

Engaging Government

A CRS GUIDE FOR WORKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



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Cover photo: The CRS sponsored public school of Sheikhan in Iraq celebrates an official visit with a traditional dance. Philip Laubner/CRS.

Suggested citation: CRS. 2018. Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Field Testing

Between 2016-18 colleagues on CRS' Equity, Inclusion and Peacebuilding (EQUIP) and Partnership and Capacity Strengthening (PCS) teams presented parts of the guide at the Summer Institutes for Peacebuilding, country program-level workshops and regional conferences. Numerous country programs, leading relevant proposal processes, also drew on the draft guide. Colleague feedback expanded the scope of the guide and contributed practical experience included throughout the final version.

And to all the CRS country teams and partners doing the daily work of engaging government, thank you. Your knowledge, creativity and perseverance, which so richly contributes to the guidance here, is critical to advancing our shared mission.

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FOREWORD

Over the past 20 years the development landscape has evolved rapidly. High-level forums on aid, and later development effectiveness reaffirmed national and local ownership as an essential condition of sustainable development. Efforts to secure and strengthen such ownership must span all three of society's sectors: civil society, the private sector, and government. Since its inception 75 years ago, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has developed and refined multiple strategies and approaches for doing so with civil society, and more recently the private sector. It is only in the last decade that CRS has begun to intentionally do so with government institutions and actors. Yet our experience engaging government stretches to our founding.

Engaging Government, A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change (EGG) provides step-by-step processes for such strategies and approaches. It is written for CRS and partner project and program managers in all development and humanitarian contexts. It is a resource designed especially for those who may not consider themselves “experts” in governance or capacity strengthening of government yet who recognize the need or opportunity to engage with government partners to achieve program success.

The *EGG* provides a “primer” on how government works. It also offers multiple resources and tools for developing successful approaches for influencing public policy, optimizing government institutional performance and increasing civic participation.

These three elements comprise CRS' overarching approach to engaging government. Combined together with equal consideration into context analysis and evidence-based strategies, they represent a significant innovation in how civil society organizations such as CRS and partners can support societies as they transform. The guidance reflects the past decade of CRS' experience designing and implementing large-scale, often multi-sectorial health and social services, humanitarian response and recovery, and agricultural and livelihoods programs worldwide. In all of these programs, CRS learned by doing to integrate elements of social cohesion, inclusion and equity to transform what were essentially service delivery projects into platforms for social change.

We would like to thank all of the CRS staff and partners that were involved in calling for, researching, writing and field-testing the *EGG* over the past four years. This took significant effort and reflects their dedication to making a difference in the lives of the people that CRS serves.

With best wishes,



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PREFACE

For CRS, the idea of engaging government begins with the vision to transform the lives of the poor and vulnerable. It is grounded in CRS' guiding principles for justice and peacebuilding, and for partnership and capacity strengthening, and in a belief that strengthening state and non-state actors can generate positive social change and contribute to good governance.

WHY ENGAGING GOVERNMENT MATTERS FOR CRS AND PARTNERS

Good governance and engagement for strong partnerships between state and non-state actors are rooted in the core values of CRS' work: Catholic social teaching and the [Integral Human Development \(IHD\) Framework](#) derived from it. Using the terms of the IHD Framework, state and non-state actors' political assets must be increased and mobilized so that sociopolitical structures and systems better respond to poverty, violence and injustice.

The agency's own experience and a wealth of modern social science research demonstrate that good governance can reduce violence and improve development outcomes.² Over the past decade, donors have gradually begun to prioritize the strengthening of local systems—including meaningful partnerships among civil society, the private sector and government institutions—as a way to strengthen good governance overall and to improve all types of service delivery.

ENGAGING GOVERNMENT AT CRS

Increased requests for technical assistance from country programs helped the Equity, Inclusion and Peacebuilding (EQUIP) and the Partnership and Capacity Strengthening (PCS) Units to realize how much CRS engages government in its programming. It also revealed a need to better organize this knowledge and experience to make it more accessible to CRS and partner staff globally.

The ensuing collaboration of EQUIP and PCS has resulted in aligned approaches for two of CRS' core competencies: partnership and capacity strengthening and peacebuilding, governance and gender integration. Informal conversations grew into a structured stock-taking process carried out by colleagues from all regions and sectors, which in turn led to development of a series of practical programming aids (including this document) for CRS and partners who are working with governments and on issues of governance.

This CRS Engaging Government Guide builds on what EQUIP and PCS Units learned in the 2015 and 2016 Summer Institutes for Peacebuilding (SIP) and the 2014 Governance and Government Capacity Strengthening Workshop. It is also a deliverable of the Writeshop on Engaging Government held in 2015. It is accompanied by the CRS Engaging Government Case Study series, which illustrates how country programs and partners have worked with government and on governance issues. A set of marketing materials further inventories CRS' global experience for use in proposal development, partnership development, and external representation and advocacy.

These deliverables intentionally sought and drew from current social science and ideas expressed in recent papal encyclicals, which provide rigor as well as an inspirational and a practical basis for this work. Pope Francis has spoken directly and strongly about the need for global society, structures and systems to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

In the past five years alone, CRS and its partners implemented nearly 100 programs in 50 countries with significant focus on promoting good governance in both state structures and civil society, and strengthening the capacity of government institutions. CRS' Engaging Government Capacity Statement profiles many of these programs.

“Until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence.”
—Pope Francis

² See Annex 1 for citations and a brief discussion of the scholarship surrounding these issues.

The guide references numerous existing tools and resources (produced by CRS, partners and peers) that are ready for immediate use. The EGG authors expect that CRS will produce a number of “how to” supplements on specific aspects of designing and implementing engaging government efforts. Priorities for these “grab and go” resources will be determined with country programs as this guide is rolled out and used by CRS and partners.

If you have questions about or suggestions for the use of the CRS Engaging Government Guide, or if you would like further information, kindly write to Mary Margaret Dineen, Senior Technical Advisor, Governance (MaryMargaret.Dineen@crs.org). You are also welcome to join the Peacebuilding Technical Commission, which holds teleconference calls quarterly.

MAIN ACRONYMS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CBO/CSO	Community based organization/Civil society organization
CPLO	Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office
CSC	Community Score Card
DFAP	Development Food Assistance Program
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
DNH	Do No Harm
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EGG	Engaging Government Guide
EQUIP	CRS Equity, Inclusion and Peacebuilding team
HOCAI	Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument
HOP	Head of programs
ICT4D/G	Information and communication technologies for development/governance
IHD	Integral Human Development
ISG	Institutional Strengthening Guide
JPC	Justice and Peace Commissions
KSAs	Knowledge, skills, attitudes
LGU	Local government unit
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRM	Natural resource management
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIP	Optimal Institutional Performance
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PCS	Partnership and Capacity Strengthening
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PLWHA	People living with HIV and AIDS
PMP	Performance management plan
P/RRA	Participatory/rapid rural appraisal
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RTI	Right to information
SIP	Summer Institutes of Peacebuilding
SCR	UN Security Council Resolution
SDC	Swiss Development Corporation
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (indicators)
SMILER	Simple measurement of indicators for learning and evidence-based reporting
TWG	Technical working groups
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

HOW TO USE THE CRS ENGAGING GOVERNMENT GUIDE

The CRS Engaging Government Guide provides comprehensive information, tools and examples for CRS and partner practitioners to increase knowledge and skills related to engaging government, considering in detail each element of the [Engaging Government Framework](#).

To begin, all users should review the concise first chapter, [Introduction and Key Concepts](#). It introduces ideas and terminology used throughout the EGG and provides a theoretical and scholarly foundation for the work of engaging government.

Similarly, all users should read Chapter 2: [Understanding Context of Engaging Government](#) to determine the most appropriate and realistic interventions for their context. This chapter includes the operational [Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix](#), which is designed to help colleagues work with the three programming pathways and the public goods referenced in the [Theory of Change](#).

After determining what specific information is needed, users can move (as relevant) to chapters 3–5 named for the three engaging government pathways: [Policy Level Approaches](#), [Optimal Institutional Performance](#), and [Civic Participation](#). Each contains a brief background discussion of relevance to CRS and partners' work; key approaches, tools and resources; illustrative activities; gender and youth considerations; and examples from CRS work.

The last two chapters address considerations for [Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning](#) activities (Chapter 6) and staff [Competencies](#) (Chapter 7) relevant to CRS and partners engaging government. The [Annexes](#) include further discussion of social science foundations for the engaging government approach and a consolidated discussion of gender, youth and protection considerations in engaging government.

1. INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

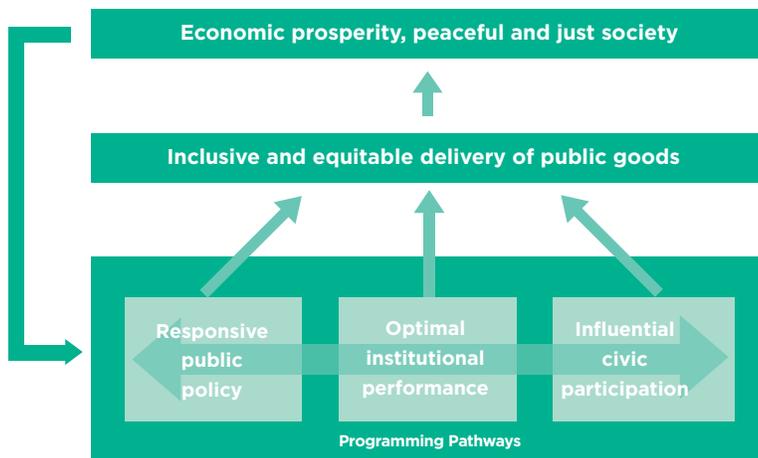
For CRS, engaging government encompasses *working with and strengthening state and non-state actors to generate social change that transforms the lives of the poor and vulnerable*. It is grounded in CRS' guiding principles for justice and peacebuilding, and for partnership and capacity strengthening. Applied to programming, these principles can help CRS, partners and community members to build strong working relationships with governments, the private sector and civil society groups and support them to contribute to good governance, to influence policy and to achieve social change.

Developed primarily for country programs seeking to engage government through existing work or new opportunities, this guide complements existing CRS resources including the [Basic Guide](#), [Institutional Strengthening Guide \(ISG\)](#), the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office's Guidance for Sector Influence Plan Development² and [ProPack 1](#). The academic perspectives provided help to ground program design in theoretical rigor and empirical evidence, improving program quality and thus increasing the likelihood of impact.

1.1. ENGAGING GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK AND THEORY OF CHANGE

The Engaging Government Framework conceptualizes the underlying theory of change and linkages with CRS guiding principles.⁴

Figure 1: CRS Engaging Government Framework



KEY TERMS:

Equity is the fair and just management of social, economic and political institutions; distribution of public goods and services; and formation and implementation of public policy.³

Inclusion is the degree to which people enjoy equitable access to public information, resources and decision-making.⁴

CRS believes that engaging government contributes to Integral Human Development (IHD) and CRS' mission, according to the following theory of change:

CRS Theory of Change for Engaging Government

IF public policies respond to the needs of the poor, and to the common good, AND

IF government achieves optimal institutional performance to implement policies, deliver services and collaborate effectively, AND

IF civic participation influences policies and services to be accountable to the needs of citizens and all people,

THEN public goods will be delivered in a more inclusive and equitable way, ensuring that all people's dignity is respected, and they live in a prosperous, peaceful and just society.

² Publication forthcoming, expected by September 2018.

³ *Justice & Peacebuilding Strategy*. CRS, 2006.

⁴ <http://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/peacebuilding-governance-and-gender-assessments>

This theory of change is aspirational; the challenges of governance are complex and CRS programming responses to them are rarely—if ever—this linear. Furthermore, the pace of social change is varied, depending on the context and the cumulative effect of many actors' efforts.

Country programs should adapt this theory of change and the [Engaging Government Framework to their context](#), designing specific objectives and customizing as needed. CRS' three programming pathways (bottom of Figure 1) are interconnected and activities should be designed to reinforce synergies among them. The cycle arrow (at left in Figure 1) represents this continuous, fluid nature of social change.⁵

CRS' Engaging Government Framework and theory of change acknowledge that because governing structures are composed of people and institutions with different interests, perspectives and priorities, engaging government requires a long-term process, sensitive to context, timing and opportunity. Work often involves different levels and/or branches of government, alone or in tandem with nongovernmental actors such as civil society or faith-based institutions.

With multiple programming pathways, the Framework and the Planning and Program Decision Matrix introduced in [Chapter 2](#) are flexible tools to help practitioners choose combined approaches based on context analysis. See also [Chapter 7](#) for guidance on how to develop competencies for navigating relationships with multiple government counterparts, including public officials and government institutions.

1.2. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

The principles of Catholic social teaching directly promote good governance. For example, the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and the option for the poor guide how CRS works with others to strengthen the voice and actions of the poor to influence the issues they face. These principles call us to remain grounded in the realities of the people CRS and partners serve while also engaging government to foster greater equity and inclusion. As Pope Francis has affirmed, "Every economic and political theory or action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one's own human potential."⁶

Catholic social teaching inspired CRS to develop the IHD framework (Figure 2), which promotes the good of the whole person and of all people. Working for the good of all people is to work for the common good, an obligation of any government responsible for guaranteeing the rights and well being of citizens. As Pope Francis explains, it is "the responsibility of the State to safeguard and promote the common good of society...based on the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity" (Gaudium Evangelii).

The EGG builds on Catholic social teaching and explains how CRS and partners can engage with state and non-state institutions. This goal is part of CRS' strategy to support marginalized people to "increase equitable and inclusive access to and influence on structures and systems at all levels."

⁵ As discussed in Annex 1, the work of Robert Rotberg and Amartya Sen significantly informed and inspired CRS contributors to the EGG as they considered the role of public goods in CRS' engaging government approach and the matrix depicted. Definitions were adapted from Rotberg publications in Annex 1.

⁶ "Letter of Holy Father Francis to H.E. Mr. David Cameron, British Prime Minister, on the occasion of the G8 Meeting (17-18 June 2013)".

PUBLIC GOODS OF GOVERNANCE⁵

Peace and security:
A basic function of government is to prevent and defend against armed attack and to protect citizens from violent threats and predation, within national and international legal limitations on the use of force within its territory.

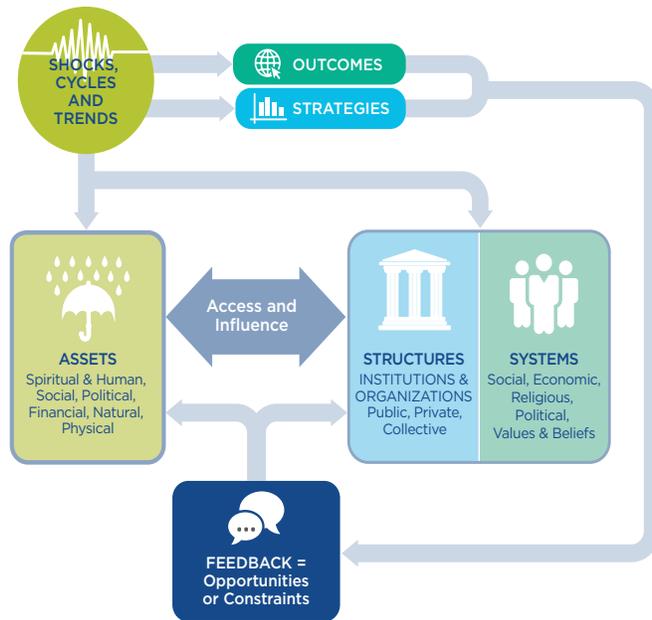
Justice and the rule of law enable citizens to rely on and access systems for adjudicating disputes and upholding laws. Systems should guarantee equal protection under the law to all people.

