

**PARTNERSHIP**

# **Protocol for Relations with Church Partners**



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## CRS PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE CHURCH

**“Where there are two or three gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20)**

CRS’ fundamental identity as part of the universal Catholic Church implies that national Church “partners” are so much more than partners: they are our sister agencies in one human family. Our vision that solidarity will transform the world requires our commitment to global solidarity through relationships marked by a common, gospel-based approach to serve the poor. Prioritizing fraternal relationships with our Church partners in the countries we are privileged to serve will enable us to respond to God’s call “to live in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in faith more efficaciously, and to have greater impact in creating a more just society.”

To support the process of developing relations with the Church, CRS presents this protocol for relationships with Church partners, designed to strengthen bonds of solidarity and promote a strategic dialogue in our service to the poor. The protocol presents guidelines and ideas for building Church relations and developing complementary visions, as well as principles for strengthening relationships and maintaining a strategic dialogue.

As with all relationships, a CRS country program’s relationship with the host country Church is dependent on both institutional procedures and personal connections. With other partners, there may come a time when CRS and the partner decide to stop working together. But CRS is part of the Catholic Church, and our relationship with the national and diocesan Church structures and leaders is that of family—it will not and should not end. CRS bears a great responsibility as a guest of the host country’s Church to ensure that the relationship is a good one. This document lays out some basic concepts and suggests certain good practices to help the staff of CRS country programs develop and maintain that good relationship.

## BACKGROUND: CRS AND ITS RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL CHURCHES

All Catholic institutions and organizations belong to a global Church. CRS represents U.S. Catholics in humanitarian work overseas, under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. CRS operates in a country at the invitation of that country's national episcopal (bishops') conference. As a sister Church structure working in their country, CRS prioritizes its institutional partnership with Church bodies of the host country. There are many Catholic Church institutions in any given country, some or all of which may be potential partners. For instance, the national Church may have commissions or offices that work on issues related to Integral Human Development (IHD), such as justice and peace, human rights, or education.

Among these potential partnerships, CRS should prioritize relations with the "official" Church—meaning the episcopal conference and the national leadership of the Social Development/Caritas network (referred to simply as "Caritas" in this document).<sup>1</sup> The function of the national Caritas office is to coordinate and promote social ministry activities with the dioceses. It is supervised by a bishop appointed by the national episcopal conference, and is often lead by a layperson. In addition to the national Caritas office, many dioceses have a local Caritas structure that carries out relief and development activities. The bishop of the diocese oversees this local counterpart structure. It is therefore important for CRS to maintain strong relationships with the bishops, national and local directors and coordinators, and other Caritas staff at all levels.

Depending on the context and agreement with the national Church, CRS may work with the national or diocesan Caritas as implementing partners for a program or project. Unless a country lacks a functioning national Caritas structure, CRS and the national Caritas should work together to define which efforts will be carried out through the national office and which are better served by a direct CRS-diocesan relationship. The internal dynamics of the Caritas system and the episcopal conference, and individual relationships between CRS and local bishops, all of which change over time, can influence the choice of partners and the types of partnerships.

In many countries, CRS works with other Church institutions or organizations, such as a national justice and peace commission, national health commission, or religious orders, particularly those running schools or health facilities. No matter who is the

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<sup>1</sup> All national episcopal conferences have commissions responsible for pastoral work relevant to CRS's mission, including humanitarian relief, development, or justice and peace activities. These bodies go by different names: social development commission, social pastoral commission, social ministry office, and so on. Many times the national Caritas office is under the social development/social ministry office; other times it is independent. CRS country staff must be aware of the official structure of the national Church and understand how they relate to it.

