



Theory of Change, Metrics and Learning Agenda

AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM





Introduction

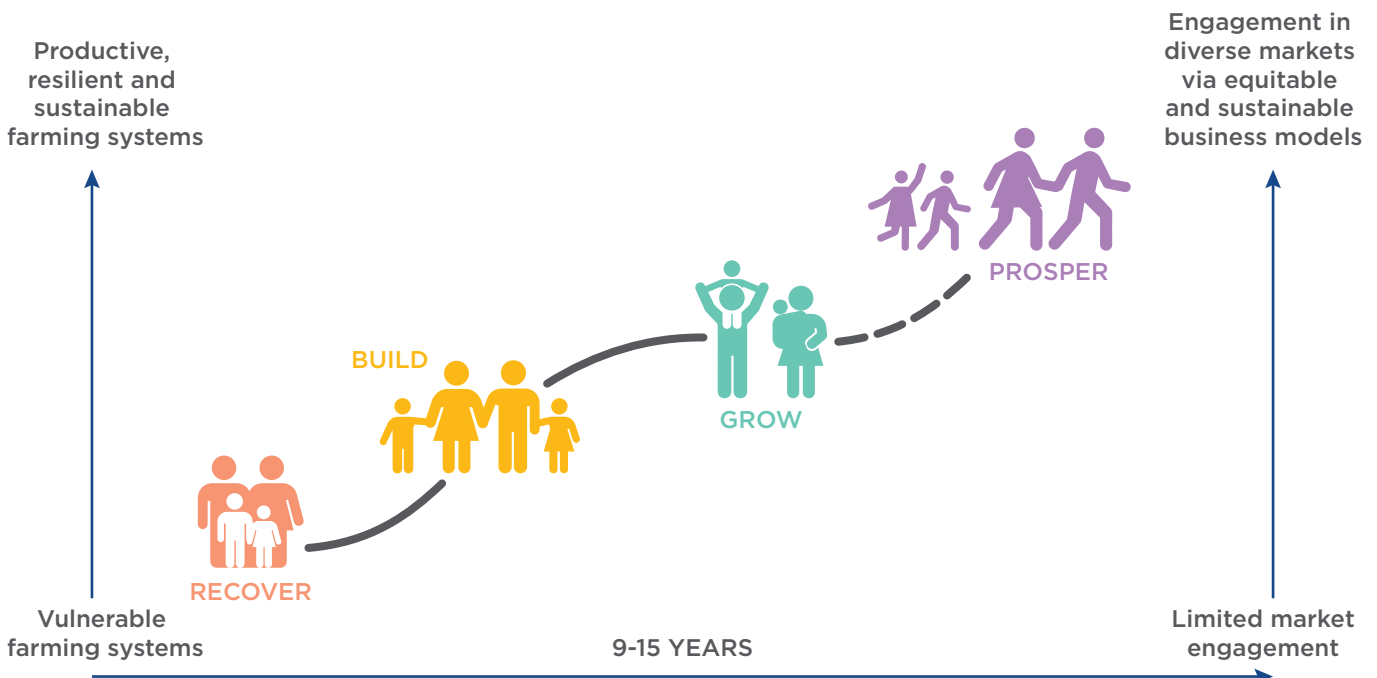
Investors increasingly want evidence that our projects have measurable impact on the lives of people we support. Many donors now require that projects present a clear plan showing how project activities lead to specific outcomes and that there is consistency in how we measure the effectiveness of our work. The need for better performance measurement is particularly important when we have many projects with the same donor. One of the tools that donors are asking for to improve our evidence of success is the “**theory of change**”. This method provides a description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context and how it is measured.

The Agriculture and Livelihoods Program-level Theory of Change was developed to help teams design and

implement projects that focus on a more consistent set of **assumptions**, and analyze progress using a defined set of **metrics**. Taking on this approach will allow us to collect data in the same manner in different locations so that we can assess our agency-level performance. The program-level Theory of Change also provides us with an opportunity to identify gaps in our knowledge from which we can identify key **learning** themes. These learning themes can be used to test our programming design assumptions, as well as to assess how and why certain methods work better than others.

This program-level Theory of Change is based on the Pathway to Prosperity conceptual framework (see Figure 1). In this framework the left-vertical axis relates to the farmers’ level of productivity, resilience and

FIGURE 1. A Pathway to Prosperity: AL-SPA Analytical Framework



sustainability; and the right-vertical axis refers to the level of market engagement.

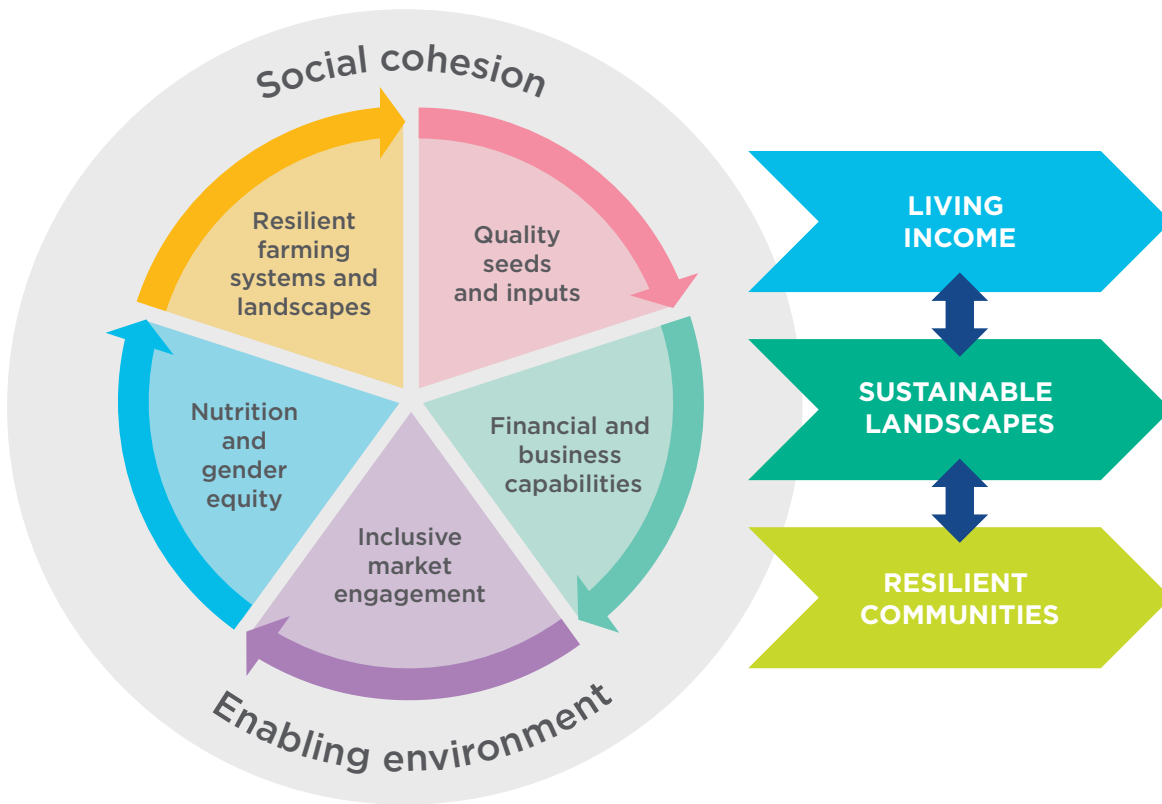
This framework enables CRS programs to segment farmers within target communities. Segmenting smallholder families within communities helps us to understand the needs and aspirations of various types of farm families, which enables us to develop specific support packages for each farmer segment. Working with all farmer segments within a

community, enables the program to provide inclusive community development.

The **Strategic Objectives**, which make up the key elements of our theory of change, are the outcome areas that the Agriculture and Livelihoods Program aims to achieve for farm families (see Figure 2), and when farm families make investments and position changes in these areas, the program will contribute to its goal, which is:

Rural families achieve a living income, are resilient, and prosper in sustainable landscapes

FIGURE 2. Strategic Objectives of the AL-SPA Theory of Change



What we want to achieve?

