CRS · CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES · faith. action. results.

MITIGATE, INTEGRATE AND LOCALIZE

enhancing global emergency preparedness and response

Humanitarian assistance is increasingly stretched thin as protracted crises rage on, natural disasters become more extreme, and new disasters, such as Ebola, come to the fore. Looking forward, the global trends of changing climate, environmental degradation, rapid urbanization and population growth all contribute to an expected increase in the number and severity of such events, and the humanitarian community will invariably be called to respond to an unprecedented number of people in need.

In the past 10 years, humanitarian need has doubled, while the cost of responding has tripled.[1] In 2013, 96 million people were affected by disasters, such as floods, earthquakes and storms, and an additional 10.7 million people were newly displaced by conflict or persecution (a number which has steadily grown every year). In response, the humanitarian community provided $22 billion of financing, which only met 65% of the

required funding for that year.[2] The U.S. government contribution to emergency response and recovery has steadily increased, yet still it has not kept pace with increasing needs around the world.

Catholic Relief Services has provided humanitarian assistance to people in need for more than 70 years. In 2014, CRS reached 8.7 million people through our emergency preparedness, response and recovery work. In response to natural disasters and complex emergencies, CRS works to save lives immediately, and then supports communities' recovery by providing livelihoods and shelter assistance, disaster risk reduction activities and civil society strengthening. In addition, CRS helps communities around the world prevent future man-made disasters through peacebuilding programs that promote forgiveness and help rebuild trusting relationships between households and communities affected by violence. The agency also supports programs that prepare communities for recurring shocks attributed to climate change and natural disasters, and helps mitigate their impacts through disaster risk reduction.

As partners to the U.S. government and the United Nations, among other public and private donors, CRS engages these important stakeholders on a policy level to ensure that the systems and structures we work within
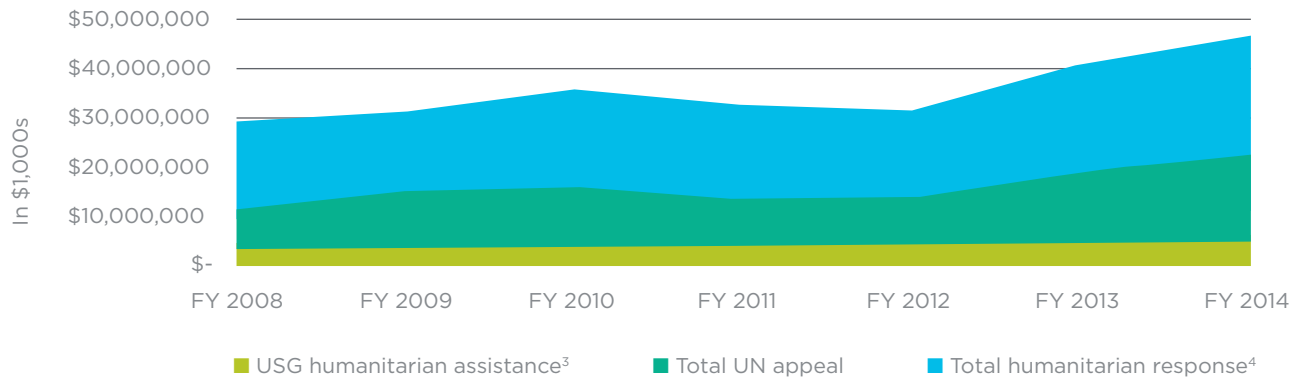
WE RECOMMEND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Fund key U.S. government accounts for emergency preparedness, response and recovery robustly.

2. Adequately fund capacity building of local partners in emergency response and recovery.

3. Increase attention and funding for disaster risk reduction.

4. Promote an integrated approach to emergency assistance.

5. Implement appropriate counterterror regulations.

6. Directly fund implementing agencies to reduce transaction costs.

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1 U.N. Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises,* accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.unocha.org/saving-lives/

2 "GHA/Development Initiatives." *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014,* September 2014.

U.S GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

Chart legend:
- USG humanitarian assistance[3]
- Total UN appeal
- Total humanitarian response[4]

are appropriate and effective in our collective response to emergencies. In addition to our advocacy on specific humanitarian situations, we seek to provide policy analysis and recommendations for the systems and structures that govern donor responses. CRS focuses our advocacy efforts primarily on the U.S. government, while also striving to engage the U.N. system whenever possible. We currently advocate the following six positions:

CRS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. FUND KEY U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY ROBUSTLY

The U.S. government issues emergency assistance through International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Account, Emergency Refugee and Migration Account, and Food for Peace, Title II. These funding accounts cover emergency assistance for crises born from conflict as well as sudden and slow-onset natural disasters.

