

## THRIVE and Covid-19 – Needed Now, Needed For the Long-term

By Christopher Shore, Chief Development Officer, WVUS

The Covid-19 pandemic is causing massive economic dislocation around the world, and is seriously harming the people World Vision serves. With movement of people and products restricted, stores and markets closed, and demand for products, services and farm goods eroded, the poor are suffering.



A WV employee checks in on a farmer and his garden including cabbage. ©2020 WV Uganda

Most of the people World Vision serves live in extreme poverty. Two thirds of the people who live in extreme poverty are people running their own small farms. To end extreme poverty we need to make a simple observation and ask the right question: How do we help these farmers make a lot more money in agriculture?

THRIVE answers that question with a holistic approach. THRIVE addresses the heart, mind, and wallet (or pocket). We help build spiritual, financial, social, human, and natural capital. We build improved livelihoods, by bringing a strong focus on farming as a business.

However, as we are all learning in our own homes and communities, a shock - like a pandemic, or drought or locusts for a farmer - can reveal just how vulnerable we are to forces we cannot control.

To help the poor exit extreme poverty forever, we help them build both improved AND resilient livelihoods. Yes, those living in extreme poverty definitely need to make more money, and a lot of THRIVE programming aims to do exactly that. But, they also need to have the ability to absorb a shock - like lower than normal rainfall, a child who gets sick, or pests that attack the tomatoes - and keep on going. We call that shock absorbing ability RESILIENCE.

As a [review of the model shows](#) that THRIVE builds resilience in many ways:



**Empowered worldview** – understanding that the Bible teaches that we are all image bearers of God; are creative, responsible, and productive; and are loved and cared for by God. Those trained realize that God’s plan is not that they live in extreme poverty,

but that they provide well for themselves, their families, and their communities. They understand that God is always with them.

- **Savings groups** – building cash savings is the best way to have the needed resources to respond to shocks (and opportunities!).
- **Diversification of incomes** – both on-farm diversification (not just growing corn) as well as considering off-farm incomes like milling the corn or crop transport services.
- **Natural resource management** – farmers don't need rain, but they do need water! So, soil, tree and watershed management are critical to managing when it may not rain enough - or rain too much!
- **Emergency and situational awareness** – being aware of what shocks or hazards might be coming (flood, drought, insects, market turbulence), and what various coping methods can help.

Our goal is simple. We want to lift them out of extreme poverty by helping them make a lot more money. And we don't want them to slip back into extreme poverty because of a shock. So THRIVE is ideally suited for the needs of most of the people we serve most of the time.

THRIVE was created in 2012 when we needed to save both the lives and livelihoods of smallholder farmers facing a disaster - a massive drought and famine. THRIVE is needed now as those we serve are finding markets for their products disrupted, buying power of their customers reduced, and restrictions on movement a nightmare for getting work done. THRIVE will be needed into the future, not only because most experts expect the effects of Covid-19 to linger, but because the world is starting to realize that THRIVE's holistic and comprehensive approach is central to meeting humanity's dream of a world free of extreme poverty. Yes, this is OUR time!



A World Vision food distribution in Zambia's Gwembe district.  
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