Service delivery and resource management builds human capital in the context of the natural and social environment, includes access to services that reduce vulnerability, and encompasses the state's ability to manage public finances and regulate the use of public resources in a fair and accountable manner.

Economic access and opportunity:
Governance systems must create an enabling environment for economic growth and prosperity—including basic economic functions and physical and technological infrastructure—and ensure that vulnerable and marginalized populations have equitable access to these systems.

Human and civil rights are an essential and crosscutting dimension of the above public goods. Political, civic, economic, and social rights are inextricably linked to responsibilities. **proposed results.**

Figure 2: Integral Human Development Framework



1.3. CRS PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

CRS' governance and partnership principles reflect not only Catholic social teaching, but social science research and best practices in the larger humanitarian and development sector. Notably, several of the governance and partnership principles overlap (e.g., equity, inclusion and transparency) and others are complementary (e.g., fairness/competition). The following [principles](#) are used throughout this guide and inform crosscutting issues of engagement among sectors and integration.

While the EGG focuses primarily on formal governance structures of the state (elected or appointed officials or civil servants), informal governance structures often play a significant role. Particularly at the local level, they may involve traditional and/or religious leaders in parallel structures that more directly influence how communities access and use public goods and services. These structures include local committees or councils that have a foundation in local customary law and practice but not necessarily statutory law.

Formal and informal institutions can perform valuable and complementary public service delivery functions, particularly in stable but weak states. Individuals may also have multiple roles, such as an elected municipal official who also holds a position on a traditional council or farmer's group. Understanding the roles of both formal and informal governance and their relationships is a critical part of [context analysis](#); while challenging, it can also reveal critical programming opportunities.⁸

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

CRS' principles of good governance are:

- **Equity** in access to and distribution of public goods and resources;
- **Inclusion**, particularly of the vulnerable and marginalized, in decision-making;

⁷ Adapted from the *Basic Guide*.

⁸ Adapted from *Guide to Good Governance Programming*, Mercy Corps, 2010, pg. 37. See also, Francis Deng. *Identity, Diversity, and Constitutionalism in Africa*. USIP Press: Washington DC. 2008.

KEY TERMS:

Government is the structures and systems established for the delivery of goods and services and ensuring security, inclusion and protection of all people in a country's borders that fall under authority of the state.

Governance refers to the rules and processes that guide the efforts of both governmental and nongovernmental actors to manage public resources for the common good. CRS seeks to promote equity and inclusion in these rules and processes.⁷

- **Transparency** in objectives, processes and access to information;
- **Accountability** in performance and management;
- **Integrity** in leadership;
- **Competition** as ensured by a system of checks and balances among various state institutions.

These principles call on both state and nonstate actors to model the kinds of governance structures and behavior they expect others to practice. This prevents accusations of inconsistency or hypocrisy and improves each actor's credibility. The underlying assumption is that actors and institutions that embody these principles are more effective, contributing to good governance.

Principles in Action: Context Analysis Findings in Mali

A CRS-funded context analysis in Northeastern Mali uncovered an important relationship between the formal judiciary and informal structures governing conflict resolution related to land tenure. Decentralization reforms over the past decade stripped informal land conflict resolution mechanisms of legal recognition, undermining people's confidence in both informal and formal mechanisms. Increasing pressure on land due to climate change and population growth only exacerbated tensions and local violence. The coup d'état and macro-level conflict in the North of Mali in 2012 then revealed the state's deep-seated fragility and the limits of customary structures. This analysis led CRS to recommend that any programming in the region must rebuild public trust by revitalizing both types of governing structures and how they work together.



PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

CRS works in partnership to achieve structural change; this includes partnering directly with government entities and with civil society actors working to improve governance and government performance.

The principles for engaging government compliment CRS' core Partnership Principles.¹¹

- **Shared vision** affirmed among partners working toward improved governance;
- **Subsidiarity** such that partners are empowered to make their own decisions and solve their own problems for improved governance;
- **Mutuality** and **respect** through consultative and reciprocal interactions with governmental and nongovernmental partners;
- **Commitment** to sustained engagement and long-term relationships with governmental and nongovernmental partners;
- **Community ownership** by local institutions and their constituents, achieved through working together to understand dynamic contexts and jointly design program responses, as well as through strong and open dialogue among citizens, civil society, private sector groups and government;
- **Capacity strengthening** with governmental and nongovernmental partners to improve policy and program outcomes;
- **Sustainability**, grounded in the belief that healthy institutions and all partners working toward improved governance are better able to provide better-quality services more consistently.

This partnership approach increases the capacity, confidence and credibility of host-country governments to develop and implement important institutional

9 USAID. Democratic Decentralization Programming Handbook. 2009. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaea460.pdf

10 CRS. Partnership and Capacity Strengthening Basics: A guide for facilitators. 2015. <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/partnership-and-capacity-strengthening-basics.pdf>

11 Ibid.

KEY TERMS:

Political competition is built on a rigorously enforced system of checks and balances among state institutions across the different branches and different levels of government, as well as between the government and (civil) society. Checks and balances can serve as a robust defense against tendencies of the central government's executive branch to consolidate power often at the expense of more representative, local structures.

Decentralization is the transfer of power and resources from national governments to subnational governments or to the subnational administrative units of national governments.⁹ Decentralization includes issues of authority, autonomy, accountability and capacity, which is further discussed in Chapter 4.

KEY TERM:

Partnership is a relationship based on mutual commitment and complementary purpose and values that is often supported by shared resources and which results in positive change and increased social justice.¹⁰

reforms. These reforms help to create an enabling environment for sustaining the impact of development investments and lay the foundation for improving the effectiveness of governance. In the process, government institutions become more willing, trusted and effective partners for CRS and partner civil society organizations (CSOs) in other initiatives. These relationships also facilitate numerous ways of learning, providing the data and insights essential for government institutions to pursue systemic change or to tackle complex challenges. When shared openly, such learning processes increase the likelihood of replication and scaling up, while also generating robust evidence to inform donors on development effectiveness.

1.4. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL ENGAGEMENT

Achieving social change requires a constituency. Constituency building is a process of establishing webs of influence and relationships across diverse spaces. Associations and networks or umbrella groups help to advance social change initiatives horizontally with potential allies and vertically by targeting key decision makers.¹³

It involves working both **horizontally** to include key stakeholders and **vertically** to engage key decision makers at multiple levels of government to increase their political will for the desired social change.

Figure 3: Lederach Strategic Triangle¹⁴

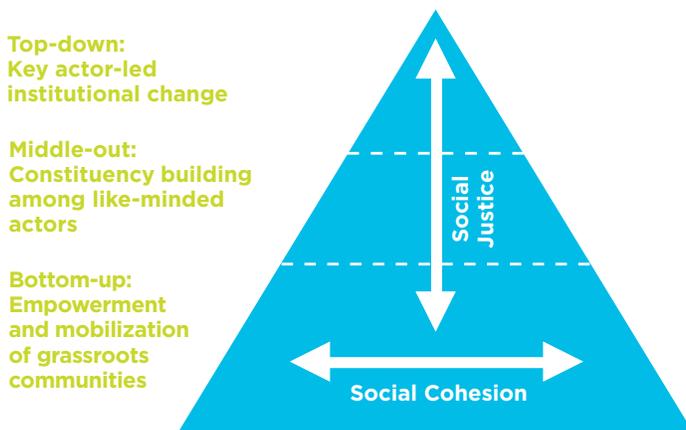


Figure 3, named for peacebuilding scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach, shows how to apply a policy influence strategy with various levels of governing structures and actors. At each level, CRS and partners should engage formal and informal government. Very often colleagues find working across levels aids more effective programming.¹⁵

PARTNERSHIP WITH CATHOLIC PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICES AND JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSIONS

CRS works with a wide variety of Church and non-Church civil society partners. Two groups in particular that often engage government directly and can be effective program partners are [Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices](#) (CPLO)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <http://cdacollaborative.org/cdaproject/reflecting-on-peace-practice-project/>

¹⁴ Figure adapted from Lederach, John Paul, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 1995. Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 1997.

¹⁵ Text adapted from Reina Neufeldt, Larissa Fast, Fr Robert Schreiter, Fr Brian Starcken, Duncan MacLaren, Jaco Cilliers, and John Paul Lederach. *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual*, pp. 82-83. Vatican City: Caritas Internationalis, 2002.

KEY TERM:

Capacity strengthening is a deliberate process that improves the ability of an individual, group, organization, network, or system to enhance or develop new knowledge, skills, attitudes (KSAs), systems, and structures needed to function effectively, work towards sustainability, and achieve goals.

KEY TERM:

Political will is the willingness of key government actors, particularly those with decision-making authority to support a particular policy, policy option or reform. Related is the idea of political consensus, or the broad agreement about an issue among main political groups, often motivating political will to act.

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and [Justice and Peace Commissions](#) (JPC). Each regional and national bishops' conference, as well as many dioceses, establish a JPC. National JPCs function as the official advocacy and peacebuilding agency of the national bishop's conference with dedicated programs across a wide range of key thematic areas such as gender, economic and environmental justice, civic participation, inter-group relations, land reform, international solidarity, peacebuilding and reconciliation. In some countries or dioceses, there are also parish-level JPCs which are a source of community volunteers for engaging government services and structures. The relationship of the JPCs to the national and diocesan [Caritas organizations](#) varies by country/bishops' conference. In some cases, they operate as parallel entities, whereas in others their mandate is merged.

CPLOs—at the regional and national level—are the official channels for dialogue and influence between the Catholic Church and the country's government. They provide an avenue for the Church, as part of civil society, to contribute to debates on issues of public policy, to influence policy and governmental so that it promotes the common good in areas of political, economic and social concern. CPLOs will often make formal submissions on legislation before a country's parliament. CPLO staff will also make informal contact with members of parliament, cabinet ministers and senior civil servants, attend notable government occasions such as the annual opening and the budget speech, and network with other CSOs on legislative issues of shared concern. Further examples of engaging government work of the JPCs, CPLOs, Caritas organizations and other CSO partners of CRS are noted throughout this chapter and guide.

“Once we get the support and buy-in, as well as the influence of the leaders of higher-level structures (such as provincial and regional government structures), then local leaders below the hierarchy also provide support. One aspect we consider is the importance of the role of nonstate actors and traditional leaders including the local *datus* [chiefs] to engage with government.”

—Executive Director of IMAN, a Muslim partner of the Peace Governance for Mindanao Project, Philippines

1.5. MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACHES IN ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

CROSS-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

A key strategy for promoting competition in governance systems and structures is **cross-sector engagement**. CRS brings together stakeholders from various levels of government, the private sector and civil society to ensure that all voices are heard and interests are considered. Public-private partnerships facilitate programming scale-up, thus contributing to broader, more durable social change. This guide includes examples of successful cross-sector partnerships in which CRS has played important roles initiating, convening and facilitating collaboration. Examples include: academic institutions ensuring government access to credible research, such as with the national university in Vietnam discussed in Section 4.1; public-private partnerships to transform industries, such as inclusive value chains for coffee in Colombia in Section 3.3; and CSOs in India addressing service gaps for child rights in collaboration with law enforcement, profiled in Section 5.7.

POWER WITH VERSUS POWER OVER

Power is a significant theme whenever thinking about governance and engaging government. Recognizing, planning for and managing power dynamics are all part of working in complex contexts. Issues of power are discussed throughout this guide. Power relations are in all systems and structures, and they shape the willingness and ability of individuals and groups to participate in governance processes. Believing that power contributes to the common good when it is inclusive, CRS seeks greater balance of power: “power with” all parties, rather than “power over.”¹⁶ It is through “power with” that the relationship between government bodies and people is strengthened. It also helps increase competition and accountability within and among governance systems and structures.

¹⁶ See Kenneth Boulding, *The Three Faces of Power* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1989). See also Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

INTEGRATION ACROSS SECTORS AND COMPETENCIES

To expand impact and influence, CRS promotes the integration of justice and peacebuilding (which includes conflict transformation, and aspects of governance, gender, protection and youth) in the agency's work across all sectors. A project that has integrated an engaging government approach intentionally pursues high-level objectives in two or more distinct areas of programming, one of which should seek to achieve social change. Examples include:

- A new agricultural livelihoods strategy that seeks to strengthen public policy for more inclusive value chains. See [CRS LACRO Borderlands Case Study](#).
- Emergency response experts striving to work with government from the beginning to undertake joint assessments and design interventions that align with host country policy and include elements to improve social cohesion. See the [CRS BiH Social Housing Case Study](#).
- Health and social service programs that engage government to scale up effective, gender-responsive faith-based initiatives that protect vulnerable children and adults. See the [CRS Nigeria SMILE Case Study](#).

The following criteria should be used for determining whether justice and peacebuilding have been sufficiently integrated into a program or project:

- Justice and Peacebuilding component results should be set at the intermediate result or strategic objective level.
- Intended changes in unjust structures, policies or in conflict situations should be specified.
- Significant project budget resources (a minimum of 10 percent) should be dedicated to each Justice and Peacebuilding component.
- Project team members should possess professional competency and technical skills in justice and peacebuilding.
- Coherence and synergies between components should be intentionally built into project design.
- Results should be demonstrable and evidence-based.

Civil society is frequently an entry point for activities that engage government. CSOs and CSO networks that function and self-govern effectively are well positioned to legitimately represent citizen interests or advocate for good governance with elected and appointed officials. To do so, they must initially focus on strengthening their internal governance to adopt and model the organizational behaviors and performance they demand from government institutions.

Engaging government can also integrate with peacebuilding and gender efforts in a wide range of project contexts. For approaches to the integration methods summarized below, see CRS' [Basic Guide](#).

Peacebuilding

In addition to strengthening the relationship between governments and people (vertical social cohesion), CRS seeks to strengthen horizontal social cohesion between identity groups (groups of people defined by their race, ethnicity, religion or place of origin). See Figure 3: [Lederach Triangle](#). Context questions of *who benefits* from government policies and programs, and *who participates* in decision-making are key considerations for the integration of peacebuilding and governance, and should be reflected in a robust contextual analysis. In conflict settings, this should include an analysis of the Who? What? and How? of conflict.

With this context analysis, programs can better prepare to mitigate tensions that worsen or are worsened by governance initiatives, and to incorporate strategies that bring together identity groups. For example, CRS and partners have:

- Led initiatives to deter inflammatory rhetoric and violence against certain identity groups and instead promote peaceful elections;

- Worked for increased, more equitable access to public services for vulnerable identity groups; and
- Strengthened the capacities of state-mandated conflict resolution structures to increase access to justice for all.