While the United States is one of the most generous donor governments in the world, the number and size of emergencies has worsened every year, creating greater and greater demands on the humanitarian community. CRS closely monitors the levels of funding for these accounts to *ensure they are funded appropriately and sufficiently now and for as long as it takes to achieve recovery.* Recovery funding is particularly important because once relief efforts are underway and a disaster is no longer in the public eye, funding declines. CRS also advocates for funding of disaster risk reduction to prevent shocks and mitigate their impacts when they do occur.

2. ADEQUATELY FUND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL PARTNERS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

In emergency situations, local institutions—often faith institutions—can mobilize large networks of staff and volunteers to provide basic needs such as food and shelter. These institutions can also serve as focal points for information, provide psychosocial support and facilitate conflict resolution. Because of their permanent presence in communities, local institutions can be ideal partners in humanitarian responses to emergencies, which often occur in isolated, remote communities that are difficult to access. In conflict situations where other humanitarian actors may not operate, they are often the only remaining humanitarian presence.

As part of the 2010 reform elevating USAID to be an integral part of U.S. foreign policy, USAID FORWARD established three major areas of focus, including promoting "sustainable development through high-impact partnerships and local solutions."[5] CRS has worked to achieve this goal since our inception. We are guided by the Catholic principle of "subsidiarity," which holds that "larger institutions in society should not

> *The Catholic principle of "subsidiarity" means larger institutions have essential responsibilities when local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs and advance the common good.*

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3 Figures from annual Congressional Budget Justifications, and include International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, and Food for Peace Title II Emergency Food Assistance.

4 These figures come from the annual "Global Humanitarian Assistance Report," and include government and private contributions.

5 USAID Forward, accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.usaid.gov/usaidforward

Raghed, 7, 'C' heats water at an informal refugee settlement in Qab Elias in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Photo by Sam Tarling for CRS.

overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions, yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good."[6] CRS partners with local Church and non-Church civil society organizations in response to local problems. Through this collaboration, we tap into a wealth of understanding about the local context, infrastructure (including extensive networks of health and education facilities) and existing relationships with affected communities, while helping to build their programming and operational capacity. CRS continues to work with local partners between active emergencies on development and planning so that partners can

become more resilient leaders and change agents, realize their full potential and actively provide humanitarian assistance.

Therefore, we promote the inclusion of civil society, including Church actors, faith-based organizations and non-governmental actors in decision making during a humanitarian response—and long after—through accountability and stewardship. *We advocate for grant funding to INGOs and partners so that INGOs can help build the capacity of local institutions through direct accompaniment, job shadowing and peer-to-peer support,* which have proven effective in strengthening local institutions.[7] We also recognize a need to *perform research to better understand how local NGOs are best able to respond to emergency humanitarian needs,* as well as participate in and influence the humanitarian infrastructure.

3. INCREASE ATTENTION AND FUNDING FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

From 1991 to 2010, only 0.5% of emergency assistance, globally, went to disaster risk reduction (DRR), while in 2011, 5% of funding went to this purpose.[8] Every dollar spent on risk reduction saves between $5 and $10 in economic losses from disasters.[9] While U.S. funding for DRR generally tracks global numbers, we have seen DRR funding decrease after its high-water mark in 2011. Yet the increase in the number and frequency of climatic shocks points to greater need for preparing vulnerable communities for such events.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AS A PROPORTION OF U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
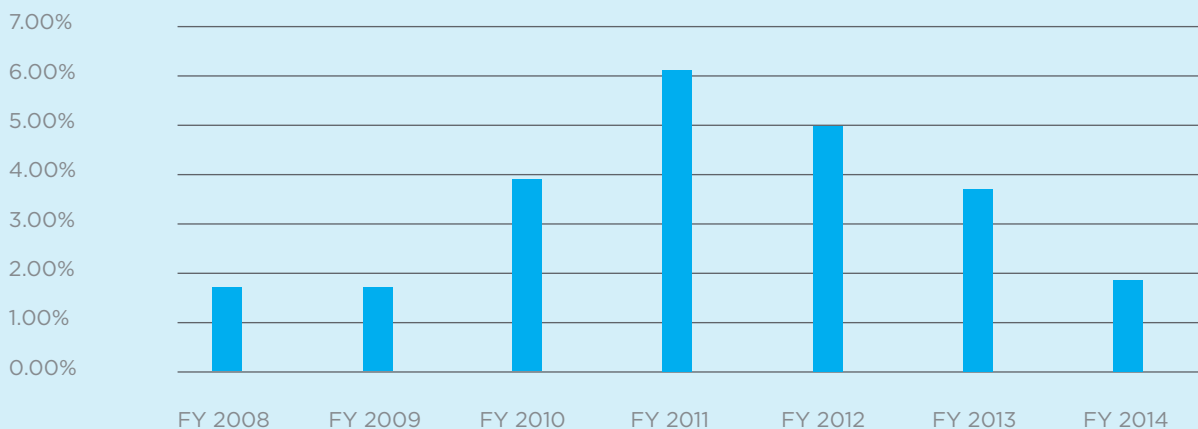
6   "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," No 48, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-part-one.cfm.