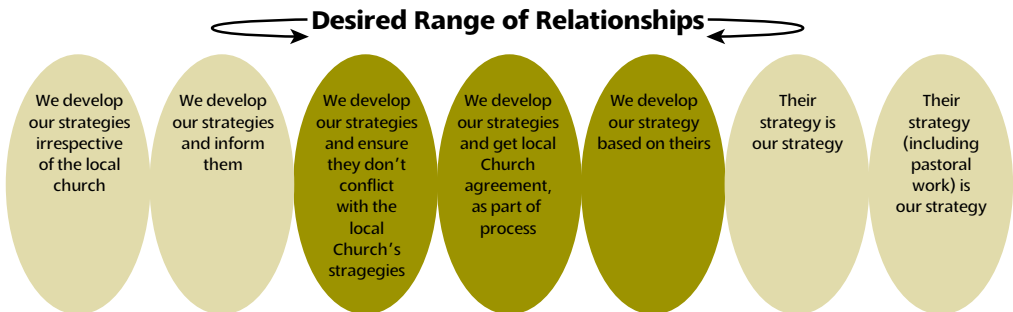


implementing partner, CRS should plan and coordinate its overall operations with the national Caritas and keep the national office informed of its activities with the dioceses, other Catholic institutions, and religious orders.

In countries with a very small Catholic Church presence, or in which the Church is not actively involved in development work, CRS should still maintain close and collegial relations with the officials of the Church, inviting them to professional events when appropriate. Social or religious celebrations should certainly include the Church, regardless of the partner relationship.

### Desired Range of Relationships

The diagram below, from the 2006 “Strategic Program Plan (SPP) Guidance for CRS Country Programs,” illustrates the range in the quality of relationships CRS may have with the host country Church.



The most common situations are represented by the green-shaded areas in the diagram. Country programs should strive to be as far to the right on this continuum as possible, although CRS does not have a mandate to support purely pastoral work. Other organizations exist within the Catholic Church to serve that purpose.

## HOW CRS CAN BE A BETTER PARTNER

Staff from CRS country programs around the world have participated in a number of partnership reflections with Church partners in recent years. Country programs can adopt a set of good practices based on lessons learned from lived experiences that reflect CRS' guiding principles and partnership principles.

### Accompaniment and Solidarity

A partnership is far more likely to thrive, and to survive problem periods, when based on genuine mutual appreciation and trust. When we know each other, we build trust. Therefore, it is important that CRS and partner staff invest the time to get to know each other as individuals, not just as institutions. The Mennonites call this “tea-drinking time.” Opportunities for this kind of personal interaction can come from invitations to holiday parties, drop-in visits, courtesy calls when passing through, or working in a particular diocese, and so on.

It is critical that CRS staff visit all partner offices at least once a year. All partners should be encouraged to visit the CRS office, as well. Many country programs require program staff to visit the local bishop when working in a diocese, as a way to maintain relationships and to inform him of activities conducted on behalf of the Catholic Church in his diocese.

Accompaniment is about being with others, rooted in trust and a willingness to walk side-by-side with partners. Spending the time to visit project sites with partners should be a priority. Doing so has allowed staff to gain a real appreciation of the challenges and successes of our partners' work and has increased CRS staff's ability and commitment to accompany partners in their efforts.

### Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity, that “a higher level of government—or organization—should not perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level by people who are closer to the problem and have a better understanding of the issue,” is one of the guiding principles of CRS and a major theme of Catholic social thought. For partnerships with the Church, CRS must recognize, respect, and support the capacities of the Church and its organizations, so that the local Church can increasingly assume the responsibility “for making [its society] more just and peaceful. Our behavior must demonstrate that we respect and value their efforts, knowledge and resources, as well as our own.”

Practicing subsidiarity can be challenging. For example, record-keeping and business processes, conformity to donor requirements, and standard U.S. accounting practices are essential for CRS funding. CRS therefore cannot defer to a partner's different practices, even when there is a high level of trust. Practicing subsidiarity may, in such an instance, mean that the Church and CRS discuss differences in practice in detail before submitting a project proposal together, to prepare the Church for the realities of donor requirements. Many country programs provide extensive training in donor standards for Church partner program and finance staff, a good practice to emulate.