Gender



In virtually all the contexts where CRS works, women, men, boys and girls face inequitable access to public goods and to public decision-making. A gender analysis is an important tool that practitioners can use to understand the gendered barriers (in access to information, resources and time constraints as well as in attitudes, beliefs and perceptions) that women and men face that lead to inequitable access to public goods and decision-making. A gender analysis also examines access to services, decision-making and power imbalances, and particular barriers to civic participation. Once these factors have been identified, efforts by CRS and partners to engage government and promote civic participation will be more effective at generating gender-responsive approaches to achieving equity, inclusion and, ultimately, integral human development. And, as discussed further in [Section 4](#) when supporting public institutions to reach optimal performance gender audits can be conducted to identify ways to improve institutional gender responsiveness and equity. See examples in [Annex 3](#) and [CRS' Gender analysis toolkit](#).

Protection



Government has the primary responsibility to ensure the human rights of its citizens are protected. Unfortunately, not all governments are able or willing to fulfill this responsibility, especially authoritarian regimes or those facing high levels of violent conflict. Yet these are the very contexts where protection is most needed. Conditions that contribute to physical violence, refugee migration and environmental disaster make individuals and their families especially vulnerable to abuse, trafficking, forced labor and emotional trauma. It goes without saying that children, women, minorities and people with physical disabilities are especially at risk of victimization. Protecting their basic human rights often takes additional efforts.

In humanitarian crises, if states are unable or unwilling to fulfill this role, international and local CSOs will sometimes provide assistance and protection to populations in need. The Sphere Project Handbook guides their efforts.¹⁷ Such crises are short-term shocks, and longer-term efforts to engage government to ensure protection of its citizens and all people must continue. In recent years, CRS has undertaken several initiatives to respond to this imperative: rolling out the [Code of Conduct](#) and new [Protection Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults](#); and mainstreaming protection principles in the signature program areas, especially in Health and Social Services where CRS now implements several large-scale protection projects.

Youth



The youth sector has developed significantly over the past decade. Public donors now require that the needs of youth, defined by USAID as people aged 10-29 (although its strategy focuses primarily on those aged 15-24), be considered in all development initiatives. International development and relief organizations must therefore operationalize the principles of positive youth development so that youth have more equitable access to public information, resources and decision-making. CRS promotes the concept of positive youth development, further discussed in the [Basic Guide](#). Defined as “an approach that aims to build the competencies, skills and abilities that young people need to grow and flourish throughout life,” positive youth development engages young people, along with their families, communities and/or governments so they are empowered to reach their full potential. Such approaches build skills, assets and competencies, foster healthy relationships, strengthen the environment and transform systems.

¹⁷ <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95530/The-Sphere-Project-Handbook-2011.pdf>

KEY TERMS:

Gender equality: Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of all the opportunities, resources, rights, rewards, goods and services that a society values. Government has the authority, and some would say the obligation, for ensuring that such equality is enshrined in a society's systems, structures and institutions.

Gender equity: Gender equity is the means by which we achieve equality. It is the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls. By engaging government, CRS and partners can influence and strengthen the government systems and structures that safeguard and promote gender equality as well as raise public awareness and socialize attitudes in support of such equality.

2. UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT OF ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Much goes into understanding the context for engaging government. Factors include: the larger institutional environment, the political dynamics of how specific government entities perform, informal governance structures, agendas and entry points, the public and their organizations, and how all groups interact with each other. Looking at the big picture and dynamics is critical to identifying root causes and drivers of poverty, inequality, injustice and violence and the creative approaches for addressing them through engaging government. Context analysis helps program teams select strategies and tactics that are more politically feasible, and have the greatest chance of creating social change at scale.¹⁸

Carrying out an effective context analysis requires resources, time and expertise in governance and capacity strengthening. It also requires some proficiency in designing and conducting assessments. Context analysis improves program quality; enables us to better manage risk; and uncovers potential entry points, leverage points and windows of opportunity.

This chapter makes context analysis more accessible by providing:

- The basic context analysis process;
- Major context analysis considerations specific to engaging government;
- Levels of context analysis and specific tools and guidance for an integrated analysis;
- A program decision matrix that helps teams use the context analysis findings and choose specific programming pathways discussed in the [Public Policy](#), [Optimal Institutional Performance](#), and [Civic Participation](#) chapters.

2.1. THE BASIC CONTEXT ANALYSIS PROCESS

Context analysis is a process. Because contexts are dynamic by nature, actors and their priorities change, power relationships shift based on the political moment, and opportunities appear and disappear. Similarly, governance processes are neither linear nor static, and CRS and partners will be well served if they embrace this reality. Country programs should plan to undertake an initial context analysis and, following a project award, carry out periodic updates.

The phases of a context analysis process include:¹⁹

1. Mapping contextual factors such as the government regime type; political trends; the enabling environment (e.g., consensus, rule of law, inclusion); and governance structures (e.g., parliament, the judiciary, local government units, traditional councils) and their capacity.
2. Identifying institutional actors and other key stakeholders related to the opportunity.
3. Comparing implementation options to reach a desired social change.
4. Choosing a program approach to effect the desired social change.
5. Measuring the various capacities of the institutional actors and key stakeholders.
6. Following the award, regularly updating the contextual analysis as part of MEAL.

[Section 2.2](#) provides guidance on phases 1–3, and [Section 2.3](#) discusses specific levels of analysis and tools. [Section 2.4](#) covers phases 4–6.

¹⁸ *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations*. ODI. 2006.

¹⁹ Adapted from USAID DG Assessment phases and ODI paper and summarized in CRS' Basic Guide.

Rapid or rigorous analysis?

It depends. Some country programs have invested private funding to undertake a fairly rigorous contextual analysis—for example, CRS used a final report to attract and influence donors, especially around youth and peacebuilding program areas. The product enabled the country program to gain access to and influence with donors, while the assessment process built relationships with key government and nonstate actors, and a local team with survey expertise for future analytical exercises.

In other instances, a rapid assessment may be adequate for the design process, with a more in-depth assessment planned following the award. Many country programs already follow this process with gender analysis, such as for a Food for Peace (FFP) Development Food Security Activity (DFSA), so there is opportunity for integrated assessments discussed later in this chapter. Much will depend on donor requirements; if CRS and partners feel that a donor-prescribed approach is limiting, there may be ways to supplement and enhance it with CRS contextual analysis tools.

Participatory and rapid rural appraisals (P/RRA) are familiar to many country teams and partners and CRS' guidance on conducting them is applicable for engaging government. Both approaches facilitate local people to play a greater and more active role in information gathering and analysis process, either by being more central participants in appraisals or by leading them. Such approaches reinforce engaging government principles, generate authentic information for policy making, and are a learning-from-doing way to strengthen government capacity and model civic engagement.

2.2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

A political economy lens (see box)²⁰ is useful for an initial contextual analysis. There are three basic questions:

- What *capacity* is there to build on?
- What is the *need* and *opportunity* for change?
- What are the *options* for analysis to inform program action?

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

CRS' approach to contextual analysis uses a political economy approach. It looks at factors affecting how power and resources are accessed and distributed, and the effect these arrangements have on programming. The guidance offered here is sufficient for most CRS and partner teams, although some may want to do a full political economy analysis (PEA), using tools referenced in the chapter.

2.2.1 CAPACITY TO BUILD ON

Countries have different regime types²¹ and varying capabilities to deliver the public goods first introduced in [Chapter 1](#). Even so, CRS believes that there is always some capacity to strengthen. This capacity includes the KSAs of individuals and teams responsible for governing, as well as formal and informal systems and structures. In some states, such as Brazil and Vietnam, there is some level of stability, capacity and legitimacy. Other states may lack one or all of these and have less to build on, such as Afghanistan and the Central African Republic.

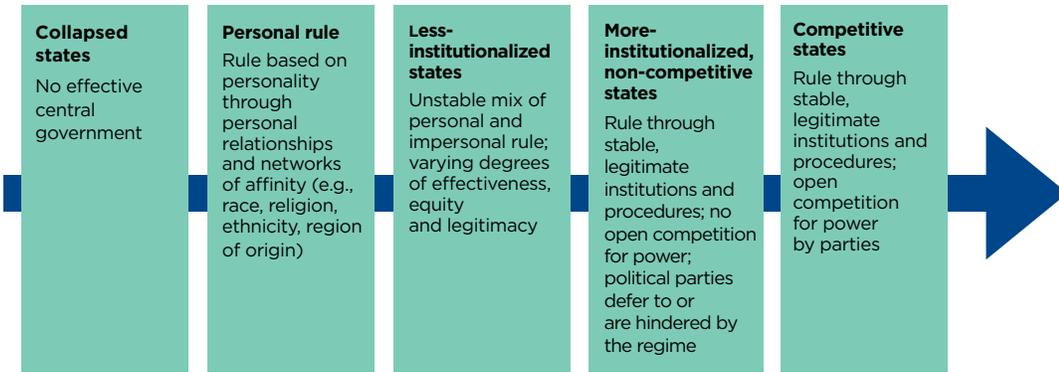
²⁰ DFID. *Making Governance Work for the Poor*.

²¹ Different forms of government can exist across the continuum of state strength and capacities, including democracies, monarchies, theocracies, authoritarian states or those under military rule.

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Use the state strength and capacities continuum²² in Figure 4 as a starting point to identify a country's current context and begin considering what program approaches may be more or less effective. Is the country's context fully within one of these categories or somewhere in between?

Figure 4: Continuum of state strength and capacities



FRAGILE OR COLLAPSED STATES

Every country is unique, even those designated as fragile states. For those in an active violent conflict, the public sector may lack legitimacy or may have already collapsed. In that context, the most effective programs are those delivering public goods through civil society or the private sector. In other fragile states, some governance systems and structures (formal or informal) may still be in place. CRS should be careful not to avoid or undermine existing systems and structures, instead helping them to become more effective, accountable and transparent.

2.2.2 NEED AND OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

A broad assessment of government strength and capacities gives CRS and partners a realistic picture of the current state. Teams also know—through program experience or funding opportunity—various governance needs related to delivery of public goods, such as security, resource management or economic access. The next phase of context analysis compares governance needs with the possibilities for change in that context to envision an improved state.

Use the following questions to focus on which actors and factors are supportive of or opposed to a desired social change:

- Which social, political, economic and institutional factors are conducive to social change? Which factors are likely to inhibit it?
- Which key institutional actors support social change? Which oppose it?
- What are their various incentives to support or oppose social change?
- What are the incentives that might motivate them to shift their positions?
- What are their respective roles, power, resources, alliances and agendas?
- What are the roles, power, resources, alliances and agendas of *external* actors?
- What are the expected social benefits of the targeted social change?

²² Adapted from DFID. *Making Governance work for the poor*. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/272330/6876.pdf

Principles in Action: Context Analysis in a Changing Context: South Sudan

In 2011, CRS South Sudan designed a multi-year assistance program in Jonglei, using a rigorous contextual analysis to integrate peacebuilding, governance and gender into agricultural livelihoods, nutrition and DRR program components. Upon award, the donor told CRS to take out the integrated activities, because it did not believe they contributed to food security. Yet soon after project startup, violent conflict erupted in Jonglei, adversely affecting thousands of Southern Sudanese and disrupting project implementation. The donor requested that CRS put some, but not all, of the removed components back in. The donor's decision reaffirmed CRS' integrated approach, based on a strong contextual analysis, to safeguard development investments.



Exactly how social change happens when it involves policy or governance reform is an ongoing challenge for CRS, partners and the international development field as a whole.²⁴ The [Policy](#) chapter offers guidance on how to navigate this process.

Contextual analysis helps program teams move from a broadly identified need to a more concrete vision of what is needed to achieve a desired social change. It also provides empirical evidence for developing a theory or theories of change to guide program activities. Even a rapid assessment can indicate the next level(s) of analysis needed (macro, sector and/or issue-specific). Any assessment can be adapted for specific contexts (e.g., humanitarian response, conflict) and certain social analysis (e.g., gender and youth considerations). See [tools](#) in the next section.

Theories of change that inform CRS' engaging government approach are noted throughout this guide. See the [MEAL](#) chapter for more information about developing theories of change for new programs and other work with government partners or toward good governance goals.

OPTIONS FOR ANALYSIS TO INFORM PROGRAM ACTION

Understanding governance actors' capacities, needs and opportunities for change reveals potential interventions and practical considerations for choosing among the three [programming pathways](#): Policy, Optimal Institutional Performance or Civic Participation.

*Rank and compare the level of ease or difficulty for each specific intervention option.*²³

- What is the level of acceptance among key decision makers of this social change?
- What is the nature and degree of complexity of the desired social change?
- Does achieving it require coordination across diverse geographies and/or consensus among numerous key stakeholders? What roles would CRS and partners play?
- What is the degree of behavioral change required? Is this about improving policy implementation or will it require significant public support and/or political will?
- What is the time horizon for achieving this change? Months or potentially years? What are the potential shocks (e.g., elections) during this time that may prevent achieving it?
- What are the risks and costs associated with this change for individual and institutional actors? For society overall?²⁴



Archbishop Paulino casts his ballot in Juba, now South Sudan. Sara Fajardo/CRS.

²³ DFID. *Making Governance work for the poor.*

²⁴ *Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective* ODI/RAPID Programme; Court, Julius; Mendizabal, Enrique; Osborne, David; and Young, David.

2.3. LEVELS OF CONTEXT ANALYSIS, WHO TO INVOLVE, AND TOOLS FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

The three basic questions of a PEA—capacity to build on, needs and opportunities for change and options for analysis to inform program action—can be conducted at different levels to accomplish phases 1–3 of the context analysis process. *Who* is involved is equally important. A context analysis should involve CRS staff, partners and country and/or subject matter experts.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

There are three levels of context analysis for engaging government: macro, sector- and problem or issue-specific. Each has a separate function and purpose, and they are connected.²⁵ CRS and partners can choose whether to focus on all three or on only one or two levels.

Macro-level analysis focuses on the broad environment influencing governance, including international factors; the country’s regime and government institutional capacity; political trends; characteristics of rule of law; and dynamics among the state, customary and traditional governing structures, civil society and the private sector. Macro-level analysis examines how governance issues are affected by a humanitarian emergency; active or recent conflict; political transition; or other major and evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics.

A thorough macro-level analysis will take two to three weeks, though a country program may decide to limit it to a two or three-day reflection with partners, government officials, civil society leaders and other key stakeholders. For the former, CRS will undertake the analysis as part of the proposal development process for governance and peacebuilding projects. If a public donor has already done a macro-level analysis (e.g., a USAID Democracy and Governance Assessment), the agency may only need to supplement it with CRS-specific learning questions.

Purposes:

- Better understanding of the larger dynamics in which CRS and partners work; important for all country programs, regardless of their portfolio or a given growth opportunity.
- Strategic planning for regions or country programs dealing with complex challenges such as cyclical shocks that cross borders or involve multiple programs (e.g., drought, epidemics or conflict).
- Proposal design, including program area and partner selection.