7   From interviews with CRS partner organizations in India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, including five Muslim faith-based community organizations, two Caritas members, and two religious communities.

8   "Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risks of Humanitarian Crises." *OCHA policy series,* (2014).

9   Eric Schwartz (U.N. Secretary General's Deputy Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, Op-Ed), "A Needless Toll of Natural Disasters," *Boston Globe,* March 23, 2006.

More funding for humanitarian assistance should be linked to DRR and development approaches to build up communities that are most prone to the effects of climatic shocks and stresses. This will make it possible to affect change over the long term so vulnerable communities are better able to cope with disasters in the future. Funding should also be provided over extended time frames, so urban planning, environmental risk mitigation, natural resource management and other efforts can be undertaken. Recent research on DRR in shelter settings found that interventions with ***longer time frames correlate with higher rates of positive behavior change.*** In addition, our research shows that DRR interventions should take place before a disaster, and should be long term.[10]

Beyond the usual portfolio of DRR activities, CRS' focus on markets leads us also to ***support increased funding for market-based DRR activities***. For example, in our work to strengthen shelters in preparation for natural disasters in Bangladesh, CRS employs local carpenters and skilled laborers, both to stimulate local market actors, and to train laborers so they can build disaster-ready shelters outside of the project scope, and help if a disaster strikes. Further, we are undertaking market assessments and pre-positioning vendors in crisis-prone areas in Haiti and Sudan, so that when disaster strikes, communities can be ready to respond—through local markets—immediately.

4. PROMOTE AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Integrating emergency assistance with protection, peacebuilding and other technical areas makes responses more effective.

CRS works to mainstream protection principles into all emergency response programming. Using a robust framework that incorporates protection concerns from assessment, to intervention, to monitoring, CRS prioritizes the safety and well-being of affected and at-risk populations; encourages equality, inclusive access and participation in program design and implementation; and promotes the dignity of, and accountability to, all groups affected by crises.

We support USAID's focus on integrating protection into emergency response and seek continued collaboration and learning on this issue.

In complex crises, emergency assistance should be designed after a thorough conflict analysis. It should contribute to peace by building social cohesion, amplifying efforts of faith institutions, and addressing root causes. For those who suffer the impacts of these crises, emergency responses should reach beyond material needs and venture into the psychosocial dimensions of support, such as counseling, creating safe spaces for women and children, and taking gender-sensitive approaches. For example, we have seen success in the Central African Republic, where CRS works with local leaders to reweave the social fabric that has been destroyed during conflict. Without addressing this aspect of the crisis, conflict could easily reignite, and destroy many more lives. The recent Global Development Alliance funding for peacebuilding and development in Central African Republic is a great example of funding which allows for the integration of various aspects of building peace and social cohesion in conflict-laden places, and ***we support similar funding that prioritizes locally led initiatives that integrate peacebuilding into emergency response work.***

Addressing psychosocial outcomes is also an important and often overlooked objective after natural and conflict disasters strike, as many will have witnessed the loss of family members and complete destruction of homes and communities. CRS' privately funded

> *"The current global context is characterized by high levels of violent protracted conflict and inexcusable and rising levels of poverty and inequality. Together and separately, these phenomena arguably account for humanity's greatest contemporary challenges. A compelling need to rigorously and routinely examine these issues in an integrated manner with an eye towards developing joint conceptual and practical strategies becomes apparent."[11]*
>
> **—JOURNAL OF PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT**

10 Turnbull, Marilise, Charlotte Sterrett, Amy Hilleboe, Seki Hirano. *Extending Impact: Factors influencing households to adopt hazard-resistant construction practices in post-disaster settings.* (Catholic Relief Services, 2015).

11 McCandless, Eric and Abu-Nimer Mohammed, executive editors, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2002).

TRAUMA AND PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS FOR SYRIANS AND OTHER WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

Trauma and peacebuilding interventions for Syrians and other war-affected children are a critical component of formal and informal education programming led by local partners.