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM ACHIEVE ITS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES? THE AL-SPA BUILDING BLOCKS

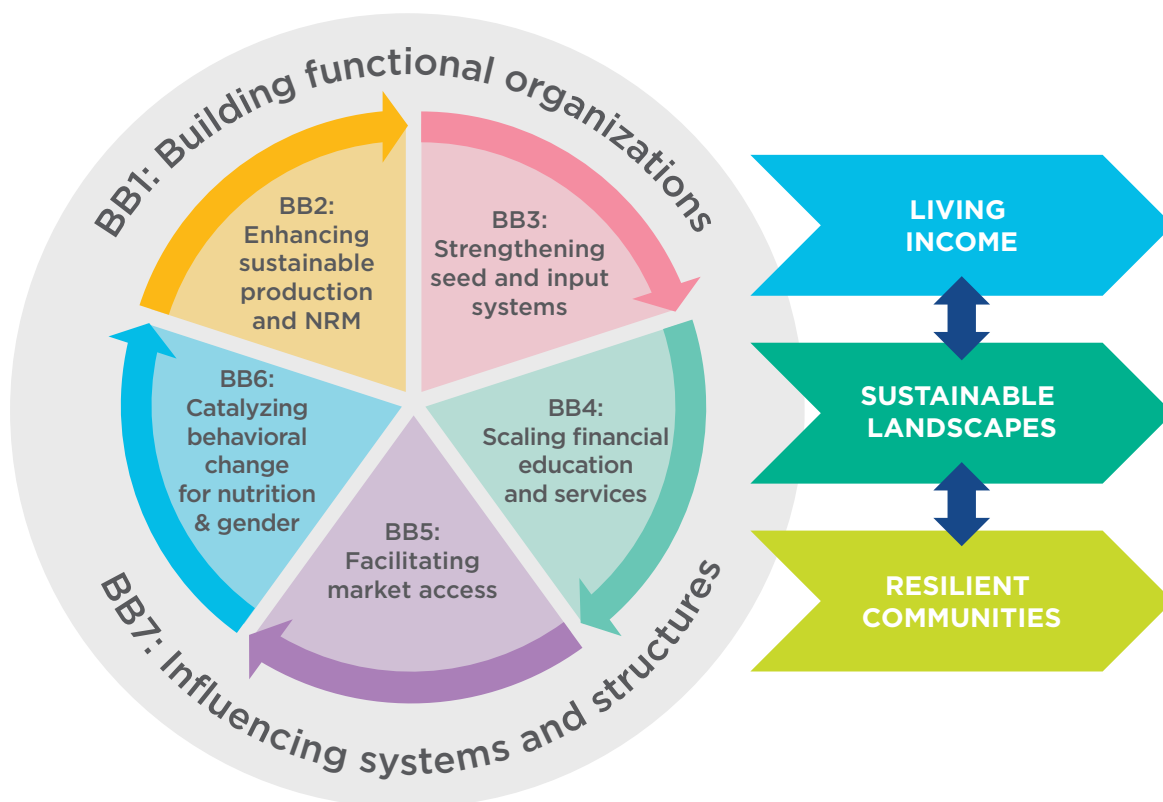
In our theory of change, the strategic objectives translate into a practical set of building blocks which cover seven key areas of CRS agricultural intervention needed to move from the theory of change to the theory of action (see Figure 3).

This document provides detail on the seven Building Blocks of the Agriculture and Livelihoods Program Theory of Change. Within each context the mix and relative importance of these building blocks are likely

to change, there will be differences in landscapes, types of products and markets that farmers engage. However, this Theory of Change provides us with an opportunity to test our key assumptions, gather data on our agency-level performance and use the learning themes to explore the validity and quality of the assumptions made.

It is our hope that through iterative reviews, and a robust learning agenda, the Theory of Change may be continually refined and improved to assist farmers wherever CRS meets them on the development spectrum.

FIGURE 3. Building Blocks of the AL-SPA Theory of Change



How will we achieve it?



Mama Teddy, 38, working in her field. She makes her living from selling produce that she grows. She gets seeds from MOCSO and CRS. She has three children: Teddy, 5, Omaria, 12, and Jenny, 2. Her two youngest children are part of THRIVE. CRS and its partner MOCSO (Mwanza Outreach Care and Support Organization) are facilitating the CRS THRIVE project in Mwanza, Tanzania. The THRIVE project is sponsored by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation grant. The project focuses on ECD (early childhood development) and includes special support for childcare centers, children’s health and nutrition and lessons in positive parenting. *Philip Laubner / CRS*

OVERARCHING LEARNING AGENDA	AL-SPA GOAL-LEVEL METRICS
<p>Pathway to Prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typology of farm families by segment • Assessing advancement along the Pathway to Prosperity. • Understanding the factors that promote/hinder advancement along the Pathway to Prosperity. <p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding resilience, and the combination of capabilities, coping actions, adaptive responses, and transformative strategies that make the difference. • Assessing resilience outcomes (trajectories) and its impact on Integral Human Development (IHD) outcomes. 	<p>G1: Living Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily per capita expenditures (as proxy for income) – USAID Indicator 4.5-9 <p>G2: Sustainable Landscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hectares under biological significance (soil, water and biodiversity) and/or improved natural resource management – USAID Indicator 4.8.1-26 <p>G3: Resilient Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of farming households who: (a) progressed; (b) are resilient (bounced back better, bounced back); (c) are vulnerable (bounced back worse, collapsed, are low and stagnant)



BUILDING BLOCK 1

Building functional organizations

WHY IS ORGANIZATION A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR FARMERS?

Smallholder farmers working as individuals face severe constraints in accessing basic services such as inputs and technologies that can increase their productivity. Individuals are unable to achieve the economies of scale needed to effectively engage in markets and generate a living income for their families. As lone actors, smallholder farmers are unable to bridge relations with other business partners, to advocate to change their situation, and to influence the systems and structures that would enable them to develop sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION?

Building social cohesion that enables smallholder producers to create functional and well-governed organizational processes and structures is a strategic objective of the AL-SPA. Functional organizations enable smallholder producers to build trust and cooperation among themselves to plan and implement collective actions. This is fundamental to their accessing services and markets to build financial

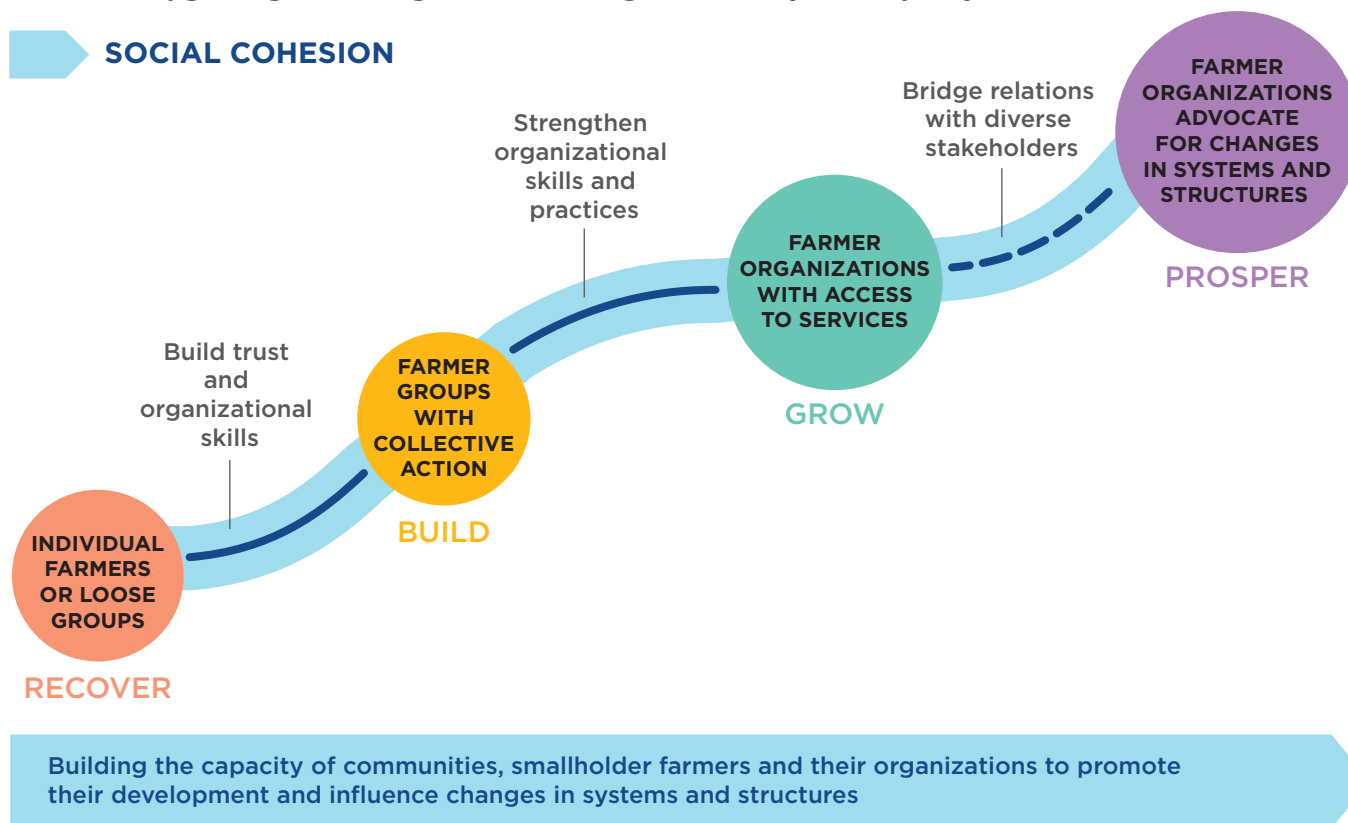
and business capabilities, access quality seed and inputs, have resilient production systems, inclusively engage with markets, and advocate for an enabling environment that supports transformational change.