Sector-level analysis considers sectors such as agriculture, health or peacebuilding to understand the drivers and constraints within each, and how these drivers/constraints relate to other sectors. A sector-level analysis includes mapping actors in the sector and those in related sectors, power relations and decision-making processes, and formal and informal rules and norms that govern the sector(s). For example, in analyzing a country’s agriculture sector, it will be important to look at the following:

- What is the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture at the central through local levels? How do those different levels interact with each other?
- What is the structure of the Ministry’s relationship on core functions such as budgeting, planning, personnel and program management?
- How and how well does the Ministry interact with external actors such as farmer associations, businesses and trade associations and foreign direct investors?
- What are the dynamics of power between this Ministry and other

Note that the three levels of context analysis apply in a wide variety of situations, including working in a conflict or a humanitarian emergency. See [Section 2.4](#) for these and other specific considerations.

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²⁵ DFID. *Political Economy Analysis How to Note*. July 2009

Ministries, e.g., political alignment, prioritization, and competing mandates? Does the Ministry need to cultivate champions among other ministries to have the right influence?

- What explicit policies or implicit norms address the different roles of women and men in agriculture? How does that vary for subsistence versus commercial agriculture?
- How has the Ministry or others in government addressed issues of insecure propriety rights for smallholder farmers? Is there a conflict resolution structure in place to resolve land disputes?

Sector-level context analysis can take several days or longer, depending on need, and usually involves senior/regional technical advisors, heads of programs (HOPs), CRS program staff and partners in country, and (preferably in-country) external technical experts.

Purposes:

- Identifying new program opportunities, determine what kinds of changes are politically feasible and which are likely to get the most impact.²⁶
- Assisting government with the information needed to design a new policy, to deliver a new program, or to implement and improve existing policies.
- Partner mapping and selection, to understand who is in the sector(s), their strengths, relationships, access and power.

Problem/issue-specific level analysis starts with particular concerns within a sector (e.g., access to medicines for people living with HIV) or context (e.g., rural communities' resilience to recurring drought/flooding cycles). Context analysis should include the history of factors that have limited progress on addressing the issue and/or that have made it more urgent now.

Purposes:

- Adapting current programs to newly identified or newly acute problems.
- Requesting funding from donors or using CRS funds to expand program activities.
- Designing CRS learning agendas at the program, country or sector levels, or as part of learning partnerships with other agencies.

BEST TOOLS FOR THE JOB?

Using multiple analysis tools can be necessary yet time consuming. CRS and partners should consider carefully whether a full analysis at one or more levels is needed, or determine which is the priority and then integrate the most relevant elements of analysis at other levels. Adapting tools is nearly always necessary, but finding the right one as the foundation can save time and integrating pieces of others can make analysis more complete.

WHO TO LEAD AND INCLUDE IN CONTEXT ANALYSIS

There are many stakeholders who can provide different perspectives useful for any level of context analysis that informs engaging government approaches: CRS staff and partners, other CSO/NGO groups, government officials, traditional/informal leaders, Church officials, media representatives, private sector associations, donors or other groups. Direct interaction with affected people and communities is also critical both in the spirit of subsidiarity and for improving [social cohesion](#).

As part of CRS' commitment to transparency and accountability, analysis teams should establish from the outset expectations for what information will be shared with those providing input, and the process for doing so. See [Section 2.2](#) for guidance about communicating context analysis with donors and partners. The required level(s) of analysis and time available will determine the range of

²⁶ Contextual Analysis Toolkit, p. 3 CRS 2004. Also see "An Analytical Framework for Understanding the Political Economy of Sectors and Policy Arenas." Joy Moncrieffe and Cecilia Luttrell. ODI 2005.

Where You Stand Depends on Where You Sit:

Identifying the stakeholders who need to be included, consulted or informed is even more important for any analysis looking at government institutions and actors. Government actors, both elected and appointed, have their own biases, which are influenced by their political interests, which are in turn influenced by their particular responsibilities as well as the mandate and obligations of their institution.

people to include. To be less subjective, context analysis teams must carefully consider the balance of disciplines represented by the team's members and diversity of perspectives solicited from stakeholders.

Principles in Action: Role of Church Partners in Context Analysis (Central African Republic and Nigeria)

During a time of sectarian violence in the Central African Republic, CRS assessed social cohesion readiness and entry points in the enclave of Boda. Most CRS staff were from the capital Bangui and Christian, so CRS held separate focus group discussions with staff from Caritas, many of whom were Muslim and originally from Boda. Church partners frequently share the same identity as and an affinity with intended beneficiaries; they play a vital role in context analysis and implementation.

And in Nigeria, starting in 2005 the national Catholic Secretariat established a think tank composed of mostly lay volunteers with interest and expertise in one of five thematic areas (e.g., extractives, education and economic justice). The volunteers formed subcommittees for each of these areas and analyzed the context and formulated recommendations for action. The extractives committee used the results of its analysis to issue a significant report, which it then used to increase the Church's influence through policy advocacy.



A general approach to selecting and engaging informants is to map the perspectives relevant to the context or problem:

- Prioritize individual conversations with people who have information about the context.
- Conduct individual or small group interviews with key stakeholders such as decision makers, civil society, media leaders and others who influence public opinion.
- Conduct informal group interviews, focus groups or surveys to solicit input from important segments of society. Informants should always include underrepresented or vulnerable groups most relevant to the context such as women for land rights, youth for education policy or persons with disabilities for social protection programs.

Context analysis processes can also help establish and build relationships with potential partners or influence key stakeholders. Consider ways to structure information-gathering to minimize CRS bias when deciding the following: where and when to hold meetings, the level of formality with which they are conducted, how to communicate the purpose and how to follow up.

Who conducts a context analysis and how teams are structured again depends on the needs and resources available. CRS and partners can accomplish various parts of context analysis by:

- Sequencing tasks;
- Having teams with different expertise lead separate activities simultaneously;
- Designing a fully integrated approach to be jointly conducted by a team with complementary perspectives, skills, and access (see also Chapter 7 on [Competencies](#)).

Contextual analyses that are developed with multiple partners require clear leadership, scope and communication. They can also have multiple benefits, including:

- Greater diversity of human and institutional resources;
- A more logical division of labor among partner organizations;
- A more comprehensive picture of what needs to be accomplished;
- Identification of potential entry and leverage points;
- Insights into how different program pathways and levels of intervention intersect;
- Greater opportunities for partner capacity strengthening.

²⁷ Details of how CRS facilitated this process are captured in the 2016 Policy Brief, "Using Scientific Evidence to Link Private and Public Sectors in the Planning Process: Observations from coffee-sector engagement in Marino, Colombia." See also [Chapter 3](#).

Principles in Action: Applying context analysis in planning processes with public-private partnerships (Colombia)

CRS Colombia introduced the results of its Borderland project context analysis in a participatory planning process, which aligned the interests of government agencies, businesses and civil society groups to support increasing competitiveness in the coffee sector. The resulting strategy informed a new policy in which the government allocated scarce public resources in a market-responsive way to reduce poverty in ways recommended by the context analysis and other research.



Tools and Resources

The following list of tools includes those developed by CRS and partners or recommended by CRS country programs and technical experts. It is representative, but not exhaustive; analysis teams should adapt approaches to their particular needs, opportunities and circumstances.

- [Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners](#) is an important starting place, especially for macro-level (political-economic) analysis. It includes key questions for analysis teams working across these integrated areas, based on CRS contexts and recent technical requests.
- CRS' [A Sample Gender Analysis](#) is a condensed version of a full gender analysis of a food security program in Ethiopia. It can serve as a template for other projects conducting their own gender analyses. CRS has also developed a [Gender Analysis Toolkit](#) that provides guidance on conducting a gender analysis as part of program design. This toolkit is available for use by CRS programmers.
- CRS' LACRO Sector Influence Plan Guidance (publication expected 2019). is the Latin America and Caribbean region's guidance for country programs to contextualize and operationalize influence agendas with the goal of catalyzing change at the level of systems and structures. Sector strategies and action plans look at programming as a whole, rather than as individual projects, to find pathways for influence.

Additional Governance Sector-Specific Context Analysis Tools

- USAID: Analytical frameworks and assessment methodologies, including the [Democracy and Governance sector assessment tool](#), which informed CRS' Basic Guide.
- USAID: Several sector-specific guides and issue-specific handbooks for corruption, decentralization and other topics can be found on the [USAID website](#).
- UN Development Program (UNDP): The [Users Guide to Measuring Local Governance](#) helps practitioners choose among tools and methods to do local level context analysis.
- Overseas Development Institute (ODI): Multiple tools including [An Analytical Framework for Understanding the Political Economy of Sectors and Policy Arenas](#).

2.4. CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND POPULATIONS

Adding to the basic political economy analysis approach, which addresses the macro level outlined in [Section 2.2](#), it is often important to integrate analysis perspectives specific to conflict and humanitarian response. CRS is also committed to analyses that fully integrate gender, youth and protection. In addition to highlighting gendered needs and challenges, a gender analysis can reveal ways in which women, a traditionally under-represented group in public participation and governance, can contribute significantly to governance and peacebuilding processes. CRS' [SCOPE program](#) in Senegal is an example.

Humanitarian Response Context Analysis



Context analysis of any kind is challenging in rapid onset emergencies and other humanitarian responses. Governance strengths and limitations are particularly evident in emergencies around issues of leadership and coordination, quality of data for decision-making, and targeting and access. In countries or regions where CRS and partners can anticipate likely emergencies—such as areas prone to cyclical hurricanes or earthquakes—understanding government roles and related capacity is critical for macro-level context analysis.

An analysis provides a baseline that can be updated for more rapid planning and response. If time is short and the situation fluid, start with quick and easy approaches and tools, and improve on them as needed over time, using some of the approaches suggested in this chapter.

Tools and Resources

- CRS: The [ProPack 1](#) guidance on “What is different in an emergency response?” is applicable for context analysis. 
- Emergency Capacity Building (ECB): CRS participated in the analysis of the Sphere standards and creation of [The Good Enough Guide](#), with tools for context analysis in humanitarian response, including working with the public sector. 
- CRS: [Humanitarian Response in Violent Conflict Settings](#), which is adapted from the Sphere standards and includes guidance for further conflict sensitization of analyses. 
- The [HRD Emergency Capacity Assessment Form](#) is used to assess country program readiness for emergency response and includes questions on potential partners and logistics capacities in country.
- Transparency International: Section 1 of the [Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations Handbook](#) describes how to assess corruption in humanitarian contexts.

Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity

To engage government effectively, a conflict analysis needs to be undertaken so teams understand how conflict dynamics affect and are affected by program interventions. Teams can then work to minimize any negative impacts they might cause and maximize their benefits. This is the basis of the [Do No Harm](#) commitment and methodology. This conflict-sensitive approach helps to avoid exacerbating grievances that might lead to violence, and instead to contribute to building healthier relationships. Regular updates of an initial analysis are critical to trace how the conflict evolves, and to identify new or changing opportunities, power dynamics, risks or threats. Conflict factors can often be integrated into macro-, sector- or issue-specific analysis.

Tools and Resources

In addition to [CRS' Basic Guide](#), relevant tools include:

- [Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines & Procedures](#) applies the Do No Harm concept familiar to many CRS and partner staff, showing how conditions can either bring people together (“Connectors”) or drive them apart (“Dividers”). 

Gender-based Context Analysis

CRS' [Basic Guide](#) notes that gender should be incorporated into all context analyses, including for engaging government, and is relevant at macro-, sector- and issue-specific levels. Factors include:

- The structural nature of gender inequality with government institutions and policies;
- The gendered dynamics of informal and formal governance processes and norms;
- The contextual considerations that influence how program options might affect men, women, boys and girls differently.

Tools and Resources

- CRS [Pro Pack I](#) revised (checklist) 
- [Gender-based Analysis: A Guide for Policy Making](#)

To align with CRS' positive youth development approach, it is essential to include youth in the youth context analysis, not only as key informants or focus group participants but as members of the analysis team.

Youth Context Analysis

Similar to gender analysis, there are dimensions of poverty, violence and injustice that differently affect young people. CRS and partners should include youth concerns in macro-level analyses and consider:

- Education and labor market opportunities for young people;
- Youth involvement in violent conflict and their history of civic participation;
- Youth inclusion (economic, social and political) and youth leadership;
- Inter-generational perceptions.

At sector- and issue-specific levels, there are questions of youth access and control, decision-making, power and participation. It is critical to segment youth as needs, practices and priorities change along lines of race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender and place of origin.

Tools and Resources

- USAID's [Guide to Cross Sectoral Youth Assessments](#) provides a conceptual framework, instruments, and tools for designing and implementing youth assessments, including democracy and governance indicators.
- [Partners for Change: Young People and Governance in a Post-2015 World](#) explores young people's participatory governance across different areas, including education, anti-corruption, local decision-making on young people's issues and environmental awareness.
- DFID's [Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers](#) offers strategies for working with youth at a practical operational level and serves as a foundation for youth mainstreaming.

Protection Context Analysis

The Basic Guide's protection chapter includes guidance on two approaches: basic and nuanced. For engaging government, country programs should use the latter, which requires protection-focused actions *as part of* the assessment process. These resources are regularly updated.

Protection-related tools, best practices and guidance on how to promote and roll-out a protection policy to partners, including government departments or government-sponsored programs, can be found on [CRS Global](#), in addition to a compendium of research measures, indicators and guidance on protection-related issues.

Tools and Resources

- CRS: [Protection Resources](#) 
- CRS: [Trafficking in Persons Resources](#) 
- Save the Children: [Child Safeguarding Standards and How to Implement Them](#)
- Global Protection Cluster: video on the [Elements of Protection Mainstreaming](#)
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center: [Resource library](#)

2.5. MAKING SENSE OF CONTEXT ANALYSIS FINDINGS FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Now, what to do with all the context analysis information gathered? The Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix²⁸ (Figure 5) is a tool for transforming context analysis findings into programming options.

Figure 5: Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix

		Programming Pathways		
		Public Policy	Civic Participation	Optimal Institutional Performance
Public Goods	Peace and security			
	Justice and rule of law			
	Human and civil rights			
	Services and resource management			
	Economic access and opportunity			

CREATING OPTIONS: PUBLIC GOODS AND PROGRAM PATHWAYS

Designed by CRS,²⁹ the Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix helps teams formulate options to achieve a desired social change. It can also help teams use context analysis to articulate the rationale for such options by considering the relationships among various public goods and programming pathways. Other uses (e.g., for different phases of the project cycle or strategic planning) are discussed in this chapter.

The y-axis of the matrix lists public goods supplied by governance actors (to include government, CSOs, and other nonstate entities), and the x-axis presents the programming pathways taken by CRS to improve delivery of those public goods.

Identifying Public Goods

Context analysis findings help identify which public goods can and should be improved and how they are interconnected. It thus informs both individual program design as well as issues to be addressed at the country program level

²⁸ Adapted from Rotberg publications, see [Annex 1](#).

²⁹ CRS Engaging Government Writeshop. Baltimore, MD: November 2015.

for a more coordinated, strategic effort to achieve a desired social change. For example, context analysis may show there is sufficient access to justice in peaceful locales but not in insecure ones. This finding reveals an opportunity to address the public goods of peace and security and justice and the rule of law. Similarly, limited access to land titles may be depressing investment in agriculture and driving rapid urbanization, especially by unemployed young people. This finding indicates the need to jointly address public goods of service delivery and resource management, and economic access and opportunity.