Both CRS and the Church should practice subsidiarity with the communities they serve. Sometimes a situation arises where donor demands or other pressures make it difficult to respond to the needs and expressed desires of a community. In such an instance, CRS, the Church, and the community must work closely together to determine how to meet community needs within the constraints. Ideally, the Church, CRS, and the community would have discussed the project, funding sources, requirements, and any limitations well in advance of submitting a project proposal, to avoid a challenge to our joint principle of subsidiarity.

### **Respect, Openness, and Sharing**

CRS and its Church partners should recognize and value the complementary skills, resources, knowledge, and capacities that each brings. Even when we do not clearly understand or agree with the ideas, contributions, and traditions of the partner, we respect their autonomy. For example, a partner's ways of working, based on its culture and priorities, can be very different from CRS'; respectful behavior involves seeking to understand those differences and finding a middle ground when working toward common objectives. Sharing emphasizes that each party in a partnership is an expert and a learner. Learning and adapting as the relationship grows and evolves keeps the partnership dynamic and the work together innovative. Finally, effective communication is the foundation of an open, sharing, respectful collaboration.

Like all visitors, Church partner staff who visit CRS offices should be welcomed and shown respect. This responsibility lies with all staff, starting with the first people visitors encounter. Numerous country programs have, as a result, trained the receptionist, drivers, guards, and other staff in the importance of greeting partners appropriately when they arrive. This is particularly true for Church partners, where staff may need training in forms of address appropriate for priests, bishops, and other clergy. The culture within the Church differs in each country, ranging from very formal treatment of Church leaders (especially bishops) to less formality. CRS staff should adopt the appropriate greetings and titles in addressing Church leaders.

### Strengthening Civil Society and Institutional Development

Church partners often value their partnership with CRS because of CRS' ability to raise the profile of the Church (to international donors, for instance), assist in fundraising by increasing access to the sources of funding, and generally help partners toward financial and programmatic sustainability. However, partners chafe at the idea that CRS will "build their capacity." A more appropriate attitude to take is one reflecting joint learning and mutual capacity building. These processes must be a two-way street. CRS may support the process of self-assessment on the part of the Church and undergo a self-assessment process as well. Together, CRS and the Church can begin reflections and trainings by identifying the assets and strengths that each brings to the table before identifying each organization's challenges. Recognize that if discussing our strengths and challenges sometimes feels challenging as CRS staff, it certainly feels so to partner staff as well. By sharing in an open fashion, CRS can help partners feel comfortable discussing the capacity of their organization.

### Solidarity

Church partners have responded positively to the CRS mandate to work with and build relationships between our "dual constituency" of two communities: the poor and excluded overseas and the U.S. Catholic community. They particularly appreciate our recognition and commitment to work on changing unjust policy and practices in the United States. By asking partners to help us in dual constituency activities, through providing information, developing joint strategies on key issues, hosting journalists and other visitors, or speaking in the United States., we move beyond the donor-recipient relationship. Ideally, these visits promote solidarity and mutual understanding without placing an undue financial or logistical burden on the Church.

## WORKING WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHURCH STRUCTURES

CRS should have relationships with the episcopal conference, with such key Church authorities as the apostolic nuncio (the Vatican's diplomatic representative to the host country), and with the bishops of dioceses where CRS has programs. A standard memorandum of understanding (MOU) is available from CRS headquarters to use as a basis of negotiation for the relationship with the national episcopal conference.

As the national Caritas office is the representative of the episcopal conference for humanitarian assistance and development work, it is worth taking the time to discuss Catholic social teaching and integral human development with Caritas officials, to arrive at complementary visions. In some cases, such a discussion has resulted in joint vision and mission statements for work in the country. If this approach is taken, a joint vision statement should only be considered final when the bishop president of Caritas and, when possible, the president of the episcopal conference have approved it. A joint vision or mission statement is important, but it should not be the principal or only goal of the process; rather, it should be seen as a useful step in furthering the relationship. As the development of a joint vision statement may be an extended process, country programs should advance on other project agreements that respond to specific situations. The presence of project agreements has made relations in many countries easier by specifying such details as how CRS and Caritas will respond to emergencies. Often CRS will sign specific project agreements with its implementing partners based on new funding or initiatives in country.