HOW DOES OUR WORK HELP?

Functional organizations are at the core of the Agriculture and Livelihoods Program Theory of Change, providing the foundation on which other building blocks can be layered. However, developing functional organizations requires considerable local knowledge and trust. This requires working with communities to support local leadership, engaging their members, aligning incentives with goals, and enforcing agreed and clear rules and regulations. The first steps in strengthening farmer organizations are:

- Conducting an appraisal of existing structures, to understand functionality and governance strengths and weaknesses;
- Identification of barriers and opportunities for inclusion; and
- Assessment of organizational competencies, such as member participation, leadership and negotiation skills.

FIGURE 4. Upgrading farmer organizations along the Pathway to Prosperity



Having assessed organizational strengths and gaps, the next step is for its members to develop an action plan that will let them transition:

From recover to build by:

- Identifying shared objectives and incentives for collaboration.
- Creating opportunities to build social cohesion and trust.
- Building organizational competencies and values.
- Facilitating agreement on shared norms and rules.
- Promoting collective planning and accountability processes.
- Implementing concrete and tangible actions to achieve shared objectives.

As a result, farmers initially working individually or in loose groups will now actively participate in farmer groups to achieve collective action.

From build to grow by:

- Supporting organizations to provide or leverage access to services for their members.
- Strengthening key management structures and systems.
- Strengthening decision making skills to ensure accountability and transparency.

As a result, farmers will access services provided directly by their organization or leveraged through their organization.

From grow to prosper by:

- Developing capacity to influence changes in systems and structures.
- Building inclusive and equitable relations with other value chain actors.
- Integrating more inclusive business models into the organizational strategies.

As a result, farmer organizations will be capable to advocate for changes in systems and structures.

WHO DOES THIS WORK?

The Agriculture and Livelihoods Program and its partners need to work with local civil society organizations, governments and the private sector to assist farmers in forming and promoting

functional and well-governed organizational processes. This is crucial to mobilize members and resources to build effective farmer groups, cooperatives and farmer unions with improved social cohesion and governance.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of smallholder organizations' performance• Effectiveness and cost-benefit of different organizational models• Minimum set of smallholder competencies to create effective and responsive organizations	<p>BB1.1 Number of farmer groups</p> <p>BB1.2 Percentage of farmers that are organized in farmer groups or producer organizations, by gender, age range, and type of group</p> <p>BB1.3 Number of farm groups/producer organizations that have improved management practices (USAID Indicator 4.6.2-9)</p>



Members of CRS-supported SILC groups (Savings and Internal Lending Communities) dance together during a meeting in Awaradoni village, Upper East Region, Ghana. These women have begun making and selling shea nut butter, straw baskets, and parboiled rice ever since interrupted weather patterns related to climate change have inhibited their abilities to earn livelihoods through farming. *Jake Lyell for CRS*



BUILDING BLOCK 2

Enhancing Sustainable Production and Natural Resources Management (NRM)

WHY IS NRM A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR FARMERS?

The natural resource base—soil, water, biodiversity and ecosystems—are the foundation for rural livelihoods. The majority of the world’s poor who live in rural areas depend on agriculture and their natural resource base to support their livelihoods. Climate change, land use transformation and the needs of a growing population have dramatically increased pressure on natural resources. Already there is a global crisis in land and environment quality, and as soils and water systems degrade, the potential to generate dignified livelihoods falls. This trend needs to be reversed in order to ensure that rural households can live food-secure and prosperous lives, and this requires a *regeneration* strategy.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION?

Food production from smallholders, the largest population group involved in agriculture, is a key driver in the overall food security and economic growth of agricultural economies. Smallholders need to be empowered to sustainably increase food security and generate living incomes from their farms

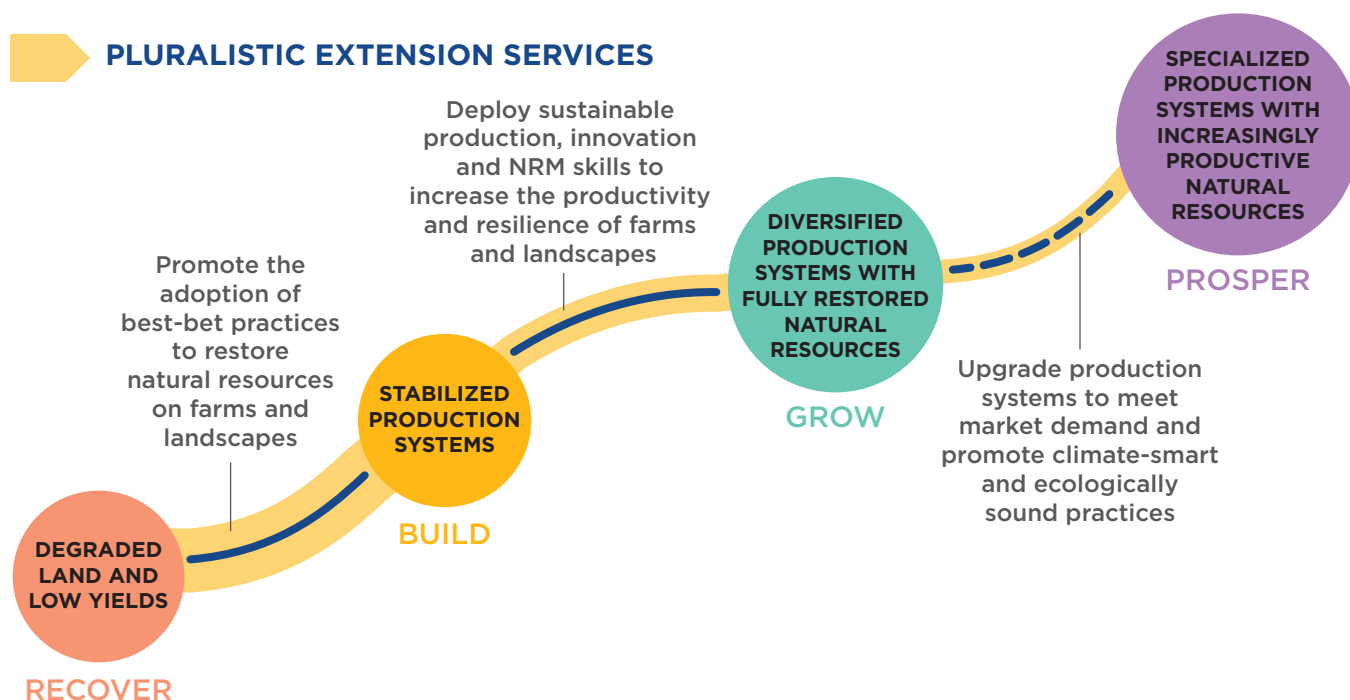
and off-farm activities. To achieve this, it is important that rural landscapes are protected and able to provide critical ecosystem services on which *all* lives and livelihoods depend. Restored ecosystems are both a national (and international) security issue and a resilience issue.

HOW CAN OUR WORK HELP?

To change the downward spiral of degrading natural resources to a cycle of increasing productivity and income opportunities, CRS programming promotes pluralistic, demand-driven and gender-transformative extension and advisory services. These services need to foster smallholder farmers’ skills and agency for increased productivity while halting the degradation of natural resources at farm and landscape level. To do so, these services need to:

- Build the “agency capacity” of smallholder farmers, increasing their own ability to understand their key priorities and act to effectively enhance their own development.
- Increase the technical knowledge and capacity of smallholder farmers and their communities to effectively manage their natural resource base and production systems.