In the past year, CRS has partnered with UK-based **No Strings International** *to develop two films to help address the psychosocial and peacebuilding needs of war-affected children. These films are being used in Syria and throughout the region.*

The films were carefully developed in consultation with representatives working in the field, to inform design of the film scenery, props, scripts, puppet names, costumes and appearance. They were designed to be relevant to the intended audience—built on local knowledge and coping mechanisms, and produced in the local language.

CRS and partners are training hundreds of teachers, counselors, community workers and mobilizers in using puppetry to help thousands of violence-affected children be more resilient. The methodology seeks to provide an opportunity for children—many of whom have experienced trauma—to express their feelings and learn positive ways to deal with them.

Because the films should not be shown without a trained, certified facilitator present, the partnership includes the following:

• Training for key stakeholders to help them identify and respond to the psychosocial needs of children through puppetry and other tools;

• Supporting trained stakeholders in implementing action plans in their schools, community-based organizations or child friendly spaces; and

• Monitoring use of the puppetry methodology and providing the additional support as necessary.
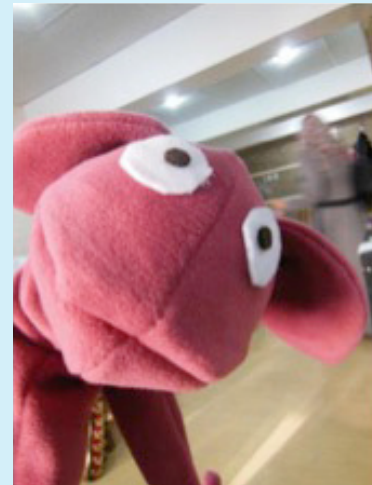
Puppetry and artwork encourage children to express themselves after watching "Out of the Shadows," a film that deals with trauma. Photo by Catherine Cowley/Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

"No Strings" and "Creative Arts Methodology/CAM" programming have helped address the trauma and peacebuilding needs of children after natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Haiti and, more recently, in Nepal. These methodologies are also useful in response to conflict, and we have successfully implemented them in Gaza and countries affected by the Syrian conflict. Through engaged play, including puppetry, art, music and movement, children and communities can build a sense of solidarity, increase their understanding of reactions to difficult situations, express their emotions, and increase their capacity to find and use coping mechanisms to manage their stress and grief. Appropriate entry points for these types of interventions can often be found within both formal and informal education programming, which is also an essential element of any quality emergency response. *Therefore, we encourage increasing current funding and adding additional funding streams that allow peacebuilding and psychosocial programming to be integrated with emergency responses in both disaster and conflict situations.*

Lastly, DRR activities should be integrated into emergency response as often as possible, and funded more generously to help people in high-risk areas prepare for future shocks. DRR activities should go beyond shelter building or planting drought-resistant seeds. DRR projects should equip people with systems and mechanisms—such as early warning systems and community planning—to mitigate, prepare for and respond to future disasters. One such privately funded CRS project is successfully helping people build disaster-resilient livelihoods in Guatemala. The project helps farmers mitigate the potential disaster of coffee leaf rust by supporting improved farm management systems through coffee soil analysis, plant renovation and intercropping, and diversifying livelihoods through a savings and lending component. The project also works with farmers to develop an early warning system to prevent the disease from devastating livelihoods.

5. IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE COUNTERTERROR REGULATIONS

U.S. "war on terror," regulations have impeded our programming and compromised our ability to abide by humanitarian principles. In trying to protect U.S. funds from being misappropriated by terrorist groups, the U.S. government has asked INGOs like CRS to engage in activities that threaten our ability to work with local partners, which contribute greatly to our effectiveness. This has threatened our ongoing work to address the root causes of terror, such as extreme poverty—in places like Afghanistan and West Bank/Gaza—and can increase operating costs, slow operational response, curtail funding and undermine humanitarian partnerships.[12] Preventing humanitarian organizations from providing aid can also leave terrorist groups as the only remaining conduit for aid.

CRS staffer Ross Tomlinson, hands out plastic tarps at a CRS and Caritas Norway distribution of 700 emergency shelters in the town of Palo, on the east side of the island of Leyte in central Philippines. Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS.

One example of an overly burdensome and harmful regulation is the Partner Vetting System, or PVS, which began in West Bank/Gaza. It has since been administered in Afghanistan and piloted in USAID projects across five additional countries.[13] PVS checks the backgrounds of CRS staff and local partners considered to be "key individuals" against classified databases of suspected terrorists maintained by the FBI and populated by more than 40 military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies. In some cases, the information provided may be used to update those databases.

