

Winter 2020-2021



GLOBAL EMERGENCY UPDATE

HIGHLIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

Catholic Relief Services is pleased to share the following year-end highlights of our key emergency response and recovery activities of 2020, as well as a forecast of the most urgent humanitarian needs—and opportunities for global impact—in 2021. This work is possible thanks to the generous support of private and public donors, the dedication of our local partners, and the unwavering presence of Caritas and the Catholic Church.

SPOTLIGHT 2021

COVID-19 RESPONSE

CRS and our partners continue to support the most vulnerable communities affected by COVID-19. To date, we have reached 10.2 million people across 46 countries with a range of vital and lifesaving assistance. In our outreach and programming, CRS is prioritizing efforts for prevention and awareness, hygiene, strengthened health systems, food security and livelihoods.

CRS continues to design and implement emergency and development programming worldwide while incorporating COVID-19 preventive measures into existing programs. Virtual and remote support have become central to our programming, along with other adaptations to ensure safety. CRS has been working closely with government officials in several countries to adapt humanitarian and development projects to the COVID-19 context. As our country programs and partners continue to implement critical humanitarian programming, we are especially mindful of high-risk populations, including elderly adults and vulnerable children, refugees and migrants, and people with compromised immune systems or disabilities, and their caregivers.



Rwanda's COVID-19 lockdown meant vegetable trader Blandine Mukamana, a mother of three, lost her livelihood when she was unable to buy stock due to restrictions on movement. A CRS unconditional cash transfer enabled her replenish her stall so she could support her family.

Photo by Maggie Andresen for CRS

© 2020 Catholic Relief Services. All Rights Reserved.

CRS AND PARTNER COVID-19 RESPONSE

Program reach in numbers:



10.2 million people reached with COVID-19 programming



3,022 health facilities provided with COVID-specific support



6 million people reached with COVID-related information and communications for prevention



583,615 people reached with assistance—food, cash or vouchers—for essential needs



577,280 people reached through the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as living supplies



124,671 people supported with livelihoods assistance



98,625 people engaged in psychosocial support



33,910 health care staff trained in COVID-19 prevention or care



27,645 people trained in protection and safeguarding



URGENT PRIORITIES 2020-2021

Locusts swarm in Samburu County, Kenya. To avoid the possibility of reinfestation, control efforts must continue, and expand into at-risk areas. Photo by Fredrik Lerneryd for CRS



A locust swarm covering one-third of a square mile can eat enough crops per day to feed 35,000 people.

EAST AFRICA: DROUGHT AND LOCUST CRISIS

Billions of locusts are devouring a swath of farmland across East Africa, resulting in at least 2.5 million people requiring emergency assistance. Locusts are voracious eaters—they can eat their own body weight and travel up to 90 miles daily. A swarm covering one-third of a square mile can eat enough crops per day to feed 35,000 people. Already, farmers in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have experienced extensive crop loss and rangeland damage, and livestock health has been undermined. Extreme food insecurity affects already very vulnerable communities.

Thousands of farming families need food and income at a time when COVID-19 lockdowns prevent them from seeking alternative work. Millions of people are at risk of losing their livelihoods and savings.

Since late June, CRS has been working with Catholic Church partners in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda to support government locust control efforts, organize community locust surveillance, raise locust and pesticide awareness, and provide seed to replant damaged crops and pastureland.

2m

CHILDREN IN YEMEN ARE SUFFERING FROM ACUTE MALNUTRITION

YEMEN HUNGER CRISIS

A humanitarian crisis has devastated the lives of families across Yemen as a five-year war is waged between Houthi rebels and forces loyal to the government, backed by a Saudi Arabia-led coalition. With insecurity and a blockade severely limiting people's access to food or income, 80% of the population is in urgent need of aid, including 2 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. Only 50% of health facilities are functioning, and less than half of the population has access to clean water. The needs have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRS has been working closely with local partners in Yemen to provide vital water and sanitation and support to health facilities. We have expanded our emergency programming to provide training for young Yemenis to fulfill the needs of understaffed health facilities and hospitals; equip vulnerable communities with information to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and strengthen health systems to respond to the pandemic.



CRS supports equipment and training for six health facilities benefiting 41,723 people, and is training up to 400 skilled, unemployed Yemenis (50% women) to work at 155 understaffed hospitals.

Photo courtesy of Education for Employment

With the help of local carpenters, CRS is helping Caritas Bangladesh provide Rohingya refugees with safe, dignified shelters. Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS



BANGLADESH REFUGEE RESPONSE

In August 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees fled Myanmar for neighboring Bangladesh, expanding the refugee population there to nearly 1 million. More than 600,000 Rohingya live at the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site—the world’s most densely populated refugee camp. CRS has been working at the site with Caritas Bangladesh since the onset of the crisis to assist more than 263,000 refugees with comprehensive

and wide-ranging support. Urgent areas being addressed include safe shelter for families; improved settlement infrastructure; water, sanitation and hygiene; disaster risk reduction efforts in the cyclone-prone area; and counseling, education support and protection for vulnerable women and children. These efforts have been significantly adapted to address and incorporate COVID-19 prevention measures.