FIGURE 5. Upgrading sustainable production systems along the Pathway to Prosperity



Promoting pluralistic and gender-transformative extension services to foster smallholder farmers' skills and agency for increased productivity while halting the degradation of natural resources

These services will help farm families' transition:

From Recover to Build by:

- Supporting the design and implementation of community-based natural resource management plans to rehabilitate degraded landscapes.
- Promoting the adoption of best-bet practices to restore natural resources on farms and landscapes.
- Ensuring that the poorest have access to options to establish and maintain diverse and resilient production systems.

As a result, production systems, initially in degraded land and with low yields will stabilize.

From Build to Grow by:

- Strengthening extension and advisory systems to ensure smallholders' access to the most relevant and appropriate climate-smart technology options.
- Deploying sustainable production, innovation skills, and NRM (soil, water and ecosystem management)

skills for productive, resilient and sustainable production systems at farm and landscape level.

- Supporting broad application of improved NRM systems at farm and landscape level.

As result, farm families will have diversified production systems and natural resources will be fully restored.

From Grow to Prosper by:

- Supporting the upgrade of production systems to meet identified and prioritized market opportunities.
- Influencing the private sector to support more climate-smart and ecologically sound practices.
- Advancing business and marketing skills that retain climate-smart perspectives and promote inclusive and sustainable value chains.

As a result, farm families will manage specialized and profitable production systems with increasingly productive natural resources.



Catholic Relief Services' project Superamos is helping vulnerable subsistence farmers and their families affected by 2015's drought in three departments of Guatemala's Dry Corridor. Millions suffered during last year's drought, so in advance of the 2016 harvest, one community asked for help. Around 5,000 families will receive help to buy food over a 6-month period using a high technology system as a part of CRS' Emergency Response with funds from USAID. *Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS*

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

The Agriculture and Livelihoods program and its partners need to work with farmers and communities, farmer organizations, national and local governments, private sector extension and advisory services, research

organizations and business to enhance the adoption of effective and sustainable farm and landscape management methods that are both profitable and affordable, and that achieve gains in water resources, soil productivity, and broader ecosystem services.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most effective methods and processes to deliver SMART skills • Barriers for the adoption of more productive and resilient farming systems 	<p>BB2.1 Farmers' level of organizational, financial, NRM, innovation and marketing skills, by gender and age range</p> <p>BB2.2 Number of producers who have applied improved technologies or management practices (USAID Indicator 4.5.2-5)</p> <p>BB2.3 Number of community-based NRM plans designed and being implemented</p> <p>BB2.4 Community assessment index of ecosystem trends and services</p>



BUILDING BLOCK 3

Strengthening seed and input systems

WHY IS THE INPUT SUPPLY SYSTEM CRITICAL FOR FARMERS?

Input systems include the many products and services needed to grow crops and raise animals. These include seeds, fertilizer, crop protection agro-chemicals, veterinary medicines, farm tools, irrigation pumps and pipes, safety materials and postharvest equipment such as threshers and driers, packaging materials for storage and marketing. Of all these products, seed is probably the most cost effective way to increase sustainable production, support nutrition and raise incomes. Developing a vibrant input supply system that enables farmers to obtain seeds and inputs at prices they can afford and in locations they can access is a major challenge for development agriculture, and the lack of access to these services is a major hurdle to progress.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION?

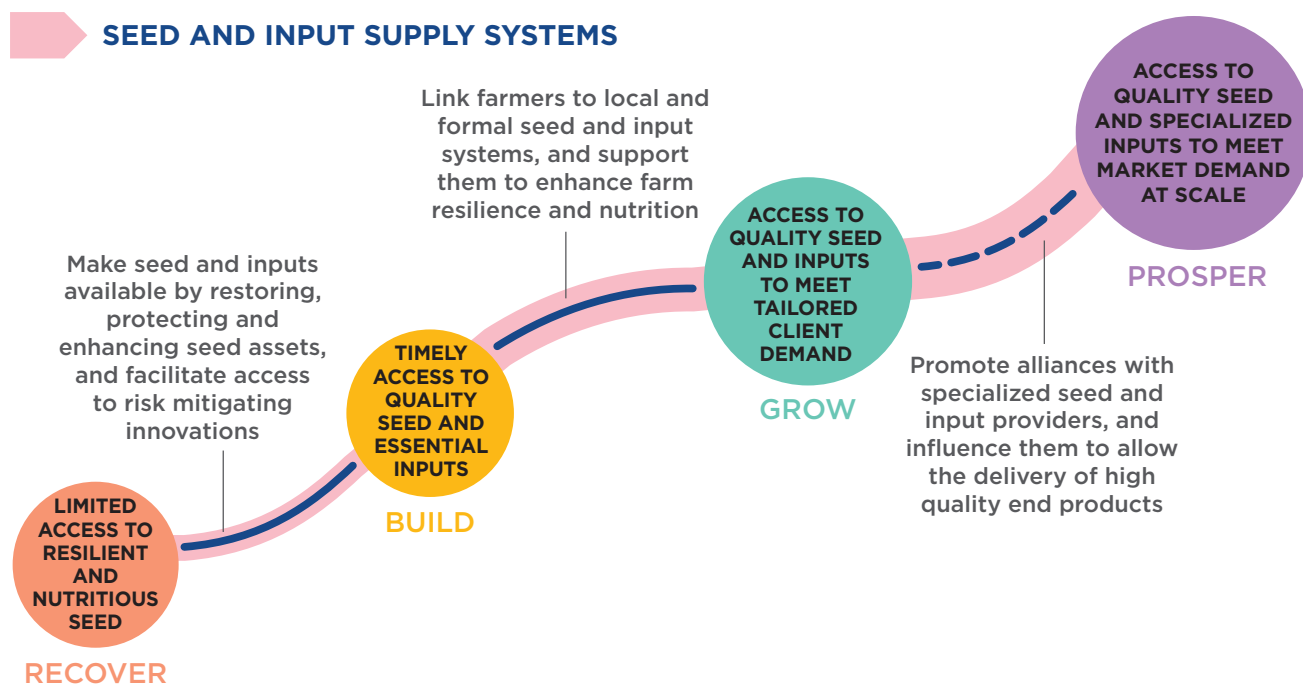
Strengthening seed systems and improving smallholder access to quality inputs requires new ways of doing business, that both supports the formal systems to provide modern varieties and technologies to millions more farmers; and to upgrade the informal sector where most smallholder farmers still get their seed. Improvements in the informal sector include working to retain the quality of seed from farmers own stocks and improving the quality of seed purchased

from the local market. Strengthening the informal seed sector will require changes in policy to support sales of non-certified seed and better ways of labeling seed for farmers. To achieve year on year gains, farmers need access to quality seed of varieties that are adapted, with farmer-preferred traits and in high market demand on a continuing basis. The seed must also have high germination rates, be affordable, and be able to reach farmers even at 'the last mile'. To support resilient production, farmers also require access to a wide range of crops and varieties to reduce risks to shocks. To attain the desired goals, the use of quality seed might best be complemented with best soil and crop management practices. New business models are needed to catalyze input systems for smallholders, and better information services are needed on crops, seed and markets to help farmers make informed decisions on how to invest in seeds and other input services that will increase their productivity and sales.

HOW CAN OUR WORK HELP?

Catalyzing impact-oriented seed and other input systems means working with an array of supply and delivery actors who help move seed and inputs to the 'last mile.' This means working with private and public actors who are willing to tailor the product, the delivery mechanism and the information strategy, even to those who are geographically, socially or politically marginalized.

FIGURE 6. Upgrading seed and input systems along the Pathway to Prosperity



Strengthening seed and input systems to improve smallholder access to quality inputs to build resilient production systems

Seed and input systems’ interventions are critical to support smallholders’ transitions:

From emergency to recover and build by:

- Making seed and inputs available to farmers to restore, enhance and protect their seed assets, via Seed Vouchers and Fairs (SVF), Diversification in Nutrition for Enhanced Resilience fairs (DiNERS), cash transfers—and better storage techniques.
- Facilitating smallholders’ access to risk mitigating innovations, such as crops and varieties that will produce in degraded soils and support more diversified diets.

As a result, farm families will have timely access to quality seed and essential inputs.

From build to grow by:

- Linking smallholder farmers to localized production and seed delivery systems to drive the process that offers quality, community-acceptable varieties and seeds marketed through Private Input Service

Providers (PISP), supply-driven agro-dealers or other means, which deliver even to remote areas.

- Supporting seed and input systems to enhance farm resilience and family nutrition by facilitating access to a diversity of crops and varieties and soil restoration inputs.

As a result, farm families will access quality seed and inputs to meet tailored client demand.

