

# THE EMPOWER APPROACH – LAC REGION

## PROMOTING LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, CRS is committed to its principle of subsidiarity: the understanding that communities, who are the closest to local challenges, are the artisans of their own development. Building and strengthening local leadership and institutions ensures that CRS respects the dignity and agency of each person and community we serve, and fosters an approach of accompanying local institutions to serve the common good.

In 2018, in fulfillment of these ideals and CRS' commitments to the Grand Bargain<sup>1</sup> localization initiative, CRS leveraged private funding to launch the EMPOWER program with partners in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). EMPOWER, short for Empowering Partner Organizations Working on Emergency Responses, promotes the leadership of local organizations with nation-wide coverage. The program **seeks to increase localization of humanitarian response** through three areas of strategic focus:

- **COORDINATION:** Local partners strengthen participation in humanitarian coordination platforms at the local, national, and regional levels.
- **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING:** Local partners strengthen institutional capacities and organizational structures to better manage humanitarian responses.
- **FUNDING:** Local partners access and implement a larger percentage of humanitarian funding.

Since its inception, EMPOWER has demonstrated strong results and the ability to scale up. EMPOWER LAC programs are now **partially funded by USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance**, and EMPOWER has expanded beyond the LAC region to support partner organizations in **West Africa and parts of Asia**. Current donors include BHA, the ELMA Caribbean Foundation, and the Arthur M. Blank Foundation.



CRS EMPOWER and Caritas Brasileira responding to the historic Amazon drought of 2023 in communities completely cut off from basic services [Felippe Thomaz for CRS].

1. An agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

The EMPOWER process involves seven main steps:



Icon: Project Icons; Video conference by IconTrack; signature by Gregor Ciesnar; checklist by Shalawat Nuriyah; evaluation by Ivnitaf

EMPOWER By the Numbers (LAC Region, 2018-2023)



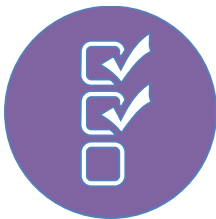
35 countries



20 partners



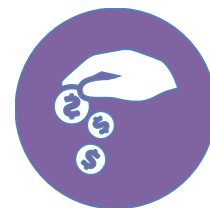
Partners have secured \$62M in funding



93% win rate from external donors



Partners are primes on 36.8% of proposals



Partners have received \$38M as primes