CRS might also have relationships with the national Church justice and peace commission or health commission, or with religious orders, particularly those running schools or health facilities. CRS may sign project agreements or letters of understanding, in lieu of MOUs, with these groups. As with the episcopal conference, the nuncio, and Caritas, it is very important to learn as much as you can about the commission and orders, and to understand them in the context of the church in country. Remember that religious orders do not follow the same communication and decision-making processes as the ordained hierarchy (pope, bishops, and priests), so staff must learn how to work effectively with the orders as well.

### Why Work Together?

CRS works with national and local Church structures to develop complementary visions and maintain a strategic dialogue. Partnership is fundamental to how CRS sees itself in the world. We believe profoundly that change occurs through the Catholic

Church (and other local partners) and that by sustaining and strengthening the local Church and its institutions we enhance a nation's ability to respond to its own problems. CRS' belief that solidarity will transform the world inspires a commitment to right relationships with those we serve, in collaboration with the Catholic Church, who is closest to those in need.

Although we share the principles of Catholic social teaching and integral human development with our sister Church agencies throughout the world, there is need for joint reflection on those principles as we work toward complementary visions of their application to humanitarian relief and development work. To that end, CRS must maintain a dialogue with both the episcopal conference and Caritas. This dialogue must incorporate proactive planning on emergency response, including possible direct CRS operations in emergencies, growth opportunities, donor compliance issues, program quality and financial management issues, and mutual assessment of capacity-strengthening areas.

### How Do We Work Together?

*Possible action items with bishops and other national leaders.* The types and frequency of activities intended to keep CRS and national Church leaders involved in each other's work depends on the situation in each country (e.g., whether there is an emergency) and the role of the episcopal conference.

At least once a year:

- Submit a written report to the conference on CRS programming in the country. It can become part of the historical record about the relationship, useful to both parties moving forward.
- Request an invitation to address the annual bishops' assembly to present CRS' work to the bishops and key Church leadership.

Twice a year or more:

- Meet with, as appropriate, the president and/or secretary-general of the conference, the nuncio, and/or the president of Caritas to discuss the status of the CRS SPP and the annual program plan (APP) for the country.
- Invite the bishop president of Caritas or another key bishop to the CRS office to officiate or speak at a program or staff event (retreat, anniversary, program launch, blessing of a new building).
- Invite the bishop president of Caritas or another key bishop to the CRS office for a lunch with staff, holiday party, or other social event.

- When there are joint Caritas-CRS activities, make joint reports and presentations.

*Possible action items with the national Caritas.* Because the national Caritas is the coordinating body of what are often CRS' partners at the diocesan level, it is important to work toward complementary visions. Activities to ensure dialogue and to build trust can include:

- Establishing or renewing a shared vision for the country and promoting the development of joint CRS and Caritas strategies. It is important that the visioning process focus both on content (what do we want to achieve together?) as well as on the principles that should guide the process to ensure that rights and responsibilities are respected on both sides. The 2002 *CRS Partnership Toolbox* describes processes and formats for covering points such as common values, principles, transparency, and dispute resolution.
- Conducting a joint partnership reflection. The 2003 *CRS Partnership Reflection Training Manual* can help country programs and their Church partners discuss partnership principles and continue strategic dialogue.
- Having joint training in the application of the integral human development framework can also strengthen dialogue and joint action.
- Holding regular meetings for information exchanges on specific programs, to discuss major issues affecting the country (poverty reduction, external debt, HIV), or in response to important events such as the preparation or evaluation of the SPP, APP, or a major program such as a Multi-Year Assistance Program. The meetings can be either structured (e.g., a planning workshop) or informal (e.g., having lunch together).
- Sharing copies of annual reports, project evaluations, and resource materials such as manuals.
- Inviting staff to CRS-sponsored trainings and social events.
- Every five years, as a country program develops a new SPP, engaging with the national and diocesan Caritas to assess the priority issues and geographic areas on which CRS should work.

