



The Lingson Family's Story

The following information and discussion questions are designed to accompany the ELCA World Hunger Video, The Lingson Family's Story. Find the video at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources.

INTRODUCTION TO SHARE:

What makes development sustainable? And what is so special about that type of development as opposed to another? Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹ This helps us understand development as something that has effects far beyond just today. Development is sustainable when care for future needs and long-term effects is evident in the planning, implementation, construction or maintenance of a particular project. It is not always easy to anticipate future needs or know how current decisions will affect future ones, but making decisions with sustainability in mind involves being aware of a set of goals.

In sustainable agriculture, three main goals are at the heart of decision-making: environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. These could also be explained as stewardship of land, air and water resources; profit over the long term; and quality of life. The effort to produce food more sustainably includes integrated pest management,² conservation tillage,³ use of cover crops,⁴ and energy conservation and production, among other techniques. Sustainable agriculture is crucial to fighting hunger and poverty.

This video tells the story of the Lingson family. ELCA World Hunger works through partners, like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi, to pursue sustainable development. This is accomplished by supporting programs and projects that incorporate principles of management, conservation of the natural resources and the orientation of technological and institutional change in a way that ensures the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. This story shows how a simple gift of animals goes a long way when placed in the context of a comprehensive development plan.

WATCH VIDEO: Length is 5 minutes, 39 seconds

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What role do animals have in our own food system? What are the similarities and differences in the role animals play in communities that suffer from hunger, especially in countries with fewer resources?
2. What are some examples of sustainable development that were identified in the video?
3. What role do you think the community plays in the process? There is a moment in the video where Telina Lingson says, “In the past we did not live as a community.” What would be different that could lead her to say that? **Leader's Note: A major part of sustainable development work includes community organization and mobilization. Plans involve community members taking stock of what they have, discovering needs, and working together to come up with practical solutions.*



READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-22

Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Paul finds fault with some of the Corinthians going ahead with their own meals while others go hungry during their celebration of the Lord's Supper. For Paul, this practice was not consistent with the gospel, nor was it sustainable for the worshipping community. What practices or traditions in the ELCA and the wider church are capable of sustaining a loving community over several generations?
2. One of the big issues in sustainable development is how to decide between present and future needs. According to Paul's critique, whose needs are being served here and how is that detrimental?
3. What would a sustainable practice of the Lord's Supper look like? How does this carry over into how we do mission?

ENDNOTES:

1 The term "sustainable development" was first coined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, a commission of the United Nations (http://conspect.nl/pdf/Our_Common_Future-Brundtland_Report_1987.pdf).

2 Integrated pest management is a strategy that uses a variety of practices to control pest populations below the level of economic injury (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_pest_management).

3 Conservation tillage is a strategy that leaves at least 30 percent of crop residue on the field in hopes of reducing soil erosion and depletion (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tillage>).

4 The use of cover crops is a strategy where crops are planted for the purpose of managing soil nutrients, biodiversity, and other factors contributing to plant growth and production.