



ACDI/VOCA

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES  
WORLDWIDE



## WHO WE ARE

A nonprofit that means business. We encourage broad-based economic growth, raise living standards and foster vibrant communities.

## OUR VISION

A world in which people are empowered to succeed in the global economy.

## WHAT WE DO

We draw on our grassroots experience, collective knowledge and the guidance of our donors and beneficiaries to design sustainable solutions to the most pressing development problems. Our activities span the development continuum, from meeting basic needs to community stabilization, poverty alleviation, access to financial services and market integration. We have experience in 145 nations.

ACDI/VOCA's signature approach does not rely on short-term interventions or supply-driven technology transfer directed at single problems in isolation. Rather, we look at problems holistically and tap all our resources to provide lasting results.

We integrate the skills and tools of our five practice areas to address poverty, food insecurity, lack of credit, dysfunctional market systems and other problems that stymie economic growth and limit opportunities. We have hard-won success in fostering stability in conflict-affected and transitional states. We strive to ensure that the voices of women, youth, indigenous populations and other marginalized groups are heard and their needs addressed.



“This was my first time bargaining with cocoa buyers on price, and I’m happy to tell you that we got the highest price that we have ever sold our cocoa for before!”

—Business manager of the Zoekwadoe Cocoa Farmers Association in Liberia

# AGRIBUSINESS

## LINKING FARMERS TO MARKETS



In the majority of countries where we work, agriculture drives the economy. We promote agribusiness systems that improve production and link farmers to national, regional and international markets to create economic opportunities and enable rural families to thrive.

We help farmers and agribusinesses work together to manage risks. Working through producer and industry groups, we identify constraints in the policy environment and help groups advocate for legal and institutional reform. We also build the capacity of farmers and agribusinesses in business development, input supply, cultivation techniques, post-harvest handling, storage, processing, transportation and marketing. We help farmers use scarce resources responsibly, introducing drought-resistant seeds, careful use of agrochemicals, and effective irrigation, water management and agroforestry techniques. Through industry partnerships, we leverage the resources of private sector stakeholders in commodities like maize and rice, value-added products, and specialty crops such as coffee and cocoa.

### KEY TOOLS

- **Technical Assistance:** Our in-house technical staff and database of specialized consultants and volunteers provide a range of services in almost any area of specialization.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** We help producer groups lower input costs, negotiate higher sales prices, access business services, and get HACCP and GLOBALGAP certifications.
- **Farming as a Business Training:** We train farmers to view agriculture as a profitable business and adopt management techniques tailored to local needs.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



We implement community-driven and community-based integrated strategies that foster stability and set the stage for long-term development in environments that have been disrupted by natural disasters, conflict or social tensions. We work with citizens and local governments to encourage democracy and good governance, and design initiatives that build human and institutional capacity, improve access to essential public services, foster job creation, and enhance stewardship of natural resources.

Under challenging circumstances, we help communities work together to identify and prioritize their needs and address them while building greater self-reliance. We promote and enable investments in the next generation of leaders, particularly in high-unemployment countries experiencing significant youth bulges, providing hope to youth by building their skills and linking them to local job markets.

### KEY TOOLS

- **Small-scale Infrastructure and Public Services:** We help provide essential services such as access to potable water, and build roads and bridges to link communities to markets.
- **Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding:** In conflict-affected areas, we foster dialogue and provide an environment that enables citizens to see beyond differences and organize for long-term progress.
- **Licit Economic Opportunities:** We help vulnerable communities transition from illicit crop production to legal—and profitable—economic activities.



“If we want to achieve, first we have to value ourselves and raise our own self-esteem. The [ACDI/VOCA] workshop leader talked to us about real issues and gave us advice about how to be good leaders.”

—Senior class president at Palos Blancos High School in Bolivia



“We would like to thank you for the hard work, coaching and support that you have given us, which has improved our selling skills and abilities to deal with the U.S. market. This has led to a significant increase in our sales to that market.”

—President of Mymoune, a Lebanese natural food processing company



# ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

REDUCING POVERTY,  
ENABLING ENTERPRISE GROWTH



We apply a market systems approach to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises and smallholder farmers. We use market-focused tools to gain a thorough understanding of opportunities as well as legal, social, resource and other constraints. We then work at strategic points to encourage innovation, spur private sector investment and build relationships among industry and service provider participants.

We are leaders in research on creating wealth in poor communities and promoting growth by linking small firms into profitable markets. Moreover, we inform and learn from this research as we partner with private firms to design and implement competitiveness strategies that are inclusive of vulnerable groups, including women, youth and the very poor.

Under a USAID contract, we have conducted research and training in 13 countries and published approximately 40 papers on the value chain approach and promoting economic growth in poor communities.

## KEY TOOLS

- **Value Chain Approach:** We analyze value chains and design programs that address challenges and capitalize on opportunities.
- **Strategic Firm-level Assistance:** We help “lead firms” improve their operations to drive industrywide improvements and reduce poverty through job creation and backward linkages to small enterprises.
- **Certifications and Branding:** We help firms obtain certifications such as ISO, HACCP, GLOBALGAP, USDA Organic and Fair Trade, and we assist them in developing branding strategies to reach more profitable markets.