### *Possible action items with diocesan Caritas*

Ongoing:

- Jointly plan and conduct meetings with Church leaders regarding strategy issues, project development, and project progress.

- Schedule meetings with them when hosting a donor or CRS leader for a field visit in the diocese.
- Invite staff to trainings.
- Share CRS and external resources (web links, manuals, best practice guidance, training opportunities, etc.) relevant to their program areas.

For projects in development or active projects:

- Actively engage them (e-mail exchanges, telephone conversations, and face-to-face meetings) in discussing project ideas.
- Conduct “writeshops” to produce concept papers, proposals, and reports.
- Conduct site visits on a schedule set out in a project agreement or according to mutual needs. Site visits should relate to both project activities as well as project management (administrative and financial aspects).
- Express interest and offer support through informal “check-in” telephone calls or drop-in visits.
- Share feedback from donors and others related to proposals, monitoring reports or visits, audits, and evaluations.

### With Whom Do We Work?

In addition to the relationship with the episcopal conference as an entity, it is important to develop relations with individual bishops and the staff of the diocesan Caritas, especially in the dioceses where CRS works or is planning on working.

CRS can, and in many cases should, develop relations with other Church agencies (commissions, religious orders, etc.) to carry out our mission in the same spirit that guides our relations with Caritas. Also, countries generally have other Catholic institutions that implement programming in line with the CRS vision and mission—universities, for example, or NGOs.

### Why Those Individuals?

*To maintain relationships with bishops.* It is important that the local bishop be briefed directly by the country representative or a senior country program manager on what CRS is doing or planning in the diocese (or in other dioceses) and with what partners. The country representative should solicit guidance and advice from the local bishop and encourage his feedback. Many country programs ask that whenever staff are in a diocese they pay a courtesy call on the local bishop to keep him informed, show respect for his authority, and maintain good relations with the Church.



*To have an effective relationship with implementing partners.* Of all of Church structures, the local Caritas is most likely to be CRS' implementing partner, and therefore to be engaged in the nuts and bolts of project development, implementation, and evaluation. The relationship between CRS and Caritas needs to be solid in order to maximize one another's strengths and to work through challenges.

*To build relationships with other Church entities.* Although our principal relationship is with Caritas, we can also develop relationships and projects with other organizations, such as the health commission or the justice and peace commission. These relationships are appropriate as long as we keep the national Caritas informed and coordinate with them.

Experience has shown that it is important for country representatives also to have relationships with foreign missionaries working in the country, especially those with a key presence there. Missionaries are in the country for the long term, and their insights into the culture can be very helpful to CRS staff. In addition, they can provide information on key Church players and ideas about the dual constituency collaboration. They may also be a good resource for orienting new expatriate staff to the country and the culture.

# ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

## Regional Staff

The Executive Leadership Team of CRS has entrusted the regional director with the overall responsibility for the health and quality of partnerships in the region. Therefore, the regional director will monitor relationships in each country, offering his/her support and advice as needed.

Some CRS regional offices have worked to develop complementary visions and mission statements with the regional Caritas. These statements are an important step forward, but there is still need to discuss them with staff and use them as general references to guide and orient our work and our national Caritas partnerships.

## Country Representative

The country representative is the face of CRS to the host country Church, and therefore is ultimately responsible for all Church relationships in the country. Therefore, he/she should work with his/her regional director to have a partner relationship component to his/her annual performance plan. He/she should model behavior toward partners to the rest of the staff. He/she should be the primary person to relate with the episcopal conference and with bishops, (though this does not preclude other staff from contact with them). The country representative needs to ensure that all staff approach the relationship with Church partners in the same way, to minimize mixed messages. One of the important messages relates to how the relationship with the Church is very much consistent with program quality and accountability, not the reverse. He/she should be the signatory on all formal correspondence and approve other CRS personnel's dialogue and exchanges with Church representatives, particularly on strategic issues, in resolving problems, or topics of special sensitivity.

