

**GLOBAL FOOD INSECURITY:
PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD**
REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
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“There is little reason for anyone to be hungry in a world in which we have the knowledge and resources to ensure that everyone has access to a nutritious range of food.”

-Richard G. Lugar

The following excerpts have been abstracted from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report, prepared by Senator Richard G. Lugar. The report’s aim is to uncover the causes of global food insecurity and the ways in which the United States government can provide leadership in solving it. It was found that making investments in agricultural productivity and rural development are essential to eradicating hunger and encouraging sustained economic growth and prosperity for food insecure nations. EARTH University was cited as a model educational institution whose structure could be replicated in underdeveloped regions worldwide.

“ EARTH University, Costa Rica. The mission of EARTH is to prepare leaders with ethical values to contribute to the sustainable development of the humid tropics and to construct a prosperous and just society. Higher education in agriculture in many parts of the world has typically focused on the training of public sector employees. In an age of shrinking public sector expenditures and growing interest in the role of the private sector in revitalizing rural economies, this emphasis is increasingly being questioned. EARTH was created with an eye towards preparing graduates for the private sector, and particularly for careers as agricultural and rural entrepreneurs. In terms of curriculum, this approach emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial skills, including practical experience in planning and operating a productive enterprise. Business administration, accounting, finance, management, and communication skills are important aspects of the plan of study.

Based on a visit to EARTH University, staff believes that establishing similar universities in strategic areas would be highly beneficial to global food production and rural development. Elements of the program should be promoted by USAID, especially in its work related to agricultural higher education in the following areas:

- Encourage faculties of agriculture to consider reviewing the focus of their curricula and educational methodologies in order to graduate professionals with the range of skills, abilities, and attitudes required to stimulate the agricultural and rural economy. While there is clearly a need to produce a new generation of researchers, teachers, and government employees, many universities in developing countries have been unsuccessful in preparing professionals willing and capable of leading change in the rural environment. EARTH University officials communicated that an emerging consensus in the agricultural field points to the need for agricultural graduates capable of integrating technical and scientific knowledge with practical and applied skills, environmental and social awareness, and entrepreneurial preparation and leadership skills.
- EARTH University can also serve as a model for integrated sustainable farming techniques that are scalable in agriculturally challenging topographies and also minimize energy and environmental impacts. ”