

EMPOWER ASIA



A village disaster preparedness group in Adabang village, Flores Island, Indonesia simulates first aid in emergency evacuation of survivors. The group includes people of various backgrounds and different ages, tribes and religions. Photo by CRS Indonesia



Countries and partners

- **India:** Caritas India
- **Indonesia:** CIS Timor Indonesia
- **Nepal:** National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority
- **Vietnam:** Vietnam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority
- **Myanmar:** Karuna Mission Social Solidarity
- **Philippines:** Caritas Philippines



BACKGROUND

In October 2021, the CRS Asia Region launched EMPOWER Asia (Empowering Partners Working on Emergency Responses in Asia) as the region's primary mechanism for investing in strengthening the capacity of strategic partners to play leading roles in humanitarian response. EMPOWER is an integral component of CRS Asia's plan to achieve its 2030 vision for Local Leadership. EMPOWER Asia uses a flexible approach, with strategic partners, accompanied by CRS Country Programs (CP), completing assessments covering technical, institutional topics and developing improvement plans, with deliverables. EMPOWER Asia serves as the coordination point for all partner capacity strengthening initiatives on humanitarian response in Asia. The program is anchored on the CRS Partner Capacity Strengthening Approach of Institutional Strengthening, Capacity Building and Accompaniment. By the end of 2023, EMPOWER Asia has supported a thousand partner staff to enhance humanitarian response knowledge and skills as well as benefit from updating or development of key policies (ICT4D, volunteer management, indirect cost recovery, and gender, equity and social inclusion).



GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

Goal: Disaster-affected communities in Asia benefit from improved locally led humanitarian assistance.

Strategic Objective: Strategic partners in Asia have improved performance to deliver effective emergency assistance.

Outcomes:

- IR 1.1 Strategic partners demonstrate strengthened organizational structures and capacities on emergency response.
- IR1.2 Strategic partners demonstrate improved collaboration, coordination and engagement with sub-national, national, regional and global humanitarian platforms.
- IR 1.3 Strategic partners seek and garner funds and resources to respond to emergencies.
- Cross-cutting Outcome: Improved information sharing, knowledge management, engagement in national, regional, global humanitarian platforms.





PROGRAM DURATION

EMPOWER is a multi-year commitment for the organizational development of partners with annual funding. The commitment will be reassessed on an annual basis to confirm partner's performance based on achievement of milestones set out in their capacity strengthening action plan. It is anticipated that the implementation of the partner's action plans will require several years and would be aligned with the partner's strategic vision and longer-term organizational development plan.

PROGRAM MODEL

The EMPOWER Asia program provides a broad, high-level framework for capacity strengthening within which participating partners and their accompanying CPs will develop and execute improvements plans based on partners' needs and priorities. The framework is also grounded on CRS' partner capacity strengthening approach of institutional strengthening, capacity building and accompaniment.



Assessments

During start-up, participating partner organizations conduct an organizational capacity assessment on governance, finance and operations, programming and safeguarding as well as technical areas of humanitarian response. EMPOWER Asia uses two sets of tools, an Organizational Capacity Assessment tool (separate tools for Caritas, national NGO or government partners) and Technical Capacity Assessment tools focusing on food security, Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Shelter & Non-Food Items (SNFI), Protection Mainstreaming and Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA). The EMPOWER Asia Core Team and CPs support partners in planning and completing assessment activities.



Improvement plans

On the basis of assessments, participating partners, with support from CRS CPs and the EMPOWER Asia Core Team develop detailed improvement plans, with clear deliverables and a timeline for their completion.



Internal application for funding

Drawing on improvement plans, participant partners and their accompanying CP will complete a detailed implementation plan and a budget.



Implementation

Participating partners and CPs are responsible for the planning and execution of improvement plans, which is skill building, capacity strengthening of staff, support in developing/policies for overall organization development and provide accompaniment support in piloting and implementation.

KEY ELEMENTS OF EMPOWER ASIA



Flexible Approach



Support is Needs-Based and Tailored



Promotes Local Leadership



Long Term Commitment

Commitment to sustaining capacity in the long term as partner moves towards long-term visions



Learning

Emphasis on documenting and sharing learning



Partner Capacity Strengthening Approach

Grounded in CRS PCS approach (institutional strengthening, capacity building, accompaniment)

