International Medical Corps has implemented successful Food Security and Livelihoods programs since 2003. Our work has saved countless lives and helped restore sustainable futures for thousands of families as they emerge from humanitarian emergencies and begin their journey toward self-reliance.

Access to nutritious food and opportunities to earn a livelihood are cornerstones of a productive life. Our Food Security and Livelihoods programs work to empower families—especially women—and their communities with the tools and skills needed to meet these most basic needs. Our programs provide direct food assistance, as well as the tools and knowledge required to grow kitchen gardens. We also offer paths to marketable livelihoods, including training to learn appropriate vocational skills, and establish micro-enterprises and village savings schemes. Such training helps people create income streams for households that enable communities not just to survive, but to thrive.
FOOD ASSISTANCE
International Medical Corps provides emergency food assistance programs to save lives and help low-income families avoid selling their meager assets to purchase food to stay alive. In partnership with the World Food Programme, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, ECHO and others, we have provided food, blanket supplementary feeding and cash transfers to vulnerable families, including those with children under 5, to prevent malnutrition.

CASH AND VOUCHER-BASED ASSISTANCE
To generate livelihoods and ensure the dignity and independence of all involved, we provide people with cash payments to purchase food or other necessities of life for their families. We help develop new marketable skills and work to strengthen family finances. In the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Americas, we have provided cash and vouchers-based transfers to support successful—often pioneering—livestock restocking programs to families that have lost their farm animals to the whims of disaster and war.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
As part of our psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), we offer training in skills that can generate income and, with it, independence. For example, we are implementing economic empowerment projects for women in South Sudan, Central African Republic and Iraq that also includes GBV prevention measures such as micro-enterprise development, vocational skills training and engagement with their male partners in gender-related discussions.

KITCHEN GARDENS
International Medical Corps blends kitchen gardening activities into our nutrition programs to increase dietary diversity and enrich the micronutrient content of meals through locally available foods. We provide vulnerable households with vegetable seeds, tools, technical training, nutritional education and cooking demonstrations to enable families to adopt sustainable production methods and promote vegetable consumption. We also encourage safe and efficient household food-storage techniques so that harvested food is kept properly, increasing its shelf life and decreasing losses.
LIVESTOCK INTERVENTIONS

Farm animals contribute significantly to household food, nutrition security and livelihoods, particularly in the developing world. Livestock can be slaughtered to meet food and other needs in difficult times. It also is a valuable source of protein and minerals. We distribute sheep, goats and chickens, either in-kind or through vouchers, targeting families whose children have severe or moderate acute malnutrition (SAM/MAM), to help families rebuild their productive assets and increase their access to animal-source foods. We also conduct mass vaccination, deworming and treatment campaigns, and distribute livestock feed to keep new livestock healthy and productive.

VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Ethiopia, we provide youth in refugee camps with vocational skills that are in short supply, then link them to employment opportunities. We also support them with start-up kits and grants so they can engage in small businesses such as auto repair, hairdressing, soap-making, carpentry, mobile-phone repair and sewing.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

NIGERIA

In response to the humanitarian crisis in northeastern Nigeria, we have worked since October 2016 in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide food assistance, including general food distributions, to about 200,000 people living in displacement camps and host communities in the region. The program also offers blanket supplementary feeding to children under 5 to prevent malnutrition, as well as cash payments using mobile money and e-vouchers to cushion vulnerable urban-area residents from the effects of COVID-19 and help them rebuild their livelihoods.

YEMEN

In Yemen, with support from Gates Foundation and USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, we have distributed 3,600 sheep and goats to more than 1,200 households whose farm animals were lost to war and whose children struggle with severe or moderate acute malnutrition. The new animals have helped these households rebuild their livelihoods and improve their access to nutritious animal-source food. We have also undertaken large-scale veterinary vaccination, deworming and treatment campaigns, in partnership with the Yemen Veterinary Service, to protect the livestock from depletion and to inform herders about improved animal production techniques. In addition, we have provided households with livestock feed to address micronutrient deficiencies in their animals.
SOUTH SUDAN

With funds from Britain’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, we are implementing the Humanitarian Assistance for Resilience in South Sudan (HARISS) project, which has helped some 1,780 survivors of gender-based violence. The project supports micro-entrepreneurial development projects through business development training and cash grants. It also offers assistance to establish village savings-and-loan programs, to strengthen family incomes and enhance livelihoods.

ETHIOPIA

As part of USAID’s Feed the Future Ethiopia Value Chain initiative, International Medical Corps has prioritized nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities in five selected agriculture areas—coffee, maize, chickpeas, dairy and poultry—to enhance nutrition and women’s dietary diversity for small farmer/owners. In partnership with seven international donors, we also provide nutrition, livelihoods and food-security assistance to refugees, returnees and local host communities, using vegetable production and fresh-food vouchers to complement our efforts to reduce malnutrition. In addition, we provide vocational skills training and an entrepreneurship program for youths who face intermittent forced migration to escape armed conflict and political instability in the Somali region.

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May 2021