CRS AND ict4d

CRS CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES faith. action. results.

At CRS we employ information and communications technology for development (ICT4D) across the gamut of our programming—from our signature activities in emergency response, agriculture and health to our complementary efforts in education, microfinance, peacebuilding, and water and sanitation. We also work closely with technology partners to influence the evolution of ICT4D to ensure it meets the needs of developing communities.

THE BASICS

51%

REDUCTION IN WALKING TIME TO FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTERS IN MADAGASCAR

33%

IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH FOR FAMILIES IN AKRE, IRAQ

25%

INCREASE IN INCOME FOR FARMERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

HOW WE USE ICT

IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Accurate and fast data collection is key to an effective, well-managed emergency response. The expansion of the Islamic State across Iraq has caused thousands of Iraqis and Syrians to flee their homes. Most have found refuge in the sub-district of Akre, where CRS is piloting a cash transfer for food project that ensures more than 3,200 families are able to buy the food they need. As part of the ICT solution, CRS has utilized tools that track distributions, conduct monitoring and evaluation, and manage databases. Thanks to these tools, at the end of the pilot CRS was able to track the progress of the families. Beneficiaries gave feedback at the end of the project based on various questions they were asked, to assess the progress they have made. With calculations made it was found that overall these families have had an increase of 33.5% in the health of the family and 55.5% of them were found to be food secure. The monitoring and evaluation ICT4D solution greatly impacts the ability to collect data which informs on the success of the project.

Heads of household line up in Akre, Iraq, to receive vouchers worth $16 per person for one month. The vouchers can be exchanged for food items at local supermarkets or select vendors. *Kim Pozniak/CRS*

Two CRS employees work at compiling data regarding coconut farmers in the Philippines using their mobile phones. FARM also uses mobile phones in order to broadcast coffee buying prices to ensure farmers are getting a fair price. *Jennifer Hardy/CRS*

IN AGRICULTURE

In the Philippines, CRS used mobile phones and SMS technology to give coffee farmers access to market price information, helping them to offer and gain more competitive prices for their crop. The initiative, called "FARM," taught the farmers new agricultural and cultivation techniques to facilitate resource management, crop yield and storage, and sustainable practices. As a result, farmers were able to increase their income by 25%.

IN HEALTH PROGRAMMING

In a project in Madagascar, CRS improved the nutrition of mothers and children with the help of an ICT solution that analyzed the local geography and proposed the best locations for food distributions. The technology – called ArcGIS – identified optimal locations, thereby reducing the walk time by 50% and increasing mothers' attendance at the distributions by 30%. Called "Fararano," the project benefited about 70,000 women, pregnant women, and children under age 2. Without the use of the ICT solution, the mothers would have had to walk an average of five hours one way, which meant many women often forfeited their monthly ration. ArcGIS is a geographic mapping tool that measures and summarizes geographical data, reveals new patterns, and identifies optimal locations.

CRS beneficiaries Diorita Patiga, 55 years old, and Reynaldo Patiga, 50 years old, pose in front of their corn field, which is part of the livelihood programs of CRS in Palo, Leyte. The FARM project also works with farmers to increase crop size. *Charles David Martinez/CRS*

To learn more about our use of ICT4D, contact pqpublications@crs.org.
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