Identifying Program Pathways

After identifying which public goods to target, CRS and partners can use context analysis to consider how best to influence social change through the program pathways, which are the subject of the next three chapters in this guide. In the above examples, strengthening institutional performance of the judiciary at the subnational level could be a pathway to improve access to justice and thus public trust, which helps prevent violence. Similarly, targeted policies and implementation procedures could be a pathway to better land management, improving youth economic opportunities in rural communities.

In both examples, social change might also be achieved through the civic participation pathway, bringing together government, civil society and/or private sector groups in a joint effort. Or multiple pathways can be combined and sequenced. Civic participation can facilitate input into new policy design and optimizing institutional performance can strengthen government actors' capacity to implement it. CRS and partners should identify several options and, using the context analysis, select the most technically sound and politically feasible option or options.

Choosing program pathways for engaging government is a lot like making a Bibingka, a Filipino rice cake:

“It is cooked with coal embers placed on top and at the bottom. A perfect bibingka is the outcome of adequate and appropriate mobilization of political will (legislation, policies) from the top and a continuing bottom-up mobilization of collective groups working together toward common goals.”

Rosario-Braid, Florangel. The Lessons of the Philippine Peace Process

WAYS TO USE THE ENGAGING GOVERNMENT PLANNING AND PROGRAM DECISION MATRIX

Whether for strategic planning, or developing a new or existing program, the Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix has many applications, including:

Planning and design: Locating opportunities for new programming and selecting options.

Helps with:

- Developing options for individual programs and sequencing of activities;
- Aligning country program's or partner's overall portfolio to achieve social change at a larger scale through reinforcing objectives and activities;
- Coordination with non-CRS/partner work to avoid duplication and instead harmonize efforts at achieving a desired social change.

Implementation: Understanding how programs are most effective when a context analysis is periodically updated.

Helps with:

- Coordinating activities and building partnerships to advance shared interests;
- Adapting program activities to take advantage of windows of opportunity to achieve desired social change or manage risk;
- Planning ahead for the next phase of programming and identifying what it might need or could include.

MEAL: Identifying how working toward a desired change can be measured and evaluated, be accountable, and contribute to learning based on context analysis.

Helps with:

- Informing theories of change, indicators, and analysis approaches for M&E;
- Highlighting ways program reporting can be accountable by including community members and sharing the results with them (and others);
- Exploring how engaging government contributes to program impact in learning agendas at the country, regional or sector (global) level.

CRS AND PARTNERS ARE PART OF THE CONTEXT

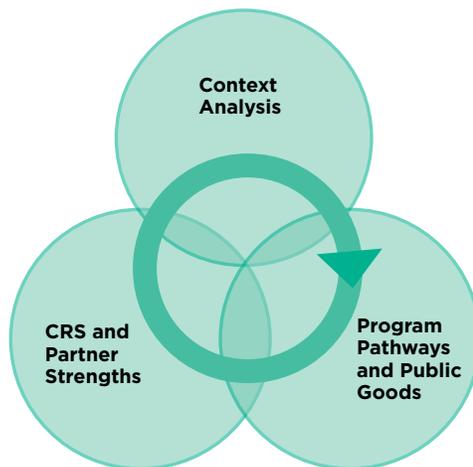
An important, yet often forgotten factor of context analysis is how CRS and partners are part of the context; they both affect and are affected by the context in their efforts to engage government. The following questions should inform program decision-making.³⁰

- How does this approach reflect CRS' mission, IHD, agency strategy? Each partner's mission and strategy?
- What is the focus of the country program and partners? Does this approach fit?
- What are the strengths, capacities and key relationships of the team(s)? What limitations and potential risks do they face?
- How do important stakeholders and decision makers perceive the approach(es) as relevant or even critical to achieving the desired social change(s)?
- Do the country program and existing partners have the right relationships to achieve the desired social change(s)? If not, can the relationships be strengthened to do so?

Using contextual analysis as a starting point, this kind of reflection can help teams identify programming pathway options and generate viable approach(es) for engaging government.

Including CRS and partners in the context analysis can highlight internal capacity gaps so programs can be designed appropriately and include targeted capacity strengthening. See Chapter 7: Staff and Partner Competencies for more about the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to effectively engage government. Many of the tools in Chapters 3-5 include more guidance on context analysis specific to public policy, optimal institutional performance and civic participation.

Figure 6: Moving from Context Analysis into Decisions for Planning



The next three chapters focus on the three programming pathways—[Policy](#), [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) and [Civic Participation](#)—each of which includes illustrative activities, tools and resources, gender and youth considerations, examples in CRS work, MEAL considerations, and CRS staff competencies.

³⁰ Adapted from methodology in The Do No Harm Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance in Conflict: A Handbook. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/the-do-no-harm-framework-for-analyzing-the-impact-of-assistance-on-conflict-a-handbook/>

3. POLICY LEVEL APPROACHES FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

This chapter draws on CRS' and partners' experience in working directly at the policy level. It defines public policy, introduces the policy cycle, and considers the potential opportunities and approaches for generating social change at each step of the policy cycle while providing some CRS examples and tools.

DEFINITION OF PUBLIC POLICY

There are many definitions of public policy, but most share the following key attributes:³¹

- Policy can take the form of laws or regulations that respond to a particular social issue, placing it in the systems and structures area of CRS' IHD Framework.
- The goal of public policy is to contribute to social change and the common good.
- Ultimately only government holds the formal legal authority to approve and implement policy or enact and enforce laws.
- Throughout the policy cycle, religious communities, civil society groups, private businesses and other non-governmental actors have many opportunities to influence policy by advancing recommendations that can improve social inclusion and reduce inequities.
- While it remains a best practice to generate and use evidence in the policy process, policymaking is at its core a political process; decisions about who benefits (and how much) and who bears the costs (and how much) are continually revisited, reassessed and revised.
- Policy can target one or multiple sectors, it can be designed and implemented by a single branch or multiple branches of government, and it can involve action at the national and/or sub-national level.

CRS' experience in Bosnia Herzegovina (see box) is an example of how the agency's signature program areas can be used as an entry point to engage government, integrate good governance and capacity strengthening, and achieve social change at scale, even in a post-emergency setting.

Principles in Action: Policy set nationally, implemented locally (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

CRS Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) provided technical support to the state-level Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), using Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) resources to design and implement a new readmission strategy for refugees across the country. The strategy responded to Germany's and other European Union countries' increased rate of denial of asylum requests originating in the Balkans to free up space in their system to accommodate the new arrivals from Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.



In August 2013, MHRR asked CRS BiH to participate in the second phase of the SDC readmission process, which introduced a social housing component. The request was based on CRS BiH experience producing more than half of the 500 social housing units built by that time. As the proposal developed, SDC further engaged CRS BiH to assume responsibilities for financial and administrative support to local government.

CRS BiH used this entry point to influence the broader, national readmission process. CRS BiH's realized that its strong track record of getting national- and subnational-level officials to collaborate with each other could help it increase momentum on readmissions. By engaging the national government over the longer term, CRS BiH's role evolved from providing financial and administrative support to advising multiple levels of the BiH government on key components of the strategy process.

Public policy is viewed and most often taught as being a highly technical, even scientific exercise, based in social science. In reality, it is, at its foundation, political. At its best, government and other actors seek to balance their individual political interests with those of their respective institutions, all within the relevant legal framework, to produce outcomes that contribute to the common good. More commonly, the public policy process is influenced by individual flaws and institutional shortcomings, which combine to produce highly political contestation and even conflict over questions of access to power and public resources.



In 2009, CRS has built social housing in the Municipality of Fojnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the settlement for return and accommodation of elderly, coming from collective centers. Sam Tarling for CRS

³¹ Adapted from Project Citizen: <http://www.civiced.org/pc-program/instructional-component/public-policy>.

CRS BiH leveraged its programming experiences and capacities to influence government policy in the housing sector. The entry point was shelter in the emergency recovery and reconstruction context, not governance. Still, CRS used its strong track record in shelter to develop its competence in governance, which the national government and donor both recognized.

While shelter or housing would normally be considered a development sector, funding for it is usually only available in the aftermath of an emergency. While CRS' shelter expertise is housed in its Humanitarian Response Department, this expertise can be used to lay the foundation for future influence with national governments seeking to strengthen local counterparts in housing administration.

CRS Theory of Change for Policy Approaches in Engaging Government

IF civil society and the private sector mobilize their constituents to produce and support policy recommendations; AND

IF they use these recommendations to influence key decision makers during the various stages of the policy cycle; AND

IF government institutions are transparent, accountable, and responsive to such demands;

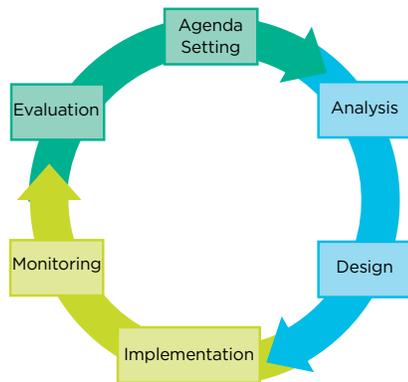
THEN public policy has the potential to produce good governance outcomes and contribute to social change.

WHY PUBLIC POLICY?

Everywhere that CRS and partners work, public policy touches people's lives. Working on the policy level is a proven approach for CRS to reach scale in its signature program areas. Making policy effective for diverse communities and vulnerable people is also an important part of advancing social justice and achieving IHD. For more than 50 years, CRS and partners have helped governments design and implement policies to improve governance by increasing the access, equity and quality of basic public goods and services.

3.1. THE POLICY CYCLE, INFLUENCING POLICY, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Figure 7. The Six Steps of the Policy Cycle



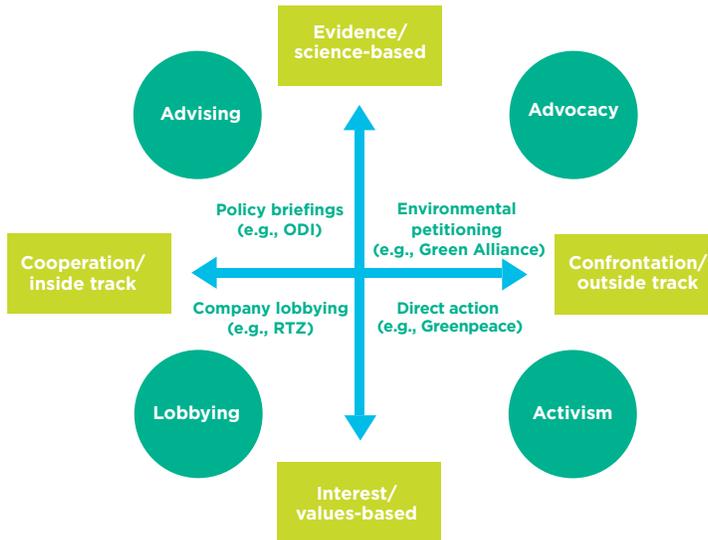
Each step of the policy cycle involves political debate and power struggle among different, sometimes conflicting interests. It is necessary to be aware of these power dynamics while seeking to influence policy making. For more on understanding power dynamics related to public policy work in your context, see Section 1.5.³²

The policy cycle (Figure 7) is the set of legal requirements and administrative processes and procedures by which a government formulates and implements solutions to address social issues. It is also a highly political contest for power and scarce public resources.

³² ODI - <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4919.pdf>

A tension among the legal, technical and political requirements runs throughout the cycle and presents many challenges as well as opportunities. CRS and its (Church and civil society) partners' motivation to influence public policy is to achieve social change. Figure 8 illustrates four key types of policy-influencing approaches and their relationships, including support for policy formulation. The chapter sections that follow are named for each step in the policy cycle (Figure 7) and include the four types of policy influencing approaches (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Types of Policy-Influencing Approaches



An effective strategy combines multiple approaches. A program might begin by mobilizing citizen activism and channeling it through a national-level advocacy campaign (the “outside track,” top right corner of Figure 8). The leverage created could then help increase the political acceptability of demands made when lobbying key decision makers and/or advising policymakers (the “inside track,” bottom left corner of Figure 8).

Principles in Action: Using a Bottom-Up, Outside Activism Influencing Approach in Jerusalem West Bank Gaza

The CRS Civic Participation Program addressed the deteriorating relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the citizens it governed. CRS awarded more than 160 grants to strengthen the capacity of more than 75 Palestinian CSOs to increase civic participation on issues of concern to citizens. By facilitating public dialogue on those issues, and mobilizing greater citizen action and building coalitions around them, Palestinian CSOs advocated to the Palestinian Authority for more inclusive decision-making in its public policy cycle. Initial efforts were focused at the municipal level, and effective models scaled up to the national level.

The four types of policy-influencing approaches in Figure 8 are discussed throughout this chapter:

1. Advising includes providing evidence-based recommendations to influence government actors so that they create or change public policy. For CRS programming, it also involves strengthening the capacity of government agencies to improve the effectiveness of public policy (see [Chapter 4: Optimal Institutional Performance](#)).
2. Lobbying entails efforts to influence government actors to change/reform public policy or to demonstrate support of policy being considered. CRS never lobbies host country governments overseas; instead, it strengthens

its partners' capacity to do so. Lobbying is more effective when it combines evidence with [political economy analysis](#) to form the “ask,” the request for action made of key decision makers.

3. Activism mobilizes civil society, media, citizens and public opinion for targeted social change through collective action and social movements. [Chapter 5: Civic Participation](#) includes approaches and tools for grassroots and higher-level activism.
4. Advocacy involves presenting reports, public testimony and statements on behalf of an organization or movement. It challenges the power structure and demands that decision makers adopt a specific policy change. Such initiatives seek to transform disputes over policy into constructive solutions that contribute to the common good.

Who is leading each approach and how they coordinate with each other is important. Based on the context analysis, CRS and partners should choose an approach that complements those taken by others (such as local movements or other donor-funded programs); generally a strategy that combines multiple approaches is more likely to succeed. In addition, steady attention to the political context should inform how CRS and partners make the necessary adaptations to their strategy so that they achieve their policy objectives.

IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP FOR POLICY-LEVEL APPROACHES

Policy-level work nearly always involves partnership, since CRS, as an international NGO, does not get directly involved in a political process such as policymaking while overseas. This chapter discusses partnership with government actors at various levels on policy development. Such working relationships are important ways to apply CRS' partnership principles, such as trust, respect, and transparency. Partners can also raise public awareness or influence public opinion. For example, their civic education and media communications activities are crucial for influencing public policy, especially when using activism and advocacy approaches.

3.2 POLICY CYCLE: AGENDA SETTING

Setting policy agendas is at the heart of influencing governance; it is also a constant process, as key actors and power dynamics often change. CRS and the national Caritas/Justice and Peace Commissions (JPCs) should elevate onto the policy agenda those social issues that respond to the needs of the poor and most vulnerable.

Setting policy agendas includes four main steps:

1. Identify the current agenda and its origins
2. Assess the current policy environment
3. Determine key actors' level of political will
4. Develop an “ask”

STEP 1: Identifying the current agenda and its origins can and should also be done throughout the other policy cycle steps discussed in this chapter. A policy agenda is a vision, a set of ideas that guides government decisions on which social issues to address in its public policies and programs. These issues receive higher levels of government attention and resources. How they are selected will depend on the regime type (democratic, authoritarian, etc.). They may reflect the priorities expressed by the general population or those in power and their supporters.