From grow to prosper by:

- Promoting alliances among smallholder farmers, their organizations and specialized seed and input providers.
- Influencing seed and inputs systems to be geared to specialized business activity, focusing either on seed production *per se* (seed for sale), or seed and inputs as part of a lucrative high-value chain in which seed and inputs allow the delivery of uniform and high quality end products.

As a result, smallholders will access quality seed and specialized inputs to meet market demand at scale.

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

Partners in input system development include governments, commercial seed/input companies, farmer cooperatives, community-based multipliers and service providers, extension services and traders who serve the local markets (even in ‘the middle of

nowhere’ and during periods of instability). The type of partner depends on the product being moved, the locale, and especially the specific farmer clientele. Farmers producing for local consumption and markets are distinct from those engaged in highly specialized export chains.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relative cost, benefits and risks of different types of quality seed for diverse clients and uses.• Effectiveness and sustainability of different market-based schemes to supply seeds of crops for resilience and nutrition.• Information systems to link seed production and delivery ‘at the last mile’.	<p>BB3.1 % of farmers purchasing seed of varied quality (certified, QDS, farmer-guaranteed), by crop</p> <p>BB3.2 Area planted with good quality seed of performing varieties (adapted USAID Indicator 4.5.2-5)</p>



Women selling seed in Kabale, Uganda who was interviewed and expressed that new business models—particularly for legume seed—are urgently needed. *J.C. Rubyogo*



BUILDING BLOCK 4

Scaling financial education and services

WHY ARE FINANCIAL SERVICES CRITICAL FOR FARMERS?

If smallholder farming families are to sustainably increase their production and engage with markets in a mutually advantageous way, they will require new financial skills and access to a range of appropriate financial and non-financial products and services. Beyond direct investments in agricultural production, the combination of improved financial skills with access to quality financial services helps farmers to manage other critical aspects of their lives, including investments in education, health, and off-farm businesses.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION?

Through financial education and opportunities to put their knowledge and skills into practice, households will develop the financial capability and confidence to choose from, and use wisely, a wide range of financial products and services, including:

- Social transfers (remittances).
- Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC).
- Savings accounts in formal sector institutions [banks, microfinance institutions (MFI), savings and credit cooperatives (SACCO)/Credit Unions].

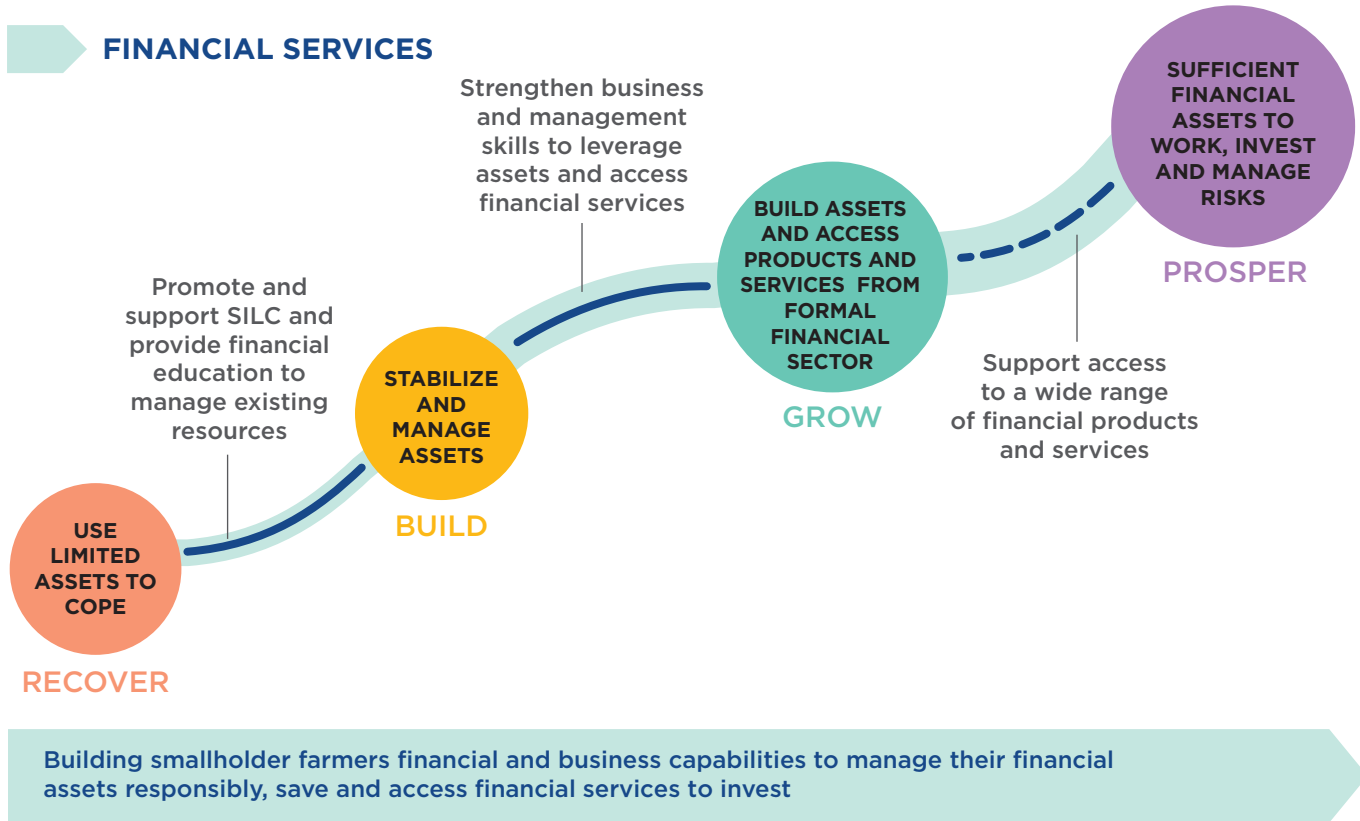
- Credit from formal sector institutions (banks, MFIs, SACCOs/Credit Unions) in addition to SILC.
- Microinsurance (health, crops, livestock).
- Money transfers, mobile money services, and virtual wallets or cashboxes.
- Impact investment.

HOW CAN OUR WORK HELP?

Farming families will access these financial services through an evolving series of channels, including government programs, development projects, community-managed groups initiated by CRS-trained, fee-for-service SILC agents, and finally the formal financial sector. Increasingly, as these services can be accessed in digital form (including mobile money), they will become readily available, amplifying their effectiveness and outreach. By using appropriate financial services, households will be able to:

- Make better investments (agricultural and non-agricultural).
- Accumulate and protect assets (financial and non-financial).
- Smooth income (cash flow).
- Cope with shocks.
- Reduce investment risks.

FIGURE 7. Upgrading financial skills and services within the Pathway to Prosperity



In consequence, households will be able to transition:

From recover to build

By promoting and supporting smallholder families to participate in Savings and Internal Lending Communities, and providing financial education training to manage existing resources.

As a result, they will be able to stabilize and better manage their existing financial resources.

From build to grow

By strengthening business and management skills, and supporting smallholder families to leverage available financial resources by engaging with the

formal financial sector, households will better invest and engage with markets.

As a result, they will build their assets and access products and services from the formal financial sector.

From grow to prosper

By supporting smallholder families’ access to a wide range of financial products and services that provides them with additional blended public/private funding, letting them engage fully in mutually advantageous market transactions.

As a result, they will have sufficient final assets to work, invest and manage risks.



Images of the “Saving for a Better Living” SILC group that started with 14 members in 2011 in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. After 5 years their SILC had grown to 85 active members. “We were introduced to SILC by Caritas Puerto Plata staff. People have gained confidence in us. No one has lost a penny in these 5 years. We are 85 members. Many of us have loans we couldn’t get at a bank. We have learned a lot about honesty and responsibility,” says Fidelio Sarita Martínez, the SILC group president. Catholic Relief Services, through its local partner Caritas Puerto Plata, has been working in the area promoting SILC since 2011. *Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS*

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

To build smallholder farmers’ financial capacity, the AL-SPA partners with local civil society organizations, governments, SILC Private Service Providers, and

producer associations, to develop their knowledge and skills to more effectively manage their financial assets (savings and loans) to invest in sustainable and scalable economic activities.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect of financial education on financial behaviors and use of financial services. • Extent that pro-poor package reaches the poorest populations currently not served by SILC. • Extent that the funds managed in SILC are invested in improving farming systems or other income generating activities. • Most effective mix of financial products for smallholder producers. • Interventions to encourage financial service providers to develop and deliver financial services for smallholder producers. 	<p>BB4.1 Value of annualized savings (US\$/year)</p> <p>BB4.2 Value and number of loans (US\$/year), by gender, age range, and type of investment</p> <p>BB4.3 Percentage of farmers who use financial services, by gender, age range and type (informal/formal)</p>



BUILDING BLOCK 5

Facilitating Market Access

WHY IS MARKET ACCESS IMPORTANT FOR FARMERS?

