



ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

at the International Rescue Committee

More than 80 years after Albert Einstein helped create the International Rescue Committee, the number and intensity of humanitarian crises across the globe warrant a dose of Einstein-inspired innovation.



JACOB RUSSELL/IRC

WHO WE ARE

The mission of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. Our vision is that the IRC will lead the humanitarian field by implementing high-impact, cost-effective programs for people affected by crisis, and shape global policy and practice by sharing our learning and experience with others.

All IRC programs are designed to achieve meaningful change in people's health, safety, education, economic wellbeing and ability to influence the decisions that affect their lives. The Economic Recovery and Development (ERD) unit at the IRC works to ensure that those we serve have their most basic survival needs met and have the combination of assets and income to prosper.

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

Each year conflict, floods, famine and drought affect over 250 million people.

When crisis happens, people are either forced to flee—leaving everything behind—or struggle to survive in unstable regions. Their means of supporting themselves are often destroyed. They may not be able to eat every day. Their shelter may be insecure. They

must concentrate on short-term strategies to meet their basic, urgent needs rather than on their longer-term economic wellbeing. In these contexts, focus on both basic needs and income and asset generation can be equally critical in addressing lasting economic wellbeing.

What is economic wellbeing?

1. People meet basic needs and avoid negative coping mechanisms
2. People are food secure
3. People generate income and assets
4. People are able to use and control resources

WHAT WE DO

IRC practitioners provide technical assistance to more than 30 country programs. Technical advisors are charged with staying abreast of the best available research and practices in their respective fields and sharing these with the IRC's frontline teams. They also lead advocacy strategies to encourage partners and policy makers to adopt the interventions proven to be effective based on our research and experience.

The ERD unit supports people's economic wellbeing by implementing evidence-based programming and approaches.

> Market-Based and Market-Strengthening Approaches

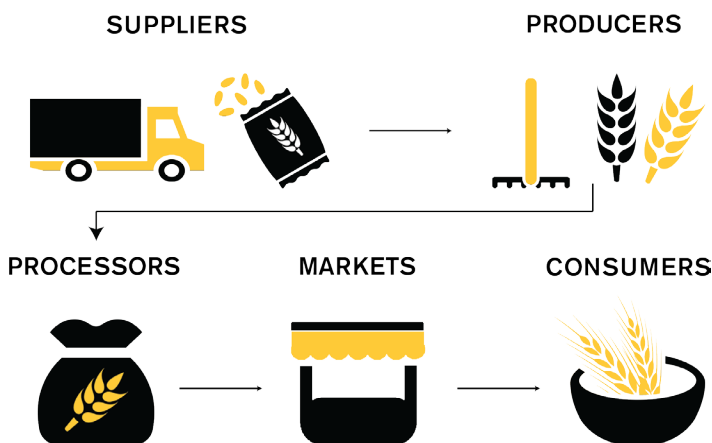
Supporting the recovery, development and strengthening of markets is essential to achieving measurable improvements in the lives of those we serve. We engage with markets before, during and after crises in order to identify needs across market supply and demand, address gaps in market systems, and develop market-relevant interventions for more sustainable impact. The IRC has developed resources to help relief agencies map markets before and during emergencies.

Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit (EMMA):

EMMA is an approach to assessing market systems in post-emergency contexts that aims to improve emergency responses by encouraging and assisting humanitarian actors to better understand, support and make use of local market-systems in disaster zones.

Pre-Crisis Market Analysis (PCMA): PCMA is a practical, step-by-step resource to guide practitioners in conducting market assessments before emergencies happen in contexts that are prone to recurring crises. This early analysis helps practitioners and decision makers anticipate how certain selected 'critical' markets will behave or function if and when a shock occurs.

Agricultural value chain development



The IRC implements agricultural value chain projects across Africa, Europe and Asia to help crisis affected people restart farming as a business. The IRC helps these producers access markets, sustainably increase their profits from farming and generate income. In Northern Uganda, the IRC supported returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had previously been small farmers to re-enter profitable agricultural value chains like soya, beans, cotton and maize. Participants were trained in agricultural practices, marketing, and given access to information and financial services.

After a value chain analysis in Northern Uganda, IRC staff identified an opportunity to sell cotton to one of the world's largest cotton processing firms. In collaboration with local leaders, buyers

and producers, over 750 acres of land was opened for food and cotton crop production.

