

# PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

- Shared vision
- Subsidiarity
- Mutuality
- Equity
- Respect
- Transparency
- Transformation
- Commitment
- Community ownership
- Capacity building
- Sustainability

# TOOLS AND APPROACHES

To help its partners, CRS uses a variety of organizational development tools and approaches developed and tested at the country-program level.

## Technical Areas

- Identity & governance
- Strategy & planning
- General management
- External relations & partnerships
- Sustainability
- Organizational learning
- Human resources management
- Financial & physical resource management
- Information & communication technology (ICT)
- Monitoring & evaluation (M&E)
- Procurement / supply chain
- Program quality (design, implementation, monitoring)

## Approaches

- Coaching & mentoring
- Training & peer-to-peer learning
- Organizational design & restructuring
- Compliance & USG regulations
- Gender & diversity audits
- Job share & secondment
- Program & management quality assurance
- Equipment & software purchases & training



For more information, contact [pqpublications@crs.org](mailto:pqpublications@crs.org)

## THE NINA CONSORTIUM

Dominican organizations have worked long and hard to keep young people off the street and away from sexual exploitation, but they generally have been unable to collaborate widely. CRS and its partners formed the NINA Consortium (growing to include 17 community organizations), which helped bring much-needed structure and collaboration among partners and networks. CRS capacity strengthening helped NINA partners provide youth-friendly, holistic, and integrated services. The consortium and its founders continue to thrive and exemplify how partnerships and strong institutions make and sustain profound social change.

## Fostering & Complementing Local Capacity

Rather than “import” technical expertise, which overlooks local resources, CRS asks institutions about existing assets and gaps, filling in with external expertise only when necessary, and helps communities and local agencies assess the external environment for possible threats and opportunities.

Through the course of implementation, CRS programs transfer skills and knowledge — be they specialized agricultural techniques or proficiency with accounting software — directly to partners. CRS experts share through training, practical application of new skills, and ongoing mentoring and supportive supervision. CRS experts also continuously learn from their local counterparts.

## THE I-LIFE PROGRAM

Through the I-LIFE program, CRS and local Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM) partners in Malawi provided food assistance and related support to the chronically ill and their households. CRS built local partner knowledge with technical assistance and organizational development, while partners provided farmers — and farmers provided each other — with training and practical demonstrations. This solidarity encouraged a healthy exchange among all partners and beneficiaries, fostered community ownership, and helped local groups and individuals sustain the improvements.

## Strengthening Organizational Capacity

Every organization must perform certain functions to be financially, programmatically, and managerially sustainable. Few institutions can do this without organizational development support, and while local organizations often face extraordinary challenges, CRS has found that they are also especially committed to the process of becoming more effective, efficient, and sustainable.

CRS’s approach to institutional strengthening is founded on decades of experience and constant refinement, and grounded in proven principles of organizational development, adult learning, change management, behavior change, and the principles of transparency, ownership, and respect for local autonomy. CRS works with partner organizations to support individuals and teams to master and internalize new knowledge and skills, emphasizing their relevance and application. Since each organization’s context is constantly changing — funding levels rise and fall, conflicts erupt, natural disasters strike — learning how to adapt is as valuable as acquiring technical skills. CRS’s participative approach strengthens a group’s adaptive capacity as well as discrete skills or policies.

## THE AMITIE PROJECT

To mitigate the impact of HIV in the Democratic Republic of Congo, CRS worked with a faith-based consortium of local and international partners on the AMITIE Project. The partners, from multiple levels and sectors, mentor and support one another, share skills, knowledge, and experience to help care for people living with HIV and orphans and other vulnerable children. CRS helped strengthen local institutions to implement activities more effectively and efficiently and to sustain the changes.

## THE CRS COMMITMENT

CRS’s vision that solidarity will transform the world inspires a commitment to equity, to right relationships with those it serves. CRS holds a long-term commitment to peace and human rights, working side-by-side with partners to alleviate human suffering, promote social justice and assist people as they strive for their own betterment.

# Partnership and Capacity Strengthening

Sustainable development through meaningful partnership and stronger organizations







With CRS help, Caritas Bangladesh rebuilt lives after Cyclone Sidr. David Snyder for CRS



Rwandan youth have new options thanks to assistance from CRS. Steve Rubin/CRS



In Guyana, the Catholic Church and CRS provide computer literacy for students and the unemployed. Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

## THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

For decades, well-intentioned development programs have struggled to engage the communities they hoped to serve. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has spent more than 60 years developing sound programs, realizing that people and organizations in their own context are best suited to identify and address their own development needs.

**CRS DEFERS TO LOCAL UNDERSTANDING, BUILDS MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVIDES COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS, TARGETED CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE, AND TAILORED INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR ORGANIZATIONS.**

CRS is deeply committed to the autonomy of its partners, yet recognizes that all organizations struggle to function better as institutions. Furthermore, many of CRS's partners have faced shortages of human, material, and institutional resources, and operate in contexts that challenge even the strongest organization.

Healthy local institutions help ensure that positive changes outlast project funding, staffing, and material or technical support. Furthermore, these partners make up a vibrant civil society that, in turn, helps lead a country toward good governance and social transformation.

## THE CRS APPROACH

CRS believes that unjust systems and structures are transformed by communities and their institutions. By concurrently partnering with and strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, CRS has learned and demonstrated that strong institutions with capable staff can design, implement, evaluate, and sustain effective development interventions. This **capacity strengthening** approach is vital because people and organizations are active participants in their progress rather than passive beneficiaries.

With technical assistance and quality assurance from CRS, over 3,000 local agencies – including religious and secular organizations, community groups, and host country governments – implement high impact projects in over 100 countries. The profound impact that stronger institutions can

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

**CRS regards capacity building and institutional strengthening as distinct but complementary efforts. Capacity building focuses on individuals – enhancing or developing new knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order for people or teams to better function. Institutional strengthening focuses on an organization, enhancing or developing its systems and structures to function more effectively, work towards sustainability, and achieve goals.**

have in creating and sustaining change has led CRS to regard principle-based capacity strengthening as fundamental to every development effort. CRS's approach to capacity strengthening is based on its principles of partnership, notably “subsidiarity,” which demands that those most affected by a problem lead the response to it.

### Solidarity and Subsidiarity

Dedicated to a culture of equity and respect, CRS and its partners have a shared vision and work together on program design, implementation, evaluation, and reporting, ensuring that successes are owned by the community or organization. This mutuality helps joint teams to:

- quickly identify populations in need and address their most urgent problems;
- leverage and complement existing networks, relationships, and supply chains, and avoid redundancies;
- lay a firm foundation to sustain and expand the program's impact.

**CRS BELIEVES THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS AND SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY. IT INSPIRES CRS TO RECOGNIZE THAT EVERY PERSON AND ORGANIZATION CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CHANGE.**



In El Salvador, CRS and CARECEN staff share a laugh. Sara A. Fajardo/CRS



This is what solidarity looks like! Caritas' Sister Mary Teresa works with CRS to help residents of Nairobi's slums. Debbie DeVoe/CRS



In Pakistan, CRS and ILAC help Afghan refugee women. Jim Stipe/CRS