



## Food Matters—How Do ALWS Help?

**ALWS work hard to ensure that people are living lives with dignity, free from oppression and poverty. This means that they need to be involved in all aspects of the development that is happening in their community.**

### ***ALWS encourages sustainable agriculture in communities***

This means enabling farmers and households to produce good crops all year round and year after year, without going into debt or exhausting their land. For example, growing a variety of crops in succession, or planting different crops in the same field, helps to replace nutrients in the soil; building terraces or stone barriers reduces soil erosion and allows rain water to soak into the ground.

Sustainable agriculture usually relies on a combination of traditional knowledge with new learning, which needs to be introduced gradually. Households may need support to purchase seeds or tools to get their agricultural plots up and running to grow enough to feed the family. In Cambodia, poor households in communities are being encouraged by Lutheran project staff to grow vegetable gardens, and now whole communities are healthier and happier. Farmers sometimes have extras to sell at the market.

### ***ALWS respond to local food shortages***

Where there are desperate food shortages in ALWS program areas, ALWS work alongside the World Food Program. The WFP support the people in receiving food aid so they can survive. ALWS work with the people to plant crops for the coming season so that they are not reliant on handouts any longer than necessary.

For example, in southern Sudan when the drought was making it so difficult for people to survive, the WFP and the Lutheran team came in for both short term and long term assistance. The WFP gave out food aid for short term survival of community members, while at the same time, the Lutheran team supplied seeds and tools so that crops could be planted. At the end of the drought, there was food growing and people were once again independent!

In the drought and famine areas in East Africa right now, ALWS are there with our partners, working to assist people as they arrive at refugee camps in order to survive.



### ***ALWS help establish livestock and grain banks***

ALWS encourage grain banks (rice, wheat and corn) in communities where drought is common, or where there are a number of families who do not have enough land to make it possible to provide for their families all year round. Grain banks store grain for times of need in communities. Families put any excess grain into storage in the good times so that there is always grain in the lean times.

For example, in Cambodia, poor families in villages all contribute to the rice banks so that in times of drought, or if for other reasons crops fail, there is always food for the families.

Livestock banks work similarly, encouraging poor families to raise animals to sell at the market or to raise herds as a small business. The animals also provide much needed manure that can be used as fertiliser on crops. The families work together to make sure the animals can reproduce to benefit poor families and their communities. This happens, for example, in Nepal, where chicken and goat banks are used to support poor families and their communities.

### ***ALWS support fair prices for farmers***

ALWS strongly support local industry, products and labour so that communities can benefit in the long term. If farmers are not paid enough for their crop, there is little incentive to produce a surplus to sell at the markets, or to look for customers from a wider field.

Australian NGOs, through the *Make Poverty History* campaign, have argued for fairer trade in agricultural products which would mean that food producers in developing countries are less disadvantaged.