Agriculture remains one of the best opportunities for the estimated 2 billion rural people to work and trade their way out of poverty. The critical challenge is to enable farmers to build their marketing skills, expand their relationships with other value chain actors, and upgrade their production to take advantage of opportunities to improve the level and consistency of their incomes. Markets are highly competitive and smallholder farmers must sell their goods at prices that cover their production costs and provide them with a profit. To support smallholder marketing strategies, extension services need to take on new roles that provide business advice and financial services in addition to their traditional role in support of production. This work requires extension agents to link farmers with the private sector, so that farmers can learn about markets and enter into inclusive trading relationships.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO MARKETS?

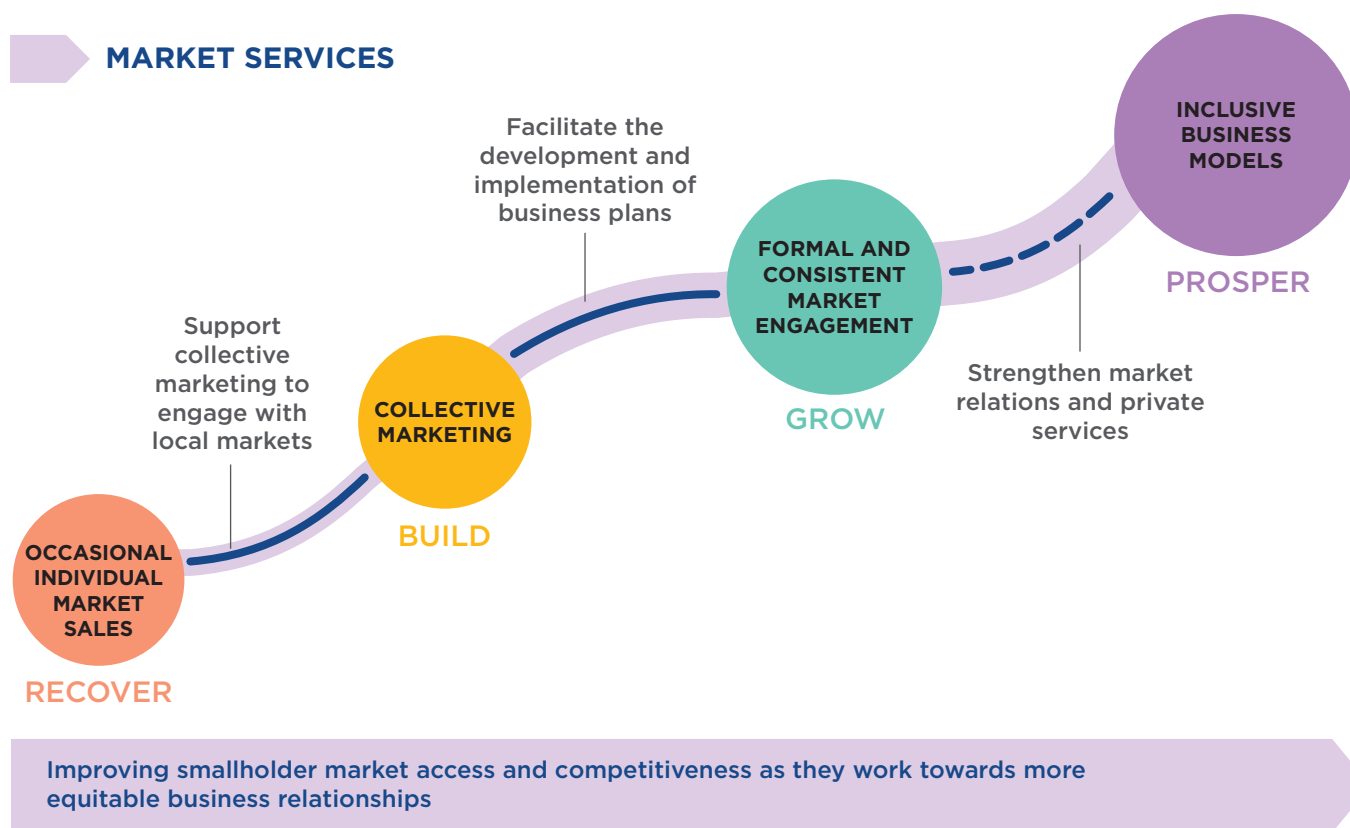
This building block focuses on improving smallholders' market access and competitiveness as they work towards more equitable business relationships. To achieve this, it develops the skills and services required to organize themselves and engage with markets. The approach includes working across the

supply chain and may also require farmers to acquire lobbying skills to enhance the enabling environment for smallholder participation in market systems. These activities are essential in the business flow, from the farm to the market and in making farmer organizations more competitive in the marketplace. A market-led production approach is driven by mapping opportunities in a given territory, a value-chain analysis, and developing upgrading plans organized around identified market opportunities.

HOW DOES OUR WORK HELP INCREASE ACCESS TO MARKETS?

Facilitating market access means developing the marketing and business capacity of farmer organizations and farmers, and enhancing their relationship networks to access inputs, services and markets. Farmers and field agents need to identify markets and then develop a set of production, organizational, marketing and financial plans to support investments in new agro-enterprises. Using business plans, field agents match farmers with appropriate markets in terms of risks and investments needed to sell products into target markets. This means making decisions on whether to focus on a farmer group's ability to establish a linkage to a first level local buyer, or to develop more complex value chain upgrading plans to engage farmers in more formal marketing arrangements.

FIGURE 8. Upgrading market access along the Pathway to Prosperity



Facilitating market access will support smallholder farmers to transition:

From recover to build by

Supporting smallholder farmers with occasional, individual sales in the market to develop the capacity to work on collective marketing strategies, which requires them to:

- Assess livelihood opportunities in their local territory or marketing area.
- Work with stakeholders to develop production and organizational plans appropriate for entry-level market options.
- Identify and assess “best fit” market opportunities.
- Implement production and market plans to achieve shared objectives.

From this, smallholder farmers will start collective marketing to engage with local markets.

From build to grow by:

Facilitating the development and implementation of business plans to:

- Make production and marketing investments to prepare for value chain engagement.
- Promote collective marketing.
- Integrate basic financial services into farming plans.
- Strengthen and link to local business development services (BDS).
- Diversify production and marketing systems to increase overall production and market resilience.

As a result, smallholder farmers will engage with formal markets in a consistent manner.

From grow to prosper by:

Strengthening market relations and private services to:

- Design value chain upgrading plans that leverage and strengthen private value chain services.
- Scale up and add value to products and services.
- Manage risk through crop insurance, crop diversification, climate-smart agriculture, climate-change modeling, social-risk mitigation, and price risk management.
- Build stronger business and service provision relationships amongst farmers, financial and input

service providers, local governments, certification bodies, traders, and end buyers.

- Improve value chain governance by convening and forging common objectives amongst value chain actors to enhance competitiveness and influence private and public sector policy and practice.

As a result, smallholders will develop relations with value chain actors via inclusive business models.

WHO SUPPORTS THESE ACTIVITIES?

Facilitating market access is highly dependent upon the existence of an enabling environment at the

national and local level, the assets and performance of farmer organizations, and private sector maturity, as well as the type of market that is being targeted. In many cases basic market linkage for smallholder farmers can be supported by NGO's in partnership with buyers. However, to build social cohesion and governance as market requirements become more complex, the AL-SPA partners with local civil society organizations and governments to develop their capacity to promote functional and well-governed organizational processes, advocate for the mobilization of resources and link smallholders with the private sector.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of on-farm income to a living income under different production systems, types of markets and target locations. • Most effective interventions and methods to support farmers access to informal and formal markets (<i>Value Chains Toolbox</i> design, deployment and effectiveness assessment). 	<p>BB5.1 Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) (US\$) by sex and age range (USAID Indicator 4.5.2-23)</p> <p>BB5.2 Gross net income per hectare of farming system (US dollars/ha) by sex and age range (USAID Indicator 4.5-16, 17, 18)</p>



A local group of women, Dios Proveera (God will Provide), grows and distributes vegetables as part of a savings group activity in San Antonio village near Estelli town in Nicaragua. *Karen Kasmauski for CRS*



BUILDING BLOCK 6

Catalyzing Behavior Change for Nutrition and Gender

WHY IS GENDER IMPORTANT FOR FARMERS?