# FINANCIAL SERVICES

EXPANDING SERVICES,  
BUILDING COMPETITIVENESS



Agricultural finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises is a key economic driver, but often a missing link, in rural and conflict-affected environments. To address this gap, we work to (1) build the capacity of commercial financial institutions to meet the needs of the underserved and link producers to markets; (2) create mechanisms and build upon relationships that promote delivery of financial products and services within rural value chains; and (3) integrate rural finance development strategies into the national financial system at the policy level to promote lasting growth in rural incomes and employment. By creating an understanding that the rural poor can become creditworthy, we expand economic opportunity.

## KEY TOOLS

- **Financial Institution Development:** We strengthen our financial institution partners through capacity building and dissemination of best practices, and promotion of transparent reporting standards and accountability for results.
- **Innovative Loan Products:** We develop flexible and practical financial products and services for farmers and agricultural institutions, train partner financial institutions to deliver them effectively, and promote relationships between financial institutions and value chain actors to help manage the risks associated with new markets.
- **Policy Reform:** We work with local stakeholders and government officials on legislation to create an environment that enables rural and microfinance institutions to play an effective role in the national financial sector.



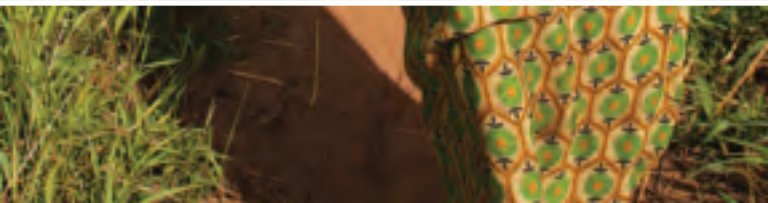
“I wanted to grow my business but did not have the capital to do so. I went to a private bank for a loan, but they turned me down because I did not have real estate and my business was small. . . . But Al-Thiqa provided me an opportunity to grow my business.”

—Client of Iraqi microfinance institution Al-Thiqa, founded by ACDI/VOCA in 2004



“We used to have problems in meeting our needs, but now when I do my planting I leave out the amount for the bank, and meet the needs of the house. It used to be very difficult to pay the school fees, but now I have no problem.”

—Woman who received cooperative training in Rwanda



# FOOD SECURITY

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FOOD  
AND FOSTERING RESILIENCE



We empower households and communities to increase their resiliency and build their capacity to participate in the global marketplace while concurrently improving the health and nutrition of vulnerable individuals. We help households move beyond governmental or foreign assistance and strengthen their coping mechanisms to protect their assets and livelihoods during times of shock. This breaks what can be a vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity, moving households beyond subsistence and low-value agricultural activities into business-oriented and intensified production. Our activities improve crop production and post-harvest handling, ensure resiliency through diversification of income sources and the promotion of savings, promote collective operations and adoption of advanced farming methods, and address household- and community-level barriers to improved health and nutrition. We also increase community resiliency through natural resource management, education and skills development, and the provision of food aid to vulnerable populations or survivors of emergency conditions.

## KEY TOOLS

- **Improved Agriculture and Income-generation**  
**Opportunities:** We promote sustainable on- and off-farm opportunities with a market-oriented approach.
- **Health and Nutrition:** We improve the health and nutrition of individuals through the promotion of nutritious crops and provision of food aid; maternal and child health care services; and health, hygiene and nutrition training.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** We help manage risk through contingency planning, early warning systems and better resource management. In the event of an emergency, we respond directly to needs through food and nonfood assistance.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



“This is definitely more than a job and very rewarding beyond just the financial rewards.”

—Tom Dobler, Colorado dairyman who has completed 16 volunteer assignments for ACDI/VOCA

ACDI/VOCA's Volunteer Program recruits highly skilled and experienced U.S. professionals to provide short-term technical assistance to our projects. Since 1970 these volunteer specialists have carried out over 10,000 assignments in 130 countries. In 1985 we were the first implementer of the USAID-funded Farmer-to-Farmer program, and today we continue to implement this key volunteer program around the world. Our volunteers bring their technical expertise and an invaluable humanitarian element that often results in lasting relationships between hosts and volunteers. We recruit from a database of approximately 11,000 experts and field hundreds of volunteers per year through USAID- and USDA-funded programs.

“The [volunteer] program was a stimulus to study cultures and become an ‘ambassador’ for the United States. I feel proud to have worked with ACDI/VOCA. It was my way to serve my country.”

—Timothy Moley, founder of Chocolve

# WHAT DISTINGUISHES ACDI/VOCA?

**Balance:** Business acumen blended with humanitarian concern

**Values:** Dedication to beneficiaries as true partners, wise stewardship of resources, and a knowledgeable, experienced, diverse and effective team

**Knowledge and Capacity:** Research, knowledge generation and dissemination, monitoring and evaluation, and sound business practice

**Sustainability:** Beneficiary-driven solutions that foster self-sufficiency, build skills and capacity, and focus on the bottom line

**Readiness and Resiliency:** Quick response to emergencies in countries where we operate, combined with a capacity to balance short-term emergency needs with long-term economic growth

**Accessibility and Scale:** Facility working on both small- and large-scale projects under a variety of contracts, grants, cooperative agreements and teaming agreements, organizing and leading large consortiums, and mounting global, integrated projects

**Synergies through Partnerships:** Leveraging public funding and creating synergies through over 200 NGO, private sector, academic, public sector and multilateral partners

“... I like what ACDI/VOCA has done in Colombia in recent years. They've been operating a Specialty Coffee project in Colombia since 2002, and it is one of the more thoughtful, well-executed and well-planned I've run into.”

—Geoff Watts, Intelligentsia Coffee



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