Agenda setting is a highly political process undertaken by governments. They can take into consideration competing ideas advanced by civil society activists



KEY TERM:

Policy Agenda is a vision, a set of ideas that guides government decisions on which social issues to address in its public policies and programs.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
AND KEY CONCEPTS

CHAPTER 2
UNDERSTANDING
CONTEXT OF
ENGAGING
GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 3
POLICY LEVEL
APPROACHES
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CHAPTER 4
OPTIMAL
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CHAPTER 5
CIVIC PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER 6
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ANNEXES

and private sector leaders. They may also be influenced by research centers or think tanks whose senior staff often include former government officials. Their analyses include evidence-based research, which are used for more values-based advocacy. Politicians use the analyses to lend credibility to their ideas and consult with polls and/or constituents to test the ideas' political acceptability with the population.³³

Principles in Action: Civil Society Roles in Influencing the Policy Agenda: Addressing Human Trafficking in India

India is a huge source, destination and transit country for women, men and children who are subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.³³ The majority of India's trafficking victims are drawn from within the country's most disadvantaged social strata - lowest caste Dalits, members of tribal communities, religious minorities, and women and girls from excluded groups. In pursuit of an especially devastating form of forced labor, traffickers lure women and girls via false promises of employment and dowry-free marriages for lives of prostitution and sex-slavery. The vulnerability of women and girls is perpetuated by extreme poverty, conflict, government corruption, the absence of legal enforcement, and a lack of knowledge about this issue among parents and community leaders. Until recently, survivors of sex trafficking in India were regarded as criminals - not victims. Laws were strengthened to protect survivors and potential victims, but the enforcement of those laws is still weak.



Since 1996, CRS has partnered with Prajwala, an award-winning NGO, to engage government on this issue. Prajwala's national awareness campaigns, using an outsider activist approach, have played a key role in placing and keeping trafficking firmly in the national policy agenda. These campaigns include its multi-state Caravan project (i.e., a truck that shows short outdoor videos about sex trafficking with survivors on hand to bear witness and answer questions), a "Take Back the Night" half-marathon march, and other high-profile events. Prajwala has also trained local law enforcement officers, supported the passage of new legislation to combat sex trafficking (most recently in 2016), strengthened services for survivors, and prevented women and girls from becoming victims through outreach campaigns.

In many developing countries, good policies are often in place. It is their poor implementation that has reduced their effectiveness. Look for assessments and evaluations of the current policies, specifically with the ministries and/or donors that were responsible for designing and supporting them, respectively, to access evidence of past policy performance.

STEP 2: Assessing the current policy environment should draw on local partners' knowledge. When setting out to influence policy, an important question to ask is: *Do relevant policies exist that need to be better implemented, or is there a lack of policy addressing the desired social change(s)?* At the agenda-setting step, it is important to revisit this question, and CRS and partners may need to further assess the policy environment relevant to the targeted issue. Doing so can help focus efforts, save time and increase the likelihood of success. The additional questions below can further sharpen program activities designed to influence agenda setting.

Where policies related to the targeted social issue exist:

- What is the degree to which policies already achieve their desired goal and to what degree do they contribute to improving social cohesion and increasing social justice?
- What are the social costs and benefits of existing policies? What are the side effects, positive and/or negative, on various groups, especially the poor and most vulnerable?
- What is the gap between the actual and targeted policy outcome? What factors are contributing to this gap in policy implementation?

³³ A study conducted by India's Global March found that most victims of commercial sexual exploitation originally left home in search of employment, and of these, most had initially worked as child domestic servants. See: <http://globalmarch.org/images/Economic-Behind-Forced-Labour-Trafficking.pdf> - Page 27

Where policies related to the targeted social issue do not exist:

- Why have such policies not yet been created? What are the barriers (political, technical, legal, budgetary, other)?
- Did such policies exist in the past? If so, why were they removed or allowed to lapse?
- What are the political interests of the various groups that support the status quo?
- Do the policy agendas of the various key actors include this issue? Why or why not?

STEP 3: Determining key actors' level of political will is critical for us to be able to influence the policymaking process. Building on the definition provided in [Chapter 1](#), political will is the willingness of key government actors to support a particular policy, policy option or reform. Some of the approaches and illustrative activities in this chapter use an outside track approach to generate political will. They mobilize and channel citizen and civil society demand for social change, using it as leverage to motivate policymakers to make a particular decision.

Other inside track ways to generate political will might involve generating scientific evidence to make a stronger technical case for a particular policy (option or decision). Forming a learning alliance with national, regional or international research or academic institutions will provide CRS with the analytical expertise necessary to generate such recommendations. The Rwanda example is useful here (see box), as well as the excerpt from the [Borderlands Coffee Project](#) below.

Principles in Action: Participating in National-level Technical Working Groups to Increase Access to Policymaking in Rwanda

At the national level in Rwanda, CRS participates in technical working groups for food and nutrition, maternal and child health, and child protection. CRS shares project data, analysis, results and promising practices with these working groups, which provide input to government policies that are being developed or revised. As a result of its participation in the Food and Nutrition technical working group, an insider advising approach, CRS was named to a commission charged with reviewing the Government of Rwanda's nutrition policy to propose amendments and updates.



Other approaches focus on the elite in society, mobilizing powerful factions within and outside of government to form pacts or settlements. These factions have competing and often conflicting agendas and interests, so the aim of “elite pacting” is to increase their political will by building consensus among them to support the targeted policy option or social change.³⁴ Even if a consensus cannot be reached, it is better when all interest groups to accept the policymaking process' outcome, regardless of whether they “win” or “lose.”

Principles in Action: Using Elite Pacting—an Insider Lobbying Approach—in Southern Sudan's Political Transition

In the years leading up to South Sudan's independence in 2011, the Church was instrumental in convening the leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in a series of meetings called Kajiko, named after the town where this dialogue initially took place. Church leadership met with the government of Southern Sudan, including the various SPLM factions, to talk about service provision, diversity, non-violent conflict transformation and the need for transparency in government—in other words, many of the things that form good governance. The result was a consensus among elites on a roadmap for transitioning to independence as a democratic state, following the 2010 elections and 2011 referendum.



³⁴ Diamond, Larry. *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies throughout the World*. New York: Holt, 2009.

This consensus turned out to be fragile. This fragility may have been more a function of the scale and complexity of the challenges facing the new nation than of the usefulness of elite pacting. In fact, the backsliding of the government into infighting and eventual civil war may have been prevented if the international community had continued to support consolidating consensus among South Sudanese elites around the foundational design of the new state's institutions. They chose instead to devote more energy and resources on strengthening the capacity of these weak institutions.

STEP 4: Developing an “ask” requires understanding of political will and how to influence the government to include in its agenda those issues that affect the marginalized and most vulnerable. This means understanding what else captures the government's attention and what might motivate its action on other issues. Doing so requires knowing how to reach key government actors, with the right message, requesting that they take a specific action—often referred to as the “ask.”

The ask should incorporate an understanding of these actors' particular interests and incentives, and use those incentives to demonstrate how inclusion of different issues meets their interests. It also involves an assessment of the policy environment to understand why an issue has generated sufficient levels of public awareness, political interest and media attention. An understanding of these sensitive issues can be developed by carrying out an initial contextual analysis (See [Chapter 2](#)) along with regular reflections and updates, following award of a project.

POLICY AGENDA SETTING APPROACHES

As mentioned earlier, a combination of approaches to influence policy can be more effective than any one approach. The following examples are illustrative.

Advising: CRS, national JPCs and/or CSOs can gather evidence from socioeconomic analyses to push for including a social issue (e.g., malnutrition) in policymakers' agendas. Increased public and media attention will provide them with political leverage for policymakers to consider the ask. National CSOs can also channel their concerns through more evidence-based recommendations to key actors in the executive-branch line ministries (e.g., Ministry of Health) and to lawmakers sitting on key committees (e.g., a nutrition task force). They can lay out the current impact of malnutrition for targeted policymakers, underscoring how attention to it will meet their particular interests and contribute to the common good.

Lobbying: National CSO leaders can use their influence with key decision makers to elevate the priorities of the most vulnerable onto the national policy agenda. Church leaders can use their prophetic voice, which is a values-based approach, delivering such messages to decision makers either directly through personal communications or indirectly through national Episcopal structures (e.g., Caritas, JPC, CPLO). In either case, such messages appeal to decision makers' sense of obligation, as leaders, to govern in the interest of the common good.

Activism: Diocesan JPCs can mobilize communities and raise public awareness around a particular social issue. They can also accompany CBOs so that members gain the confidence they need to approach local government officials with demands to address the issue. Taking such actions is a significant accomplishment, especially for citizens (such as youth) who have felt marginalized by and excluded from local governance processes. For that reason, taking an interest-based approach to organizing communities, while slow in the short term, is likely to be the most effective and thus sustainable in the long term.

The Ask: Practice, practice, practice

Developing a well-articulated ask is certainly challenging enough. Delivering it involves an entirely different set of skills, including a fine-tuned sense of awareness, both of oneself and one's target (i.e., the decision maker and/or decision-making institution).

If CRS and partners want to deliver the ask in-person, it is crucial first to script out the anticipated exchange and then to practice it as frequently as needed until its delivery becomes as natural as it is compelling.

Advocacy: The national Caritas or other CSOs can focus public attention on a social issue by mobilizing the media to report on government attempts to address the social issue. CRS and partners can elevate the issue onto the national agenda by either underscoring the successes of government efforts to address it or pointing out their deficiencies, based on the context analysis or further assessments of the policy environment discussed above.

While evidence can and should be presented, advocacy often requires more direct, simple communication. Most importantly, these messages must convey a sense of urgency: why is this particular social issue so important and why must the government address it now?

Principles in Action: Using Scientific Evidence to Link Private and Public Sectors in Setting Policy Agendas in Colombia

CRS began the Borderlands Coffee Project in Nariño, Colombia in 2011 with support from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. The partnership includes the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and three local institutions: the Fundación Carcafé, a CSO related to the Colombian coffee exporter Carcafé; Cáritas Ipiales; and Cáritas Pasto.



The project facilitates inclusive value chains that unlock coffee's potential as a licit strategy to increase family incomes, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for smallholder coffee farmers in Nariño. The project serves 1,600 smallholder coffee-growing families in 8 municipalities. Its overall goal of increasing household incomes is anchored by efforts to expand smallholder access to high-value segments of the coffee market and consolidate inclusive coffee value chains. The project also invests in efforts to diversify farm production, smooth income streams, and improve the adaptive capacity of households confronting climate change.

The project features an innovative model for setting policy agendas that involves multi-faceted collaboration with CIAT aimed at improving outcomes for project participants. This model generates results-based evidence that improves decision-making not only on the farm but also in the industry and in the policymaking process. This research to influence collaboration between CIAT and CRS has delivered technical and scientific information to key regional actors in the public and private sectors. These recommendations have informed their agenda for the coffee sector and facilitated a cross-sector planning process. This planning process in turn achieved broad alignment among multiple actors on shared strategies to make Nariño's coffee sector more competitive.

The model has influenced the Government of Nariño to adopt these strategies in setting its public policy agenda for the coffee sector and investing approximately US\$4.5 million to support the implementation. These investments strengthened the coffee value chain with approximately US\$567 million in related projects including road infrastructure, irrigation and food security.

The following illustrative program activities include several types of [Advocacy Campaigns](#). All generally include five basic components:³⁵

- **Objective:** What is the social change targeted by civil society?
- **Targets:** Who are the key decision makers with the authority to carry out the change?
- **Timeline:** What are the entry points for action in the policy cycle or legislative calendar?
- **Message:** What are the concrete actions civil society wants the government to take?
- **Coalition:** How can CSOs join with allies to build a constituency for social change?

³⁵ Conversions are from Colombian pesos as of 2017.

³⁶ CRS Southern Sudan Referendum Initiative Quarterly Report (FY10, 4th Qtr.)

ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR POLICY AGENDA SETTING

Church or interreligious platform organize "Days of Prayer"³⁶ or other campaigns and invite participation of policy decision makers and influencers.

CSOs mobilize parent-teacher association members to solicit their policy recommendations for increased access to quality education, delivered to the Ministry of Education during public comment periods.

A National Episcopal Conference issues a pastoral letter calling for cessation of violent conflict and to begin a political process for longer-term peacebuilding.

CSOs engage with local media to report on systemic corruption in the judiciary and present the results of to the Office of the Inspector General.

A National JPC shares restorative justice success stories with Ministry of Youth to promote this method's integration into youth empowerment programs.

The bar association facilitates dialog among judges, prosecutors, public defenders and national police on harmonizing the customary and statutory legal systems.

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Tools for Policy Agenda-Setting Approaches

The targeted outcome of the agenda-setting stage of the policy cycle is the inclusion of targeted social issues among those likely to be addressed by government policymakers and to produce evidence to support these recommendations. Helpful resources include:

- OECD [Trends Analysis as a Method](#)
- Schoemaker, P. [Scenario Planning: A Tool for Strategic Thinking](#)
- CRS' [Extractives and Equity](#) (for approaches to multi-stakeholder assessment) 
- Sheridan, M. & Montenegro, A. [Borderlands Policy Brief: Using Scientific Evidence to Link Private and Public Sectors in the Planning Process](#). CRS and CIAT: Baltimore, MD. 2016.
- CRS' preferred interest-based approach can be found in this version of the [governance brochure](#) 
- CRS preferred tool/resource for designing various kinds of advocacy campaigns include both CRS' [Extractive Industries Advocacy: Training Manual for Civil Society Organizations](#) (the hyperlink is for a search, and the Manual is the first result) and Just Associates' [Advocacy Training Module Making Justice and Solidarity Real for Catholic Relief Services](#) 

Inclusion, especially of the marginalized, is based in the Catholic social teaching principle of “Life and Dignity of the Human Person” and the foundation of a moral vision for society. It is also the necessary condition of local ownership, a principle of development effectiveness.

Most of the agenda-setting tools are also applicable in the next section, [Policy Analysis and Design](#).

INCLUSION OF GENDER AND YOUTH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN AGENDA SETTING

The following five areas are critical for increasing inclusion of the priorities of youth and women, and attention to gender issues and dynamics in the agenda setting process:

- Identification of the issues to be considered for inclusion in the government agenda *with full participation* of women and young people as stakeholders in the process.
- Data collection with gender- and age-disaggregated data.
- Data analysis process, including a thorough gender analysis of the potential impact of the policy, using the [Basic Guide](#) and [Sample Gender Analysis](#).
- A policy dialogue process that includes representatives from women's and youth CSOs.
- Supporting women and youth participation in engaging with government through one or more influencing approaches (i.e., advising, lobbying, activism, advocacy).

CRS and partners should ensure that hard-to-reach groups, such as poor and rural women and youth, who are typically among the most underrepresented voices in governance, are included in policy agenda setting. For that reason, it is important to identify women's and youth organizations that are truly representative. These CSOs can help by facilitating integration of women and youth into networks that are setting policy agendas.

Remember as well, women and youth, like men and boys, have multidimensional identities; they also represent different ethnic groups, religions, livelihoods/professions, places of origin, etc. Understanding how policy agendas impact all of their identities differently should be considered a part of the process.



Voting in Juba, now South Sudan. Sara A. Fajardo/CRS.