Initial sales of over \$25,000 transformed the lives of more than 400 households. Similar value chain strengthening programs involving small holder farmers and the private sector have been supported in Zimbabwe and Myanmar.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) Support

In addition to their regular business operations, MSMEs provide quality goods and services to refugees and IDPs through cash and voucher programming. Perhaps even more crucial, MSMEs can play key roles in the transition to early recovery efforts, supporting employment creation and training opportunities.

IRC research on MSMEs in Northern Syria and Lebanon showed that MSMEs face a number of barriers to growth and stability, including inadequate supply or reliance on limited wholesaler networks, exchange rate fluctuations, access to capital and inconsistent demand. The IRC develops solutions that increase access to wholesalers, introduce farmers to potential new markets or networks, and support the transport and access to goods, capital, and financial services. We provide much needed capital to support start-up businesses, mentorship to guide new entrepreneurs and follow-on support to help businesses grow.

> Food Security

Food security means having the means to produce and/or purchase a diversity of foods and having adequate income and knowledge to prepare and consume safe and nutritionally balanced diets.

The IRC promotes nutrition-sensitive agriculture programming to improve the nutrition of the most vulnerable. This addresses one or more of the underlying causes of malnutrition, including inadequate food availability or access, poor care and feeding practices, and weak health and sanitation environments. Women's empowerment and health are critical elements of nutrition sensitive agriculture, because women's decision-making, control of resources and workload directly impact their ability to provide healthy and nutritious food for themselves and their children.

The IRC is implementing household gardens and small livestock programs for approximately 7,000 households in Syria for food consumption and sales. Agricultural inputs,

training on sustainable production techniques and nutritional information are provided to vulnerable populations. Nutrition sensitive agricultural packages include raising chickens for meat and eggs, sustainable water management for micro-nutrient rich vegetable crops, and low input vegetable crop management.

The IRC also implemented food voucher programs in West Africa and Syria through USAID's *Food For Peace* initiatives with a focus on increasing access to a balanced diet. In Syria, the voucher scheme was designed to provide nutrient dense foods that were available in local markets.

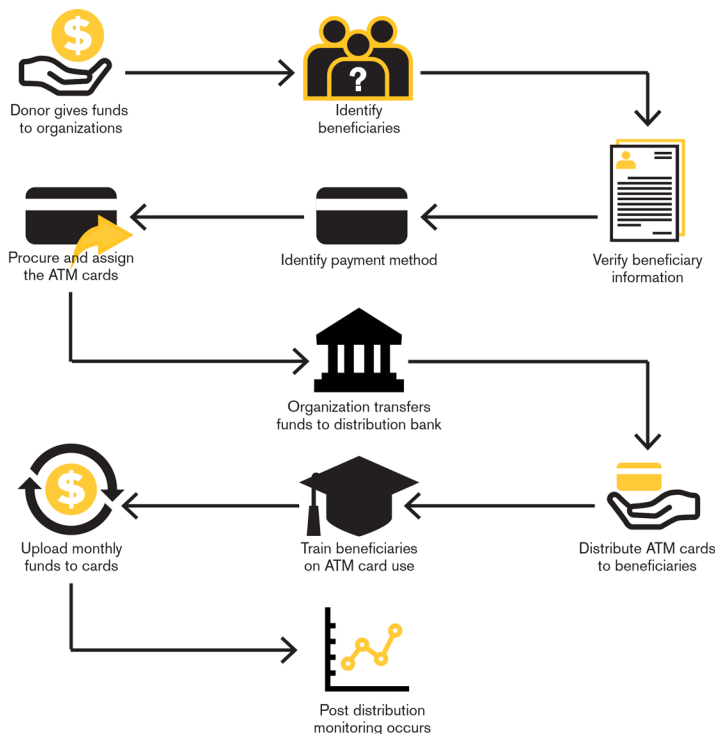


VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION IN UGANDA/IRC

training, legal counseling and entrepreneurship support—in one place. Business owners and entrepreneurs can access capacity-building support, mentorship opportunities, and business start-up support and grants. **To date, 24,000 people in Lebanon have accessed these services through the IRC's Livelihoods Centers.**

> Cash Relief

Cash transfer programming (CTP) is one of the fastest growing evidence-based interventions in the humanitarian community.