## Management and Program Quality Senior Managers

Some country programs have staff assigned as point-people for particular dioceses, religious orders, parishes, or other local Church partners. This is particularly useful when there are multiple Church partners, spread out across the country. Another helpful strategy is to have joint management quality-program quality (MQ-PQ) teams working with partners, which can be particularly helpful in delivering consistent messages, addressing potential joint issues, and celebrating strengths.

The MQ and PQ senior managers are also often responsible for organizing the annual partnership reflection; they may also work to ensure follow up on agreed-to action plans that result from the partnership reflection.

Specific activities senior managers can oversee are:

- Ensuring that partnership relationship building is included in the annual performance plans of all staff that have direct relationships with partners at any level. Because they can greatly enhance or inhibit relations with partners, communication skills may be important to include in staff development plans.
- Planning a specific orientation for all new staff (Catholic and non-Catholic, including support staff such as guards, drivers, and receptionists) on the Church and relations with the Church. In many country programs, there may be need for an initial in-depth training of CRS staff on the Church and Church relations.
- Organizing regular refresher sessions on material covered during new employee orientation, especially on partnership principles, the dual constituency, donor compliance challenges, and improving communication and relationship skills.
- Planning continuing education on topics such as key historic, cultural, economic, political, religious issues.
- Planning an annual retreat with Church partners in order to understand, share, and strengthen a mutual spiritual relationship. Combined with this meeting could be a social event for CRS and partner staff and their families.

### **Program Quality, Management Quality, and Finance Staff**

It is the project managers and finance staff who have regular contact with their partner colleagues. Their working relationship is key to a successful partnership. It is important that PQ, MQ, and finance staff share what they know about partners, so that no one misses important information. There are a number of activities that CRS staff can incorporate into their work to maintain good partner relations. In addition to conducting their daily management, finance, or programmatic responsibilities in an inclusive, respectful, and open fashion, staff may:

- Make regular phone calls and personal visits.
- Invite partners to seminars, meetings, or events.
- Share books, websites, and materials.
- Have lunch, tea, or other social occasions with partners.
- If necessary, keep a “reminder sheet” on each partner, listing important dates (like birthdays) or biographical information (children’s names, etc).
- Network—introduce partners to others, and ask partners to introduce CRS to new people as well, so that each organization can help the other’s staff expand working relationships.

# GOOD PRACTICES FOR PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH

## Communication

Effective communication is the foundation for a good relationship, and all CRS staff should work on their communication skills to facilitate Church relations. Even if problems arise, a pattern of good communication will reduce tensions and lead to faster resolution. Effective communication is respectful and honest, culturally appropriate, timely, accurate, consultative, continuous, both formal and informal, and written and verbal. Communication informs, engages, and acknowledges others.<sup>2</sup>

## Planning

To achieve the objectives and intermediate results in the Agency Results Framework, each country should ensure that they have adequately described the Church and partnership strategy in Section C of their SPP document, including priority relationships and how these will be strengthened, how the SPP fits with the desired range of relationships, plans for local Church development, and plans for partner capacity strengthening. An update on planning and measuring achievements can form part of the annual program-planning process. These planning opportunities complement but do not replace necessary project-based planning with partners.

## Record Keeping

Every country program should have its own documentation center on the Church, which should include:

- Summary of the national Church's pastoral plan.
- Strategies for the national and diocesan Caritas.
- Brief, but regularly updated, history of the Church in the country. (The historical context of the relationship is very important. Many CRS staff have little or no idea of the history of the Church in the country, and the CRS office does not always have reference materials.)
- Brief history of CRS's work in the country, including previous and present SPPs.
- Summary of main pastoral issues and concerns of the Church: violence, migration, poverty, indigenous peoples, land issues, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> McManus, S. and Tennyson, R. 2008. Talking the Walk: A Communication Manual for Partnership Practitioners. International Business Leaders Forum/The Partnering Initiative. <http://www.thepartneringinitiative.org>

