

Heifer International Statement on Foreign Assistance Funding Trends

April 20, 2025

As the U.S. transforms the way its bilateral foreign assistance is managed and allocated, the termination of thousands of U.S.-funded aid projects around the world is already altering the global development landscape in significant ways. Other leading donor countries have also trimmed their aid budgets, marking a general retrenchment that does not appear likely to reverse course in the foreseeable future.

For Heifer itself, only a few of our projects with smallholder farming communities across Africa, Asia and the Americas were directly affected by U.S. funding terminations to date. However, aid policy shifts under way are likely to add to the challenges that *all* smallholder farmers face – from climate change, population pressures, conflicts and more - as low- and middle-income countries adjust to reduced aid flows to multiple sectors including agriculture, health, infrastructure and education.

Smallholder households in these countries typically have limited savings and other resources to fall back on in hard times, leaving them highly vulnerable to disruptions and shocks. The incentive for farmers to leave their homes in hopes of finding better opportunities elsewhere – usually in urban areas or other countries – may further intensify.

Keeping to our Mission

In this context, Heifer International is more determined than ever to advance our mission of supporting smallholders – especially women smallholders - to address hunger and poverty in their communities through the development of market-driven, environmentally sustainable agricultural businesses. In the enduring spirit of Dan West, who founded Heifer more than 80 years ago, we will continue to help farmers strengthen their resilience and self-reliance, building the means to create better futures for their families, their communities, and the planet.

Our work will also remain firmly anchored in Heifer's long-held values, enshrined in our 12 Cornerstones for Just and Sustainable Development which emphasize collective trust, respect, support, accountability and strengthened capacities – attributes that we have found over Heifer's history to be essential to catalyze lasting positive impact for our partner communities.

Evolving in a Volatile World

While our mission and values will hold steady, we are not standing still. Heifer is actively transforming and evolving our program model to be more effective and impactful in an increasingly volatile world environment. Through our locally-led approach, we are shifting more decision-making power and resources closer to where the work with farmers is done, allowing our project teams to adapt quickly and innovate as conditions, priorities and needs change for the farming families they support.

We also know that building better food systems, in which smallholder farmers are integrated and fully engaged, is not something we can advance on our own. It requires strong partnerships across

the public, private, NGO and civil society sectors. Please join us in helping smallholders find firmer footing in food systems and sustainably escape the ravages of hunger and poverty.