Cash transfers are direct transfers of monetary value to people living crisis to assist them in situations where opportunities for employment, income, livelihood or economic production are extremely limited or have ceased to exist.

Providing cash can help maintain people's dignity by empowering them with choice instead of treating them like passive recipients of relief. Additionally, cash transfers provide financial injections into local economies, which have potential benefits for local vendors, producers, markets and trade.

Over the next five years, the IRC seeks to deliver 25% of its humanitarian assistance through cash, up from 6.26% in fiscal year 2015, and to have active cash transfer programs

> Client Centric Bundled Services

Many of the world's poor and vulnerable are forced to create economic opportunities for themselves. Demographic growth is significant, and companies are not starting and growing fast enough to meet demand for new jobs. The IRC's enterprise development and employment programs aim to address both supply and demand side challenges of the labor market by offering a bundle of employment and entrepreneurship services customized to the individual needs and situations of our clients. The combination of services offered vary across a range of emergency and recovery contexts but may include foundational skills development, job placement, entrepreneurship training and private sector strengthening.

The IRC developed a center-based model to deliver bundled employment services. By visiting the IRC's Livelihoods Centers, job seekers are able to access multiple services—such as job matching and referrals, business and life skills training, vocational

IN 2015



14,900
farmers trained
in agriculture and
agribusiness



75,625
refugees and displaced
households received
\$11.8 million in cash and
asset transfers



27,000 +
people received job-
related skills training

in 75% of the IRC's country offices. The IRC is well on its way to meeting this goal. **In FY15, the IRC delivered over US \$11,770,000 in cash assistance to 75,625 beneficiaries, a 35% growth in cash assistance delivered from FY14.**

Preparedness – 72 Hours

The IRC's organizational strategy sets a target of delivering survival assistance—including cash relief—within 72 hours of an emergency. Current cash transfer programs have long start-up times, and many emergency programs default to in-kind distributions of material assistance. The IRC is focused on decreasing cash delivery time when crisis strikes, thereby assuring broader use of cash over in-kind assistance.

To achieve this, the IRC is pre-positioning cash transfer programs ahead of crises to allow rapid delivery of cash when crisis strikes. With support from MasterCard Worldwide, the IRC has developed a Cash Preparedness Roadmap (CPR) to provide rapid cash delivery and electronic payments to beneficiaries in crisis settings across all IRC country offices.

E-payment systems – solutions for scale

The IRC is adopting electronic payment (e-payment) systems to deliver cash transfers during emergency and recovery programs. While electronic payments present an optimal way of transferring aid to more people more efficiently, only 30% of countries facing severe humanitarian crises have the necessary digital and financial infrastructure in place to support digital payments in an emergency.

In countries with inadequate digital financial infrastructure, the IRC's Global Payments Toolbox (GPT) prepositions stocks of prepaid cards and pre-establishes standard operating procedures, so in the event of a disaster, electronic payments can be made through global payment providers.

When the necessary digital financial infrastructure exists, the IRC partners with vetted banks, financial service institutions and technology companies to establish safe, fast and easy-to-use systems for cash disbursements to target populations. The IRC is digitally delivering cash assistance throughout its Syria region response and increasingly in countries such as Pakistan and Somalia.