- Bibliography of Church publications and other pertinent reference materials, national and worldwide.
- Basic description of Church jurisdictions in the country (dioceses, prelaties, etc.) as well as clerical titles and proper forms of address.
- Basic information on religious orders in the country, their leadership, activities, and forms of address; there may be a conference of religious superiors, analogous to the episcopal conference.
- Information on the basic principles of Catholic social doctrine.
- Documentation of major milestones, successes, issues, etc. involving CRS and the Church.
- Key personal information on all bishops, dioceses, Caritas, and any other relevant Catholic leaders with whom CRS works: e-mail and mailing addresses, house and cell phone numbers, birthdays, calendar of special national or local feast days, etc. The preferred form of contact with bishops and other key Church personal will depend on the level of relationship that the country program has developed and on local practice. Access to personal information may need to be restricted in some cases.
- An archive of all CRS correspondence with the Church.

### APPENDIX A: QUICK REMINDER SHEET

*Country Representative.* At least once a year:

- Visit the bishop and Caritas staff in each diocese.
- Report (in writing and in person) to the episcopal conference.
- Discuss strategy and activity plans with the national Caritas staff.
- Communicate to staff the context and importance of Church relations.

*Senior MQ and PQ staff:*

- Ensure all staff are trained (or retrained) on Catholic social teaching, CRS partnership principles, and appropriate behavior toward Church leaders and staff.
- Incorporate activities and skills related to building partnership into staff performance and development plans.

*Project managers, finance, and administration staff:*

- Train or update partner colleagues on CRS expectations for financial and administrative procedures.
- Make regular phone calls and personal visits.
- Invite partners to seminars, meetings, or events.
- Share books, websites, materials.
- Have lunch, tea, or other social occasions with partners.
- Refer to your “reminder sheet” on each partner .
- Share networks.

# PARTNERSHIP

## **PARTNERSHIP, PQSD**

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## **SOLIDARITY WILL TRANSFORM THE WORLD**

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Partnership is fundamental to how CRS sees itself in the world. We believe profoundly that change occurs through our Catholic Church and other local partners, that by sustaining and strengthening local institutions we enhance a community's ability to respond to its own problems. Catholic Relief Services puts its approach to development, emergency relief, and social change into practice through partnerships with a wide array of organizations: local churches and nonprofits, host governments, international agencies, and others.

Our belief that solidarity will transform the world inspires a commitment to right relationships with those we serve, in collaboration with the Catholic Church and other faith-based or secular organizations closest to those in need. We strive for partnerships founded on a long-term vision and a commitment to peace and justice. For more than sixty years CRS has worked side-by-side with our partners to alleviate human suffering, promote social justice, and assist people as they strive for their own development.

## **OUR PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES**

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1. Share a vision for addressing people's immediate needs and the underlying causes of suffering and injustice.
2. Make decisions at a level as close as possible to the people who will be affected by them.
3. Strive for mutuality, recognizing that each partner brings skills, resources, knowledge, and capacities in a spirit of autonomy.
4. Foster equitable partnerships by mutually defining rights and responsibilities.
5. Respect differences and commit to listen and learn from each other.
6. Encourage transparency.
7. Engage with civil society, to help transform unjust structures and systems.
8. Commit to a long-term process of local organizational development.
9. Identify, understand, and strengthen community capacities, which are the primary source of solutions to local problems.
10. Promote sustainability by reinforcing partners' capacity to identify their vulnerabilities and build on their strengths.

*Since 1943, Catholic Relief Services has had the privilege of serving the poor and disadvantaged overseas. Without regard to race, creed, or nationality, CRS provides emergency relief in the wake of natural and manmade disasters. Through development projects in fields such as education, peace and justice, agriculture, microfinance, health, and HIV/AIDS, CRS works to uphold human dignity and promote better standards of living. CRS also works throughout the United States to expand the knowledge and action of Catholics and others interested in issues of international peace and justice. Our programs and resources respond to the U.S. bishops' call to live in solidarity—as one human family—across borders, over oceans, and through differences in language, culture and economic condition.*



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