Principles in Action: Policy Agenda Influencing in Practice: CRS' AMASHIGA project in Burundi

In Burundi, CRS support to Women's Forums is generating innovative practices in nutrition that are influencing the national nutrition policy agenda. The AMASHIGA project in Muhinga Province is strengthening agricultural livelihoods and increasing food security and nutrition. AMASHIGA includes support for the integration of Women's Forums into a multi-sectoral platform to combat malnutrition known as Scaling up Nutrition (SUN).



Learning from joint research by CRS and the Women's Forums is being channeled through the national Civil Society Alliance to inform SUN initiatives to plan for and set policy. This bottom up approach to policy agenda setting brings in the voices of poor rural women, who would otherwise remain unheard. Participatory operations research combines their priorities and concerns with the findings gathered into an evidence-based learning agenda to influence the policy agenda-setting process.

3.3. POLICY CYCLE: ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

The next two steps of the policy cycle are connected, and so discussed together in this section.

Policy analysis unpacks complex social issues. It defines the problem and proposes goals, examining the arguments for and against policy options that could help achieve those goals. CRS and the national Caritas/JPCs should promote using IHD to frame policy analysis so that it focuses on the needs of the poor and most vulnerable.

Policy design includes seven main steps:³⁷

1. Verify, define and detail the problem, using the results from various analyses;
2. Set a theory of change and propose a solution by identifying well-defined policy options;
3. Select past policies for analysis and comparison;
4. Review past policy implementation;
5. Establish decision-making and evaluation criteria for the options, consistent with key stakeholder values;
6. Assess and compare policy options relevant to the identified theory of change;
7. Select options for design and articulate how it is relevant to the theory of change.

These general steps can happen sequentially, though in practice they require revisiting and refinement; further details are provided below.

STEP 1: Defining and framing the problem includes determining the scope of the social issues to be addressed, the goal to be targeted, and an analysis of power relationships and dynamics between different groups and constituencies. Framing a policy's design is a political process, and CRS and partners should understand that this framing sets the parameters and expectations for policy outcomes, budgets and intended beneficiaries.

Empowering citizens through activism, CRS can frame the public discussion about a social issue, focusing it on equity concerns and calls for greater inclusion of the marginalized. CRS and national-level civil society partners can use evidence gathered in the analysis stage, advocating to the government that it should respond to public demands for greater equity and inclusion.



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³⁷ Adapted from Patton, Sawicki and Clark. Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning. 2012.

STEP 2: Setting a theory of change and identifying policy options. Theories of change for public policy need not be original but should be based on empirical evidence, which CRS and partners can supply through operations research. It is important to contextualize a theory of change to reflect the power dynamics and complexities found in an implementing environment. Each theory of change also includes certain values nested in it. CRS and partners should influence the government to embrace these values, which are embedded in the [good governance principles](#), when developing theories of change.

RIGOR IN POLICY ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

Rigorous socioeconomic studies—as carried out by a national ministry, local university, civil society organization and/or think tank—can measure the intended outcomes and impact of a public policy. Most approaches use some form of econometric analysis to measure the outcomes in terms of the net social welfare (the social benefits minus the social costs, as valued in local currency) generated by each policy option. CRS and partners should also include a distributional analysis to determine who enjoys the resulting social benefits and who bears the social costs, focusing especially on the marginalized and most vulnerable. A distributional analysis is a tool used to measure how and how much certain segments of general population benefit from and/or bear the costs of a policy intervention. By disaggregating the total social welfare gains or losses, policymakers can more precisely calibrate the selected policy instrument (e.g., program, tax, subsidy) so that the benefits and costs are distributed more equitably. MEAL teams can support developing tools and skills to use them.

STEP 3: Selecting past policies for review. To test the theory of change and consider future options, it is important to reflect on how a past or current policy was chosen. The following questions should be considered after selecting a policy to review:

- How did the past or how does the current policy increase the understanding and provide insights on how best to respond to the targeted social issues?
- What are the factors enabling and discouraging the use of this important learning?
- What other alternatives were considered at the time? Why were they rejected? For which legal, political or technical reasons?
- Which tradeoffs were policymakers forced to accept, and which of these tradeoffs are likely to still be present in reforming the current/developing the new policy?

STEP 4: Reviewing past policy implementation. Related to the previous step, it is critical to understand why and how well the past (or current) policy worked. The following questions guide this review:

- Which agency (or agencies) implemented the policy? Was the policy legitimately within their legal mandate and authority?
- Was the policy implemented according to its original design? Which adaptations were made, why, and why were they important?
- What was the resulting net change in social welfare? Did the policy achieve its results at a lower cost compared to the alternatives?
- Did the policy actually solve the social problem originally identified? Or did it solve a different problem?
- What political factors affected implementation?

Theories of Change - Where do they come from?

CRS has developed a fairly rigorous process for developing theories of change for its food security programs which is instructive for engaging government theories of change. They are based on comprehensive literature reviews and rigorous problem analysis. While constructing an original theory of change in this way may not be feasible for every program, at the very least country programs should review theories of change found in the literature, adapting it to the local context, as necessary.

REVIEWING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: WHERE TO BEGIN?
 In many countries where CRS operates, there may already be policies and laws in place. They may even have been well designed, but their implementation has been less than optimal. CRS and partners should review current and past policies—multilateral donors such as the World Bank are a good source of sector performance assessments—while engaging key government informants to gain their perspectives so that they can learn from and apply the lessons to the current situation. CRS and partners should also read key documents, e.g., vision statements, enabling legislation and executive-branch decrees that were used in the policy’s design and implementation. They will likely provide an indication of what the new policy might look like; policy change, despite ambitious intentions for reform, is often incremental in nature.

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STEP 5: Establishing decision-making criteria. CRS, its partners and other CSOs representing marginalized groups should help determine and define the criteria by which policy options will be analyzed. Table 1 lists criteria used in policy design and the associated opportunities for influence. This step is highly political and the choice of adopting an evidence-based versus values-based influence approach will depend on the government’s regime type and its level of tolerance for alternative voices.

Table 1. Policy Design Criteria and Opportunities for Influence

Criteria	Opportunity for Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underlying values • Technical feasibility • Social costs and benefits • Equity • Sustainability • Political acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infuse Catholic social teaching principles in policy process • Assert CRS technical leadership in a SPA sector • Include externalities (e.g., pollution) in analysis • Ensure inter-group fairness through a distribution analysis • Strengthen the capacity of government institutions • Mobilize a broad constituency for reform/social change

STEP 6: Assessing and comparing policy options. Policymaking is a political process; in deciding which option to pursue, the politics and power dynamics play out at multiple levels:

Within government institutions, such as a ministry, bureaucratic politics and leadership can either create bottlenecks or expedite the process.

- A country’s laws lay out which government agencies have decision-making authority, provide input for the final decision, and which have implementation responsibilities.
- Between government and society, CSOs and the private sector can contribute to policy analysis, and it is sometimes legally required (i.e., through public comment periods).

To increase their participation and influence in the process for choosing policy options, program teams should increase stakeholders’ understanding of the following:

- Institutional arenas and how decisions are made there (e.g., a parliamentary committee, line ministry, the finance ministry);
- Entry points for influence (e.g., public comment periods, town hall meetings or other fora where the public has the opportunity to provide inputs or feedback);
- Key decision makers and the people who influence them (e.g., their staff, prominent private sector or community leaders, international public figures).



At a torch parade in Zamboanga, people from Mindanao’s three major groups—Muslim, indigenous, and Christian—march together for peace. Laura Sheahan/CRS.

FINANCING AND POLICY INFLUENCE

The financial resources available will limit public policy design. In most countries, the ministry in charge of finance plays a gatekeeper role in the go/no-go decision over which policies will be considered for adoption, design and funding. It also sets the terms and levels of the resources allocated to their implementation. For that reason, CRS and partners often benefit from developing and maintaining a good working relationship with this powerful ministry. In those countries with a parliamentary or mixed presidential-parliamentary political system, the Office of the Prime Minister may also play a similar role and/or a coordinating role. For the latter, it assigns and clarifies the roles and responsibilities among the various executive-branch ministries, departments and agencies involved in designing and implementing a particular public policy. In any scenario in developing countries, it is the head of state—president or prime minister—who wields the most decision-making power and often with few checks or balances.

STEP 7: Selecting policy options. One of the more successful approaches to designing public policy comes from a model used by the World Bank and has also been used by some USAID contractors and grantees. It is an iterative process and engages participation from key stakeholders across multiple sectors, including the private sector, civil society, academia and the government itself.

In this process, the government establishes two groups: (1) a technical working group, consisting of policy analysts representing the various sectors and interest groups, and (2) a similarly representative group comprised of key decision makers from the government and recognized leaders from other sectors. A well-respected policy expert, much like the facilitation agent in the Borderlands example, works with the first group to produce drafts of the policy design. S/he manages the workflow and decision-making process so that all view the process as fair and legitimate.

The technical group then submits its draft products to the key decision makers for review, feedback and approval. This approach generates greater cross-sector engagement among members of the technical group, which can be tapped for future efforts; builds political will among the key actors across sectors, as a form of [elite pacting](#); and ensures that policy recommendations do not get too far ahead of public opinion to support them. Once the recommendations have been finalized and adopted by the decision makers, they can communicate and demonstrate their support for the new or reformed policy in the media and other public fora, raising public awareness and building public support.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND DESIGN APPROACHES

Developing country government policymakers use several models for policy analysis and design, including logical frameworks similar to the CRS [Proframe](#). These models include many of the same components: (resource) inputs, activities, different levels of results, assumptions, risks, etc. While there are more sophisticated models, especially in scholarly research, policymakers tend to use simpler models due to relatively low levels of capacity found outside of the highest levels of government.

Advising: Where CRS and partners bring technical leadership, they can support government policy analysis and design. Given the broad reach of Church structures, which often extend to marginalized populations, CRS can offer government policy makers greater access when collecting data and engaging stakeholders for policy analyses. CRS and partners can also second (or loan) staff to government offices responsible for policy analysis for deeper collaboration, using accompaniment³⁸ to apply the lenses of inclusion and equity. The

³⁸ Accompaniment is further discussed in [Section 4.2](#). The CRS understanding of accompaniment is often referred to as or understood as a means of providing 'technical assistance' by USAID, other donors and colleague agencies.

Public Policy: Who's the Real Decider?

To engage with government effectively, CRS and partners should identify the key actors, the government officials, who ultimately will make the decisions on public policy. It is also useful to map out these actors, their lines of authority, influence as well their interests, alliances, resources, etc. Knowledge of political actors, factors and dynamics will enable country programs to gain a greater understanding of what is not only technically feasible but also politically acceptable. If a country program and partners intend to catalyze change then they must also consider strategies for building power to shift what is considered to be acceptable by those who hold and wield power.

Borderlands project, summarized on below, offers one example of how to use research and cross-sector engagement to influence agricultural policy to address these issues.

Lobbying: Governments usually provide civil society and the private sector only limited opportunities for input into the policy analysis and design process. Even under democratic regimes, outsiders have little access to the formal design process. Therefore, CSOs and national Church structures should push the government to carve out a more substantial role for civil society and the private sector. Church leaders can use their close relationships with government officials, who sometimes worship in their parishes, to quietly push for this arrangement. They can also convene these officials and other leaders in a public forum for participatory policy analysis and design.

Activism: CRS and partners have experience with several methods for [participatory assessments and analysis](#), which can be modified to address issues of governance and energize community members to help mobilize a constituency for the desired social change. Social accountability provides one approach along with accompanying [tools](#). It enables citizens to determine whether a policy or program is meeting its objectives and producing its intended results. It offers a counterpoint to the government's conclusions and recommendations, and raises public awareness about issues omitted or minimized by policymakers.

Principles in Action: Evidence-based Cross-sector Engagement to Influence Policy Analysis and Design in Colombia (continued from page 29)

Figure 9 below illustrates the Borderlands project's participatory analysis and design model including timelines, key activities and milestones in: (A) coffee-related commitments made by the public sector, the Department of Nariño and the Colombian National Council on Social and Economic Policy; (B) cross-sector engagement related to the Nariño coffee sector planning process; (C) the research-for-influence collaboration between CIAT and CRS in the context of the Borderlands Coffee Project; and (D) the work of the Borderlands Advisory Council, a process for private sector engagement in value-chain programming, often with few checks or balances.



Partnership between research institutes and development agencies rooted in an intent to influence approaches have the potential to help both entities be more effective. For research institutes, the partnership contributes to public policies based on sound technical and scientific analysis, and the institutes can leverage the public goods they create through their research for broad impact. Development agencies like CRS and partners can contribute to more inclusive public policy analysis and design, so that projects, which may have limited numbers of direct participants, can achieve lower-intensity impact at a much larger scale.

In Borderlands, multi-stakeholder engagement in policy analysis and design was effective due to the facilitation agents, a group of policy entrepreneurs identified by CRS and partners. Facilitation agents were successful because they possessed the skills necessary to effectively facilitate constructive cross-sector engagement. They brought credibility because the stakeholders perceived them as having expertise and substantive understanding. They were considered to be disinterested, lacking any financial or vested interest in any particular outcome besides a clear commitment to inclusion. Finally, the facilitation agents were evidence-based; they were perceived as being driven by technical and scientific findings generated through rigorous, participatory processes.

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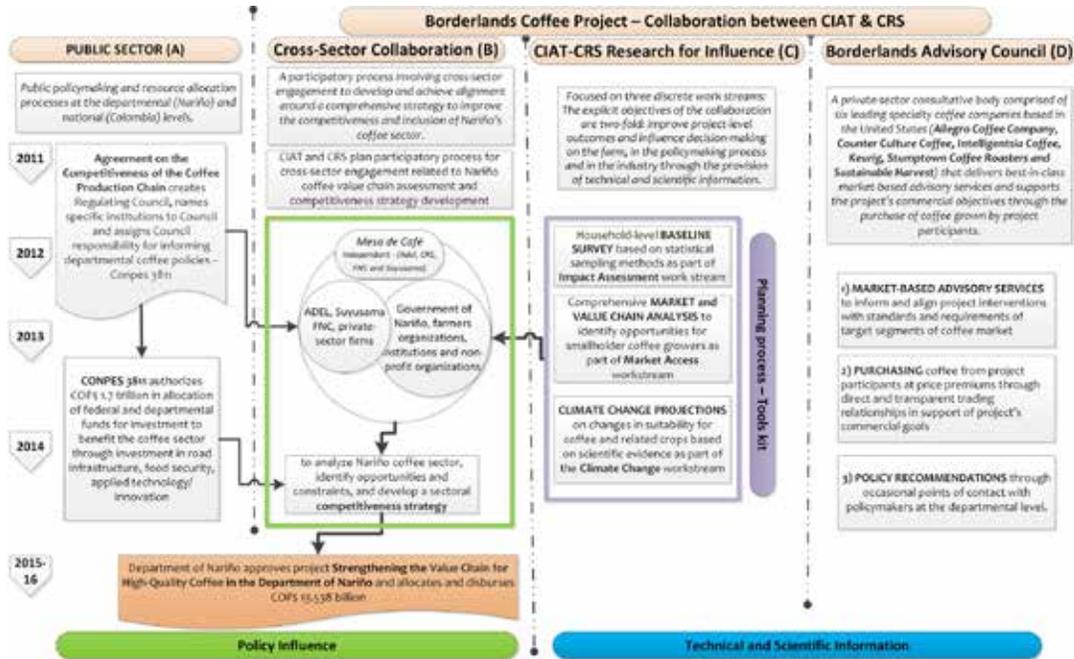
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Figure 9: Borderlands project's participatory analysis and design model³⁹



Illustrative Program Activities for Policy Analysis and Design

- Local women's associations conduct a study, comparing levels and quality of extension and advisory services offered to male versus female farmers.
- Young farmers' marketing associations produce and submit analyses to government ministries to show the impact of subsidies for imported rice on domestic production.
- CRS and partners lead a national "people's budget" campaign to mobilize citizens to provide input into the national budget and influence government programming.
- Diocesan JPCs lead a participatory appraisal process to measure the incidence, trends and impact of mismanagement of scarce natural resources in a critical watershed.
- Civil society watchdog groups visit parliamentary committees to present findings of social sector performance analyses, including results of social audits.
- CRS seconds a technical advisor to the Ministry of Health policy analysis unit to provide technical support for designing a new policy and mentor unit staff.
- A female lawyer's association supports the Ministry of Gender Affairs in assessing policy alternatives for increasing women's access to land.