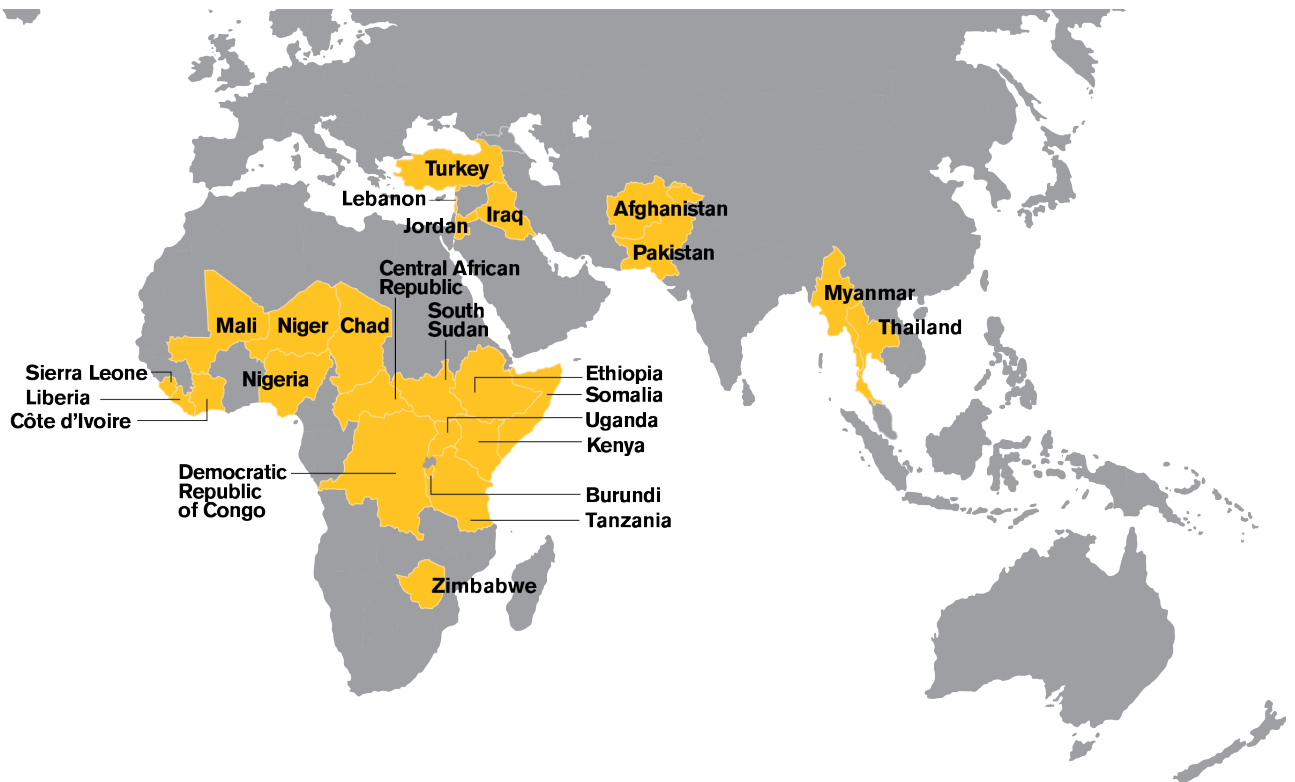
> Women's Economic Empowerment

Women and girls face a myriad of gender-specific challenges, including lesser decision-making power over resources, fewer opportunities to participate in the work force, unequal educational opportunities, and a lack of reproductive and sexual health services. As a result, they are forced to depend on other, often male, family members.

The IRC enhances women's economic opportunities, promotes their effective control over resources and offers safe spaces for women and girls to develop support networks and life skills. The IRC's innovative Economic and Social Empowerment (EA\$E) model gives women access to financial resources and provides opportunities to both women and men to create more equitable and safe gender dynamics within their households. The IRC is implementing this comprehensive model for nearly 25,500 women in nine countries. **To date, participating women have been able to save almost \$1.4 million and earn a mean profit on their savings of \$588,000.**

The IRC integrates a gender-sensitive approach to value chain development, especially in the agricultural sector. In Uganda and Zimbabwe, we increasingly work with female farmers to safely enhance their agency. **In Uganda, women's participation in leadership roles increased from 30 to 72 percent, and more women-owned businesses were established.**

WHERE WE WORK: ERD Programs at the IRC





FRONT: ANNIE GRANT, 27, RUNS A STALL AT IN THE MONROVIA SUBURB OF PIPELINE. "I MAKE ENOUGH MONEY NOW TO SEND MY CHILDREN TO SCHOOL," SHE SAYS. PETER BIRO/IRC
BACK: SYRIAN REFUGEES IN AN IRC CASH-FOR-WORK PROJECT LAY SEWAGE PIPES IN SALIMA, MOUNT LEBANON JACOB RUSSELL/IRC

The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster. Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, the IRC is at work in over 30 countries and 26 U.S. cities helping people to survive, reclaim control of their future and strengthen their communities.

New York

122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
USA

London

3 Bloomsbury Place London
WC1A 2QL
UK