1m

ROHINGYA REFUGEES ARE HOSTED BY BANGLADESH

Migrants stand in line at a Church charity to receive free meals and basic medical aid in Cucuta, Colombia. CRS and our partner organizations offer up to 8,000 free meals a day in the border town. Photo by Nicolò Filippo Rosso for CRS

VENEZUELA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Since 2015, Venezuela has been in economic and social crisis. A drastic fall in the price of oil, its main export, led to a progressive decline in local production capacity, resulting in food shortages, hyperinflation, the collapse of the health system and social unrest. Of 15,000 children under age 5 being monitored by Caritas Venezuela over the past year, 76% showed signs of a nutritional deficit, and another 13% are acutely malnourished. Small and medium-sized businesses can no longer afford to pay salaries. As much as 87% of Venezuela’s population has been pushed below the poverty line.

Millions of Venezuelans have fled to other countries to provide for their families. Neighboring countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Curacao, Aruba, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru are facing increasing flows of Venezuelan refugees. COVID-19 has led to further marginalization of refugees in host countries. Thousands have had to return to Venezuela after having lost access to shelter and livelihood opportunities in neighboring countries due to COVID-19 restrictions and stigmatization. In Venezuela and across the region, CRS’ Caritas partners—with our accompaniment and technical support—provide a range of assistance based on the local context and needs, including supplies and equipment for hospitals; food and medicine for malnourished children, and pregnant or new mothers; distribution of hygiene kits, mosquito nets and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to families; food and support for the homeless; safe shelter for refugees and those in transit; cash assistance; legal guidance; and capacity support for partner organizations providing lifesaving services.



We support 13 local faith institutions to effectively prepare for and respond to disasters in the Caribbean and South America. We will be expanding this support to include five additional partners in Central America next year.

CRS partners with the Good Shepherd Sisters to provide educational opportunities to critically vulnerable families in 20 informal settlements in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS



SYRIAN REFUGEE COUNSELING AND SUPPORT

For children in crisis, education plays a vital role in providing structure, healing and a sense of normalcy.

March 2021 will mark 10 years of Syria's internal armed conflict, one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time. Since the crisis began, life expectancy among Syrians has dropped by more than 20 years. The conflict has uprooted more than half of the population from their homes and forced 5.6 million Syrians to flee to neighboring countries. While some areas are stable and recovering, living conditions and opportunities remain a challenge. Lebanon still hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees, while Jordan hosts 670,000. Many refugee children have been out of school for years and suffered loss or trauma, making it hard for them to reintegrate into the classroom.

For children in crisis, education plays a vital role in providing structure, healing and a sense of normalcy.

CRS and our partners in Lebanon and Jordan are providing comprehensive support for communities and families, including education, counseling and care for children. Priorities in Lebanon and Jordan include trauma counseling, improvements to public and private classrooms, kindergarten classes, tutoring to prevent dropping out, safe transportation, healthy snacks, parent-teacher meetings, training for teachers and staff, and support for parents and caretakers.

BUILDING SAFE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

10m

BY 2030, OUR EFFORTS WILL ENSURE SAFE, DIGNIFIED HOMES AND COMMUNITIES FOR 10 MILLION PEOPLE

Home and community are the starting points for safety, stability, identity and love. Losing a home due to any number of factors, including natural disaster or conflict, can fracture a family and impact their economic and emotional well-being, as well as their dignity. The loss of a home can also precipitate other life-altering challenges: separating people from their loved ones and support networks, and limiting access to food, water, health and social services, education and livelihood options. More than 80 million people worldwide have been displaced from their homes.

CRS is building on decades of experience to expand our approach to shelter and settlement, to create homes and communities that are foundations for long-term health and prosperity. As part of our 10-year strategy to expand our programming to directly assist 1.5 million people, we have already assisted 31,000 families with safe homes in 2020.

To extend our impact beyond CRS programming and assist a further 8.5 million people, we will seek to bring about systems-level change by influencing key stakeholders to adopt safe and dignified approaches to rebuilding homes and communities in the aftermath of emergencies. Thus, collectively, our efforts will ensure safe, dignified homes and communities for 10 million people by 2030.

Our goal is to have resources ready so we can immediately respond to emergencies—without waiting to raise public funds or depend on media attention, which can be rare or fleeting. Our approach is not only replicable, but adaptable to local contexts for all people in tremendous need. This includes supporting communities in disaster-prone areas, so they are more resilient to cyclical storms and have greater means for recovery. In 2020, these included Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malawi, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines, among others.



Catholic Relief Services | 228 W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, USA
For more information, visit crs.org