Unequal gender relations maintain chronic poverty, household food insecurity, poor nutrition and violence against women and children. Understanding and addressing gender dynamics responsively within our agricultural programs helps programs to achieve long-term goals more effectively. Addressing gender roles and dynamics within our programs will improve the lives of women, girls, boys and men through better agriculture productivity, incomes and nutrition.

WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT?

With optimal nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, a child will achieve improved cognitive and physical development, better health, and will have better income prospects as an adult than a peer whose growth was stunted. Worldwide, about 165 million children under the age of 5 are stunted. This is one of the greatest challenges of our time, that cripples children and reduces overall productivity. Although overcoming stunting is complex, agriculture supports three areas of child nutrition with safe, nutritious foods, income generation, and women's empowerment. Improving nutrition and enhancing gender relations at the household and community level requires people to change their behavior. Therefore, our programming needs to understand the factors and players that effect these behaviors. We need to identify appropriate behavior change approaches to support the adoption of practices to improve our agriculture, nutrition, and gender equity outcomes.

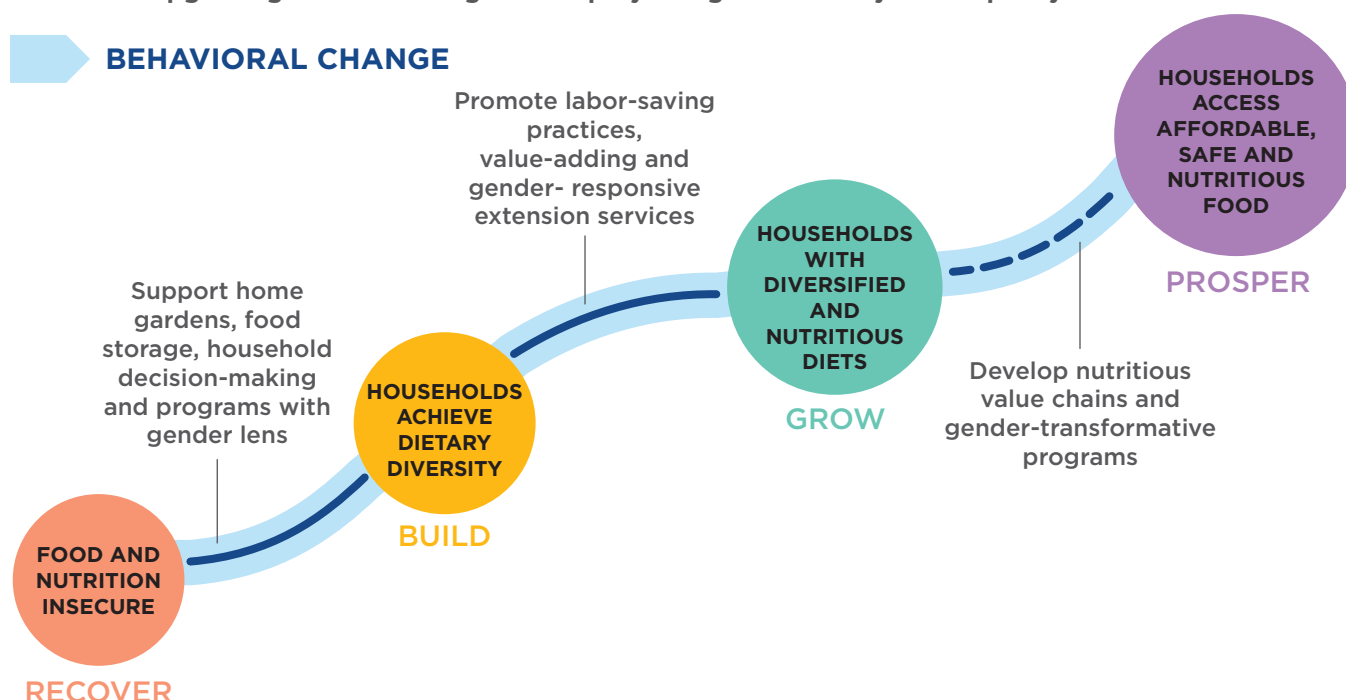
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE GENDER AND NUTRITION?

Building the capacity of households and communities to foster more equitable and democratic decision-making for improved agriculture, nutrition and gender equity, will generate important changes in community-level systems and structures to address these vulnerabilities and capacities. More gender-transformative and socio-economical agriculture systems will allow women, men, girls, and boys to adopt improved nutrition-related behaviors, access safe and high-quality food, earn and use income effectively while increasing resilience.

HOW DOES OUR WORK SUPPORT GENDER AND NUTRITION?

To integrate nutrition and gender into our programming and achieve sustainable change requires changing behaviors of women, men, girls, boys, community leaders, agriculture actors, CRS staff and partners. With gender equity, the first step is to conduct a gender analysis as a foundation to the project design. The gender analysis results, the degree of gender sensitivity (gender responsive or gender transformative), and the consultative processes with the community guide program implementation. They indicate how to design and monitor project interventions to meet the needs, constraints, and opportunities of our clients to ensure gender equity and program success. To increase nutrition through agriculture, the first step is to understand the nutrition situation. This analysis, along with understanding the agriculture-nutrition pathways, guides our approaches. In assessing these interventions, the behaviors that are needed to adopt the practice, technology, or tool should be identified and appropriate social behavior change approaches included.

FIGURE 9. Upgrading nutrition and gender equity along the Pathway to Prosperity



Building the capacity of households and communities to foster more equitable and democratic decision-making for improved agriculture, nutrition and gender equity

Promoting behavioral changes will support smallholder farmers to transition:

From recover to build by:

- Developing agriculture programs with a nutrition and gender lens.
- Working across sectors (nutrition, health, WASH) to address the causes of malnutrition.
- Supporting female voices in farmer groups with collective action.
- Supporting couples' communication to improve Intra-household decision-making.
- Promoting homestead gardens for home consumption and market.
- Supporting food storage and the preservation of perishable crops to ensure safety and quantity.
- Designing food- and/or cash-for-work programs to address gender constraints.

As a result, food and nutrition insecure households achieve household dietary diversity.

From build to grow by:

- Introducing labor-saving technology and practices in consultation with users.

- Diversifying into nutrient-rich crops.
- Supporting nutrition-integrated and gender-responsive agriculture extension services.
- Supporting local processing to ensure safe, nutritious food and longer shelf-life.
- Supporting female voices in farmer organizations with access to services.

As a result, smallholder households will have diversified and nutritious diets.

From grow to prosper by:

- Supporting the transformation and marketing of nutrient-dense crops along the value chain.
- Supporting female voices in farmer organizations to advocate for changes in systems and structures.
- Working with companies to have policies that support maternity leave and exclusive breastfeeding.
- Working with companies to develop and implement policies that support gender equity.

As a result, smallholder households will have access to more affordable, safe and nutritious food.



Sukuru, his wife Edina Mahulisa, 22 and their two children, Lightness Shukuru, 4, and Theopista Shukuru, 5 months, all participate in the THRIVE program. CRS and its partner, the Diocese of Geita, are facilitating the CRS THRIVE project in Busanda Village, outside of Geita, Tanzania. The THRIVE project is sponsored by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation grant. The project focuses on ECD (early childhood development) and includes special support for childcare centers, children’s health and nutrition and lessons in positive parenting. *Philip Laubner / CRS*

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

To achieve the behavioral changes required for nutrition and gender equity outcomes, the AL-SPA works with smallholder farmers, couples, extended families,

communities, farmer’s organizations, public and private extension and advisory services, private sector, nutrition staff, nutrition volunteers, gender staff, religious leaders, community leaders, donors, and implementing partners.

LEARNING AGENDA	NUTRITION METRICS	GENDER METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective approaches for equitable intra-household decision-making for income and assets. • Contribution of equitable intra-household decision-making to nutritional outcomes. • Women’s decision-making capacity and its role in the community and on farmer organizations. • Agriculture programming design that contributes to household dietary diversity 	<p>BB6.1 Average Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) (FFP29; USAID)</p> <p>BB6.2 Proportion of women of reproductive age who are consuming a minimum dietary diversity (FFP 4)</p> <p>BB6.3 Prevalence of children 6–23 months receiving a minimum acceptable diet (MAD) (FFP 35)</p>	<p>BB6.4 Percentage of men/women in union and earning cash who make decisions jointly with spouse/partner about the use of self-earned cash (FFP 63)</p> <p>BB6.5 Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) (FtF EG.3-b)</p>



BUILDING BLOCK 7

Influencing systems and structures

WHY IS CHANGING SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES IMPORTANT FOR FARMERS?

