

Agriculture Programs

Agriculture is a source of economic livelihood for 86% of rural populations worldwide. 63% of the world's population lives in rural areas and agriculture provides jobs and income for smallholder producers and landless laborers.

Agriculture is a primary source of income for a large proportion of IRC's beneficiaries. In view of this, IRC has been implementing agriculture programs for several years in a range of settings, from refugee camps to resettled communities. These initiatives have:

- Improved economic livelihoods by increasing land and labor productivity and diversifying incomes;
- Bolstered access to markets and enhanced efficiency of value chains through strategic public-private partnerships;
- Enhanced smallholder competitiveness and facilitated market entry through technical and vocational training.



What Does Agriculture Cover?

At the IRC, the term "agriculture" includes crops, livestock, agro-forestry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries.

A Productivity Revolution

"In the agriculture-based countries, which include most of sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture and its associated industries are essential to growth and to reducing mass poverty and food insecurity. Using agriculture as the basis for economic growth in the agriculture-based countries requires a productivity revolution in smallholder farming."

-World Bank, "World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development"

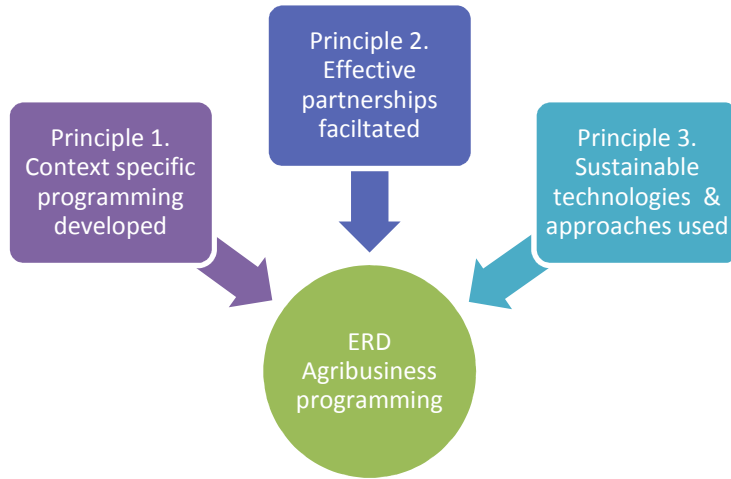
AGRICULTURE AND CONFLICT

Many countries in a state of conflict have a large agricultural potential. Violent conflict causes immediate loss of life but also undermines future peace by damaging agricultural livelihoods. On average, countries affected by violent conflict see a reduction in their agricultural productivity by 12%, extending in some cases as high as 44%.¹ Assets, skills and confidence can be lost and market access becomes limited due to restrictions on movement. Lack of access to land, water and stocks or supplies oftentimes exacerbates conflict.

In response, IRC implements conflict-sensitive approaches to address critical needs in the agricultural sector. This means that our productivity raising approaches such as value chain and livelihoods development are bolstered by professional, context specific utilization of tools such as conflict / power analysis and *Do No Harm*. Instrumental to the rebuilding of communities, this approach moves needed resources and opportunities into communities, promoting peace and prosperity, rather than war and instability.

Principles of the IRC Approach

The IRC approach to agricultural development involves three key principles that underpin and guide successful agribusiness programming and minimizes risks to conflict-affected communities. Illustrated below, these include: 1) Context-specific programming developed; 2) Effective partnerships facilitated; and 3) Sustainable technologies and approaches used.



Examples of our Work:

Over the last three years, the IRC has designed and implemented successful agricultural programming in Ethiopia, Guinea, Uganda, Somalia, North Caucasus and Azerbaijan.

AGRICULTURE IN POST CONFLICT LOCATIONS

North Caucasus:

Our efforts to support agriculture in North Caucasus engage both private sector and government to conduct value chain analysis. Based upon this analysis, specific sub-sectors have been prioritized, including milk, cheese and livestock. Particular support has been directed to a number of food processing partnerships, selected based on their willingness to invest in producers and successfully market their products. These initiatives include a total of eight communities and 13,738 small-holders in Chechnya and Dagestan successfully linked to a milk factory, cheese processing facilities, alfalfa seed suppliers and other markets.



Uganda:

The IRC’s programming in Uganda is particularly focused on agriculture in the northern reaches of the country. One of our projects, funded by SIDA, has engaged over 4,500 internally displaced farmers, training them on best practices from seed selection through post-harvest handling. “Farmer Field Days” are supported to link producers with potential buyers and input suppliers, stimulating demand for agro-processing equipment.



AGRICULTURE IN EMERGENCIES

Pakistan: After the worst flooding experienced in Pakistan's history, IRC is supporting food insecure communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by restoring their ability to produce wheat, maintaining valuable livestock assets and rebuilding agricultural infrastructure such as food processing unit that employ seasonal labour and irrigation canals. These actions will support 11,400 flood affected households.



Peter Biro for IRC

The Agricultural Sector Approach directed the IRC flood response program:

- **Context specific programming:** Emergency Market Mapping and Emergency Food Security Assessments identified affected communities, priority commodities and activities.
- **Effective Partnerships:** KPK Agricultural University and local traders are providing expert local agricultural knowledge.
- **Sustainable approaches:** Community advice is used to finalize agricultural and other livelihood activities.

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