CRS believes that this type of vetting compromises our humanitarian principles, invariably linking us to U.S. government intelligence gathering. In West Bank/Gaza, PVS drove away partners, delayed program implementation and increased program costs. Because of PVS in Afghanistan, CRS chooses not to include local partners in project proposals, which undermines the

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12 Pantuliano, Sara, Kate Mackintosh and Samir Elhawary with Victoria Metcalfe. "Counter-terrorism and humanitarian action: Tensions, impact and ways forward," *Humanitarian Policy Group Policy Brief,* 43 (October 2011).

13 These five pilot countries are Guatemala, Lebanon, Kenya, Ukraine and the Philippines.

principle of subsidiarity in a place that no doubt needs it. Should PVS be implemented globally, there is no telling what type of compromises CRS and other INGOs will have to make to abide by these regulations, undermining the work we do to provide humanitarian assistance and build the capacity of local partners.

Other overly burdensome and harmful counterterrorism mechanisms are U.S. sanctions programs managed by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, or OFAC. In some countries, sanctions restrictions require humanitarian organizations to obtain licenses to work in regions controlled by terrorist organizations or other bad actors. This has greatly impeded our ability to deliver aid in places such as Somalia in 2010, when large-scale food insecurity was predicted. Because of the sanctions program—and delays by OFAC in responding to humanitarian requests—the emergency response was significantly delayed. This led to famine, and deaths—by starvation—of tens of thousands of people.[14] If the humanitarian community had been able to reach individuals when widespread food insecurity was imminent, we could have prepared people and mitigated the devastating impacts of the drought.

Therefore, *we advocate for counterterror regulations that are effective, yet make space for our humanitarian work.* To this end, we have worked to introduce H.R. 3526, the Humanitarian Assistance Facilitation Act, or HAFA, which permits humanitarian action even when sanctions are present.[15] HAFA would allow for humanitarian organizations "acting in good faith with appropriate restrictions and controls … [to] access[] and provid[e] aid to civilian populations … in humanitarian crises …"[16]

6. DIRECTLY FUND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES TO REDUCE TRANSACTION COSTS

U.S. government funding for humanitarian response currently flows to the United Nations, INGOs and local institutions. Funding to U.N. agencies and multilateral organizations is around three times that provided directly to INGOs, and figures show that only 0.02% is channeled directly to local NGOs. While this figure may be higher in reality, because of pass-through funds that eventually go to local institutions, the actual amount is not known.

We recommend that USAID and the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration document the proportion of funding that goes to local partners so we have a more accurate estimate of this figure.

Funding to the United Nations is not implemented directly by the United Nations, but is often passed on to INGOs and local organizations via subgrants.[17] This process causes critical time to be lost and adds transactional costs, ultimately reducing assistance to those in need. *Funding should take the most direct and least costly route to implementers,* whether through INGOs or local institutions, to make programming both more effective and efficient. One viable alternative for reducing such inefficiencies is to *create a rapid response fund in countries affected by frequent emergencies.* This funding model, managed by INGOs, will be able to streamline funding because of INGOs' substantially lower overhead costs and understanding and experience on the ground.[18] Unlike the U.N. Common Humanitarian Fund, or CHF, which often can take more than 6 months to administer funds in an emergency, these rapid response funds can be administered within weeks of application—and in smaller grant amounts that are more accessible to local NGOs.

Further, the United Nations' dual roles—of coordinator and donor—diverts its focus from leading coordination, which includes working with stakeholders to develop and promote coherent strategies, and strengthening collaboration with local authorities in response and recovery strategies. The United Nations also has a primary role in addressing challenges like facilitating humanitarian access. The United Nations should welcome and promote participation from all stakeholders in this effort, and strengthen their capacity to ensure access to common services the implementing agencies need, including logistics and communications. INGOs and local groups, while continuing to focus on aid delivery, will also benefit from having access to resources that will allow them to incorporate the realities of the field into developing and disseminating responses tailored to specific sectors. *Donor resources for leading coordination should be accessible to a range of stakeholders as a means of improving participation and outcomes of humanitarian coordination.*

14 "America's Somalia Wake-Up Call." *The Daily Beast.* July 17, 2011.
15 This act was first introduced in 2013 by Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives.
16 Humanitarian Assistance Facilitation Act. HR 3526. Page 5.

17 United States, Global Humanitarian Assistance website, accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/united-states#tab-delivery
18 Currently OFDA implements a Rapid Emergency Response Fund in Darfur.