CRS grounds its work in a model of Integrated Human Development (IHD) which seeks a “state of personal well-being in the context of just and peaceful relationships in a thriving environment.”¹ To achieve this goal, CRS programming must reach beyond the household and community levels to address structural and systemic obstacles to equitable economic growth and human dignity. *Powerful people have decision-making ability over structures and systems that determine access to services and assets. They determine access to information and who participates in governance processes and decision-making.* Bridging the divide between vulnerable groups with limited voice and the structures and systems that influence their lives can create an enabling environment capable of transformational and sustainable change at scale.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES?

In an enabling environment, political, legal, economic and social/cultural systems and structures act **transparently and inclusively** to support the needs of their constituents in pursuit of the common good. An Enabling Environment breaks down barriers to achieving a greater level of shared

economic prosperity and human dignity. Thus the AL-SPA engages with governments, the private sector, financial institutions, donors, civil society, communities and households to catalyze sustainable change at scale.

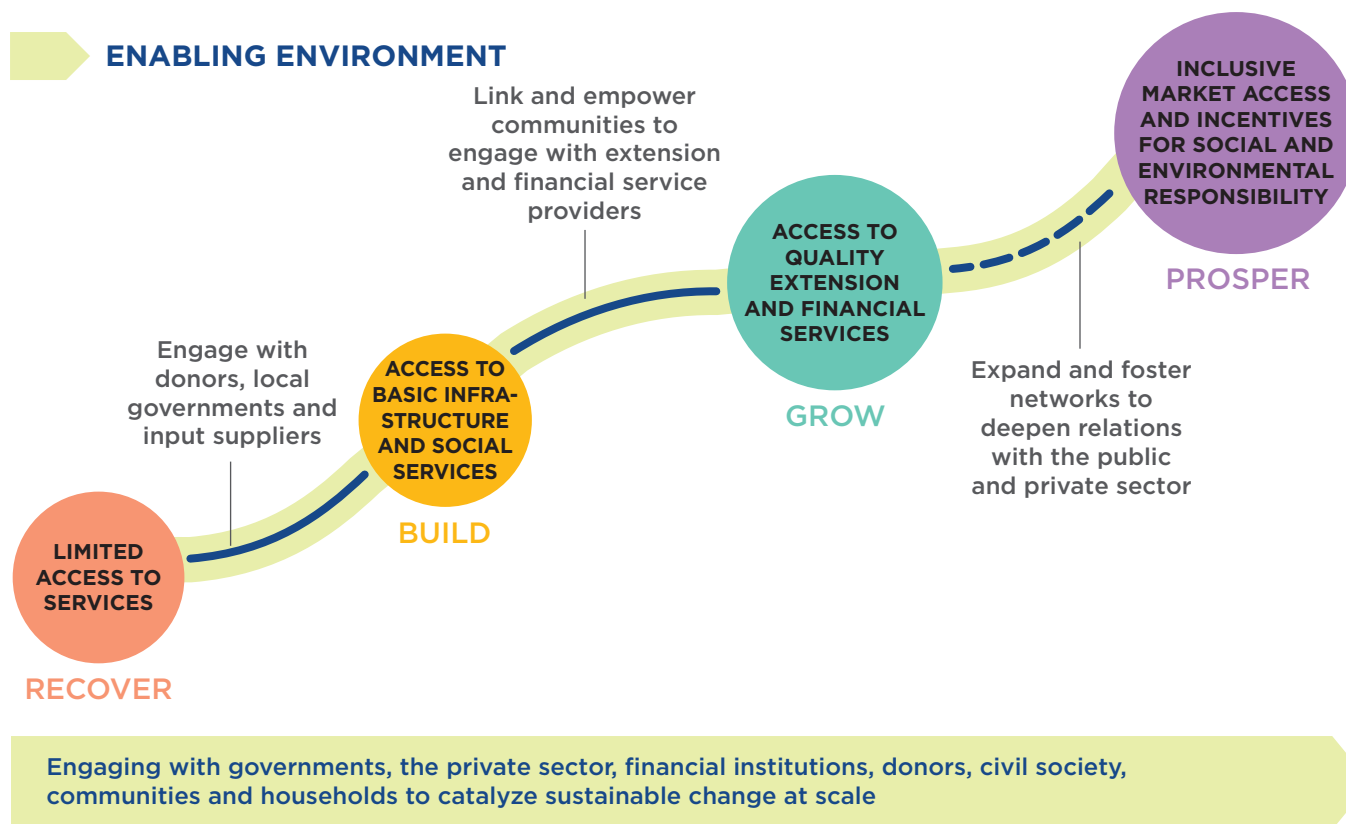
HOW DOES OUR WORK IMPROVE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES?

To achieve an enabling environment, CRS programs must engage not only with vulnerable communities, but also with the governance and economic systems and structures which serve them. CRS has historically worked with at-risk households and communities to build skills and knowledge with respect to physical, natural and financial assets. IHD compels us to help develop social and political assets as well. Doing so helps households and communities to understand their rights and to leverage their skills and assets to advocate for their needs.

Concurrently, CRS must engage with service providers to understand the needs of their vulnerable constituents. CRS programs can facilitate opportunities for engagement and promote mechanisms to bridge communication on issues of mutual interest. Such engagement requires an understanding of the structural and systemic constraints to change, including the power structures and vested interests which maintain the status quo.

¹ A User's Guide to Integral Human Development, Geoff Heinrich, David Beatty and Carrie Miller 2008, page 2.

FIGURE 10. Influencing change in systems and structures along the Pathway to Prosperity



As such, the AL-SPA works in generating changes in systems and structures to support the transition:

From recover to build by:

Engaging with donors, local governments and inputs suppliers to ensure that smallholder households have access to basic infrastructure and social services.

- Group formation for self-evaluation of community challenges and access to services.
- Capacity development for community-based organizations to undertake collective action.

As a result, farm families will access basic infrastructure and social services.

From build to grow by:

Creating linkages, and empowering household and community groups to engage directly with extension and financial services providers to access quality services that are designed and delivered to meet their needs.

- Facilitation of consultative processes—formal and informal—for household and community

organization participation in decision-making structures.

- Fostering awareness among service providers of constituent needs and potential contributions to decision-making processes.

As a result, farm families will access quality extension and financial services.

From grow to prosper by:

Expanding linkages and fostering networks to deepen public and private sector constituent relationships to facilitate inclusive access to markets, and mutual incentives for social and environmental responsibility.

- Research with leading partners to identify key barriers to smallholder advancement resulting from existing systems and structures.
- Promoting smallholder and community stakeholder representation in formal decision-making structures and interest group networks.

As a result, farm families will have inclusive access to markets and receive incentives to implement social and environmental standards.

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

To influence changes in systems and structures and promote transformational change, the AL-SPA works in coalition with like-minded agencies within networks, as partnerships can more effectively leverage the evidence base for change than a single actor or entity. Bi- and multilateral donors are important players as they have influence over both public and private sector decision-makers by virtue of their financial

role as well as their convening power in high-level policy and financial fora. Local business interests are also influential at the local level, and have a stake in policies related to assets and economic benefits. Local NGOs, and especially the church, can bring constituent pressure on host country decision-makers. CRS must build partnerships and networks among these actors as a means to give voice to vulnerable groups, and to reinforce evidence-based calls for change.

LEARNING AGENDA	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying public policies/private practices that have most limited agricultural development and therefore represent the greatest potential to unlock transformational change Bridging relations between communities and public and private sector stakeholders whose actions impact the lives and livelihoods of smallholder farming households. 	<p>BB7.1 Number of plans, policies, strategies, systems or curricula developed (adapted from Food for Peace Results Framework Indicators 2016 strategy)</p> <p>BB7.2 Number of communities engaging with public and private sector service providers, disaggregated by type of process (use of media to reinforce the agenda goals; participation in consultative processes; improved coverage and quality of services as evaluated by constituents) (adapted from USAID Indicator 4.5.1-24)</p> <p>BB7.3 Value of public and private investment in service provision, leverage by CRS (adapted from USAID indicator 4.5.2 (32))</p>



It's 5:00 a.m. and workers from La Revancha Coffee Estate in Matagalpa Nicaragua gather to be instructed where to hand pick coffee, where to kill weeds and other chores during the start of the coffee collection season. La Revancha is one of the few Fair Trade certified coffee estates in Latin America. Some buyers prize this labor rights initiative with a higher market price which will soon go directly to the workers. Some social actions are made by the workers Fair Trade committee which has direct conversations with land owners. *Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS*



Catholic Relief Services, 228 W. Lexington
Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, USA
For more information, contact:
pqpublications@crs.org

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