farmers, which can survive up to 14 days submerged in water. Additionally, we are helping farmers purchase insurance to financially protect their families and livelihoods in case of a disaster.

In the Narayani/Gandak river basin, which is prone to significant flooding, for example, Lutheran World Relief and our consortium of partners<sup>3</sup> are working with villages on both sides of the India-Nepal border to build communities' resilience to frequent floods through disaster risk reduction activities, the promotion of socioeconomic safety nets (like insurance), diversified livelihood sources, and the establishment of a community-based Early Warning System that quickly relays flood information across the border.

## EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

In the aftermath of a disaster, Lutheran World Relief provides immediate aid — like food, water, household essentials, shelter construction materials and support for livelihood recovery. We are committed to international standards of quality and accountability in emergency operations and believe strongly that those affected by disasters have a right to life with dignity, the right to receive humanitarian assistance, and the right to protection and security, in line with the Humanitarian Charter. Therefore, Lutheran World Relief provides appropriate and effective services to the communities we serve and is accountable to these populations, as well as donors funding our work. In India, Lutheran World Relief and our partners responded to families affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2008 and 2017 Bihar floods.



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<sup>2</sup> Self Help Groups, in this context, are groups of (typically) women from within a community who self-organize to provide collective services for their members, such as a rotating fund.

<sup>3</sup> The consortium consists of LWR, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), DanChurchAid, Grameen Development Services (GDS), Integrated Development Foundation (IDF), Koshi Victims Society (KVS), SAHAMATI, and Yale Himalaya Initiative.