

CRS' APPROACH TO ACHIEVING integral human development

At CRS, we believe in taking a holistic approach to helping people improve their livelihoods. To do so, we take into account the context in which people live so we can help them achieve what we call integral human development, where people reach their full potential in an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity.

ASSETS

We take stock of the assets people have, including homes, livestock, crops, wells, clothes, cash or gold. A person's education, faith and health are also assets, as are family, friends, membership in organizations and religious groups, and aspects of the natural environment such as animals, soil, plants, trees, air, rainfall and oceans.

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

We assess the systems and structures that exist in the country and the community. Systems can be legal, economic, political, social or cultural, while structures affect what we can do and how we do it. Political parties, churches, mosques, labor organizations, government ministries, and transportation and communication networks are structures.

OUTCOMES & FEEDBACK

By designing our projects holistically, we help communities move toward integral human development so they can lead full and productive lives and meet their basic physical needs. We also monitor our projects closely to identify the constraints or opportunities communities encounter in order to incorporate learning in future efforts.



INFLUENCE & ACCESS

We look at power. The amount of power a person holds has a direct impact on their livelihood and their assets. People with power can influence or control structures and systems, and decide who has access to services and assets and who does not.



INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (IHD)



STRATEGIES

Understanding the assets people have, the way they interact with systems and structures, the risks and vulnerabilities they face and the way each factor influences and affects the others is a vital part of developing successful livelihood strategies. Here are some approaches people use:

- coping, survival: getting through difficult periods
- reducing vulnerability to shocks, cycles & trends
- increasing the influence of people and communities to advocate and claim rights and services
- asset recovery: rebuilding assets lost in a disaster
- increasing the quantity and quality of assets to help households escape from poverty



RISK & VULNERABILITY

We consider the potential threats to people's lives and livelihoods, such as:

- shocks: epidemics, violent conflicts and major natural disasters
- cycles: seasonal floods, elections, diseases that come with the rainy season or crop prices that fall after harvest and rise as food supplies dwindle
- trends: incremental or gradual changes over time that affect things like demographics, health, the economy and weather patterns