Embrace complexity: Policy influence takes planning!

Cross-sector programs are rich with lessons that can shape public policy. Yet sorting out how to find the most compelling lessons can seem daunting. Figure 9 shows one example of how a team with deep experience in cross-sector programming made sense of their work for policy influence. This model helped them achieve the results in case study above.

Principles in Action: Policy Analysis and Design in Practice: Central America's ProSoil project

In Central America, rain-fed agriculture plays a critical role in producing food, yet governments and donors have insufficiently invested in rain-fed agriculture over the past 15 years. As a result, extension services, research, analysis and education are all lagging. CRS is currently working with local partners in Central America in the ProSoil project to influence their national governments so that they use scientific research and technical evidence for generating new soil policy. Grounding public policy in this kind of analysis will increase these countries' resilience to food insecurity, climatic shocks and spikes in food commodity prices. In El Salvador, for example, government policy and plans are now based in such analysis. As a result, the national soil policy has created a more enabling environment for soil restoration and soil fertility management, including the creation of a national institution responsible for implementing this policy.



39 Sheridan, M; Rodríguez-Camayo, F; Lundy, M; Eitzinger, A; González, C; Montenegro, A; Ramírez-Villegas, J. 2015. Using scientific evidence to link articulate private and public sectors for planning; observations from coffee-sector engagement in Nariño, Colombia. CRS Policy Brief. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Baltimore. 18 pp.

An important consideration is that some tools may not include a distributional analysis or other means of understanding how a policy impacts all segments of the population. From an “Option for the Poor” perspective, CRS would want to see a policy that benefits the less well-off more than the better off.⁴⁰ An example is an irrigation policy that includes a user rate structure with a sliding scale to increase smallholder farmer accessibility to and use of this service. This same policy should include safeguards to protect groundwater from runoff and minimize harm to the water quality for vulnerable communities. CRS and partners should insist that any policy analysis account for such externalities and address them in the policy design.

Tools for Policy Analysis and Design Approaches

CRS’ experience with policy analysis and design has benefited from several social science resources. A few illustrative examples:

- ODI [Toolkit](#) with multiple policy design tools.
- UNDP [application of Design Thinking](#) to public-sector management and policy design.
- [Open Government Guide](#) includes public contracting, data and rights to information, budgeting and other relevant tools.
- Analyzing the Distributional Impact of Reforms : A Practitioner’s Guide to Trade, Monetary and Exchange Rate Policy, Utility Provision, Agricultural Markets, Land Policy and Education, Volume 1

INCLUSION OF GENDER, PROTECTION AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND NEEDS IN POLICY ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

For policies to be equitable they must be grounded in an analysis of how they affect men, women, boys and girls differently, and be designed to respond to those considerations. CRS and partners should advocate for integration of gender, protection and youth considerations throughout the policy analysis and design process, rather than a last step in design review.

Initially, a policy may seem not to have gender or age implications, when in fact they emerge later and require midcourse corrections to mitigate them. It is more efficient to take these steps from the start, including the meaningful and direct participation of those affected by a policy—e.g., women and women-led organizations/businesses—in policy analysis and design.

Following the core principle of [Do No Harm](#), new laws, regulations and policies should be analyzed and monitored so that they do not inadvertently make some situations worse. Even a policy as simple and beneficial as extending the school day to help children prepare for exams may result in children having to walk to or from school in the dark, which increases their risk of harassment or attack.

Special attention is required to ensure human dignity and equitable access to public goods and services. Beyond basic safeguards in administrative procedure, CRS and partners should advocate for policies that include forms of affirmative action, if not reparations to historically disadvantaged groups for institutional discrimination and structural violence. Such policies can form an important part of a larger push for restorative justice in a post-conflict period of political transition. Protection mainstreaming, which should be applied in both humanitarian and development programming, is described in the text box below.

⁴⁰ “The Church’s love for the poor...is a part of her constant tradition. This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor...” Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense and liberation.” As taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2444 and 2448, quoting The Hundredth Year (Centisimus Annus), no. 57, and Freedom of Conscience (Libertatis Conscientia), no. 68.

A distributional analysis also enables CRS and partners to align with the Catholic social teaching of “the Common Good.” In public policy terms, it is necessary but not sufficient to maximize the gains or benefits in net social welfare. Who benefits, how much they benefit and how they benefit are all equally important considerations.

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PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING IN POLICY INFLUENCE



Protection mainstreaming incorporates protection principles and promotes meaningful access, safety and dignity in decision-making, planning and humanitarian aid. There are four guiding principles:

1. **Prioritize safety and dignity**, and avoid causing harm: Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of interventions that might increase people's vulnerability to physical and psychosocial risks.
2. **Equality/meaningful access**: Arrange for people's access to impartial assistance and services in proportion to need and without any barriers, i.e., discrimination. Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable, have difficulty accessing assistance and services or are historically disadvantaged.
3. **Accountability to beneficiaries**: Set up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, or address concerns and complaints.
4. **Participation and empowerment**: Support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including—not exclusively—the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health and education.

Note that protection mainstreaming and safe and dignified programming may be used interchangeably. Definitions and additional information on protection mainstreaming can be obtained from CRS' [Protection Mainstreaming Working Group](#), which includes Trocaire, Caritas Australia and CAFOD as members.

Likewise, CRS has had success and feels strongly that youth can and should play an active role in policy analysis and design. Program teams can help facilitate youth enrolled at universities to integrate policy research analysis into practicums or intern with policy-oriented CSOs or government ministries. Youth already in the workplace can participate in focus group discussions, community feedback processes, or as members of research teams.

An equally important role for CRS and partners is increasing the government's political will to include youth input for policy analysis and design. For example, in programs where CRS and partners are working with youth to do policy analysis, they should invite government officials to be briefed by youth participating in the program. This experience can alter stereotypes of youth as uninterested or ill equipped to contribute to public policy. CRS and partners can then facilitate formalization of future roles for youth to collaborate with policymakers.

3.4. POLICY CYCLE: IMPLEMENTATION

CRS has a long history of supporting national and sub-national government policy, mainly in the delivery of public services such as health, education, and agricultural extension. More recently, CRS' implementation of large-scale projects in food security, and health and social *system* strengthening has required us to develop additional capabilities in public policy implementation.

The following model of policy implementation borrows from that developed by USAID's Implementing Policy Change project⁴¹ and includes the following six steps:

1. Legitimizing the need for the policy
2. Constituency building
3. Resource accumulation
4. Organizational design/structure
5. Mobilizing actions
6. Monitoring impact



⁴¹ Brinkerhoff, Derick. *Policy Implementation: What USAID Has Learned*. PN-ACH-306. Washington, DC.: USAID Center for Democracy and Governance. 2001.

STEP 1: Legitimizing the need for the policy is critical, especially for those policies that may be perceived as challenging the status quo; those in power might see such reforms as a threat. For that reason, it is crucial to obtain the buy-in of key actors and to identify a champion among them, someone similar to the facilitation agent described in the [Borderlands example](#). This individual can help avoid or overcome potential bottlenecks in the policy implementation process while also continuing to build political will among the key actors. Concrete tasks might include:

- Distributing policy program implementation strategically to increase key actors' support;
- Waging public awareness raising campaigns to increase support for the policy;
- Holding parliamentary hearings to showcase progress made in policy implementation.

STEP 2: Constituency building helps transform the buy-in secured in the previous step into concrete actions. This step requires us to map key actors along a spectrum, based on their level of support for the policy: from champions and other supporters to those on the fence to those who could be spoilers, those opposed to the proposed policy or the social change it seeks to achieve. The 4-Cs model can be applied to identify which approach—cooperation, complementarity, co-optation or confrontation—to use for each group.⁴² The context will determine which approach to use and which concrete actions to take to consolidate their support, assign them roles within the constituency, incentivize their shift in allegiance or to mitigate their opposition, respectively. Concrete tasks might include:

- Advocating for civil society/private sector participation in policy dialog forums;
- Direct lobbying of uncommitted representatives by policy champions to influence them;
- Public “name and shame” campaigns to confront and neutralize opponents.

STEP 3: Resource accumulation involves the constant struggle to obtain the financial resources necessary to fund policy implementation. This task may involve both the legislative and the executive branches, so CRS should support policy-oriented, civil society platforms or think tank partners in lobbying parliamentary committees, the Ministry of Finance and any other government structures with the authority to approve budgets, appropriate funding and monitor expenditures. Even once the financial resources are secured, it will be important to work within the implementing agency (or agencies) to ensure that they are programmed effectively to achieve the desired social change. Concrete tasks might include:

- Civil society/private sector advocacy for greater appropriations to the policy's programs;
- Line ministry lobbying of the Ministry of Finance to increase planned budget allocations;
- Strengthening the public financial management capacity of the implementing agencies.

STEP 4: Organizational design/structure involves assessing and then strengthening institutional capacity of those agencies that will be responsible for policy implementation. It will require using the approaches and tools described in the next chapter on [Optimal Institutional Performance](#). This task may sometimes include seeking government authorization for the creation of new agencies, which, as with project-level work, should be considered only if necessary to ensure good stewardship of scarce public resources. In addition, it will require inter-organizational institutional design to promote greater coordination and harmonization among the implementing agencies. Concrete tasks might include:

ICT4G

In diverse countries around the world, governments and CSOs, and increasingly private sector groups, are creating new ways to use information communication technology (ICT) to encourage civic participation in governance (ICT4G). ICT4G concepts are included throughout this guide.



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42 Najam, Adil. 2000. “The Four Cs of Government-Third Sector Relations: Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity, Co-optation.” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 10(4): 375-96.

- Participatory institutional design to harmonize roles, lines of authority, budget and communication systems among agencies participating in policy implementation;
- Regular working group meetings among frontline implementers to increase coordination;
- Drafting and enacting enabling legislation as necessary (with civil society support).

Principles in Action: Working laws in practice - Senegal's SCOPE project

Enforcing laws and regulations in the access, use and management of natural resources remains a major issue in Senegal. These challenges arise from a lack of understanding by and between government officials and citizens about their respective roles, rights and responsibilities in enforcing the Code of Local Authorities.



This law devolves authority to local communities to enforce environmental law in nine critical areas, including the protection and management of natural resources and the environment.

Through this law local communities have enacted local rules to regulate the access to and use of its natural resources also consistent with forest, farming, water and hunting laws. CRS Senegal's Strengthening Communities through Peace and Equality (SCOPE) project uses a participatory approach to build citizens' capacity to inventory their communities' natural resources, identify major constraints to sustainable natural resource management (NRM) and develop local rules to enforce the Code of Local Authorities. Village and later inter-village committees draft the local rules and then submit them to national government agencies for review to ensure compliance with relevant national laws. The draft rules are then presented to the local council for deliberation and then to the Sub-Prefect for final approval. SCOPE's major results included:

- Community structures have increased expertise and more effective participation in NRM.
- A strong partnership among citizens, community governance structures, national advisory services and local administrative authorities has improved NRM law enforcement.
- The presidential decree of 2015 engaged the police force, military and paramilitary in protecting and better managing natural resources besides just water and forest resources.
- The mayors of the municipalities located in the SCOPE project intervention zone have requested that local agreements be expanded to all the villages in their jurisdiction to address NRM challenges.

STEP 5: Mobilizing actions organizes the constituencies and champions identified in earlier steps and strategically channels their efforts to advance the policy's implementation. CRS and partners should look at the policymaking and legislative calendar for windows of opportunity, such as public hearings that can be used to mobilize and broaden public support for the policy to complement the constituents' ongoing efforts. CRS and partners should also be aware of upcoming events that could present challenges, such as elections. Concrete tasks can include:

- Inaugurations of core program outputs and other public appearances of key actors;
- Civil society lobbying for expanding policy to address the needs of the poor more explicitly;
- National media campaign to highlight policy's benefits to targeted beneficiaries.

STEP 6: Monitoring impact will be described in greater detail in this guide's [MEAL Chapter](#), but this task establishes performance management systems to monitor implementation progress to assure policy relevance, effectiveness,

The Power of Social Media

Recent events, e.g., the Arab Spring, have demonstrated just how quickly social media can raise public awareness. Working with partners, especially youth-serving organizations, can help to build a broad-based constituency in support of a particular public policy's implementation.

efficiency, impact and sustainability. These systems can be developed to include opportunities for [Civic Participation](#), using social accountability mechanisms and policy dialog, which can be expanded to include representatives from civil society, private sector and faith communities. Concrete tasks might include:

- Civil society reports, analyzing policy implementation progress, presented to parliament;
- Program audits of policy implementation to demonstrate its impact and effectiveness;
- Strengthening the capacity of implementing agencies policy analysis units to do MEAL.

POLICY-IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES

Many of the approaches related to policy implementation are most effective when joined with those discussed in the [Civic Participation](#) and [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) chapters. Any design should consider sequencing approaches within a program, or how approaches by CRS and partners can coordinate closely with efforts by other actors.

Advising: CRS increasingly provides government agencies with technical support to implement public policy. Using this approach may preclude the possibility of advocating for the reform of a current policy or the creation of a new one. However, it does put CRS and national-level partners in a strong position to *influence* policy. To do so, CRS must ensure that its technical support is of the highest quality to gain the credibility necessary to increase the likelihood that policy recommendations are adopted.

Lobbying: CRS, national JPCs and CPLOs should lobby governments to adopt more inclusive, equitable approaches to policy implementation. These approaches should incorporate the [Principles of Good Governance and Partnership](#). When the regime type makes such approaches unrealistic or risky, then CRS and partners such as Caritas should seek opportunities for civil society/private sector to provide feedback, even if the decisions made are already final.

Activism: [Civic education](#) focused on new policies or those being designed is effective in diverse contexts for increasing civic participation in policy implementation. Civic education can increase citizens' knowledge about their own rights and responsibilities, and about the roles and responsibilities of government in delivering public services. It lays a foundation for citizens to engage in policy activism by enabling them to articulate clearly their demand for greater access and accessibility to better quality public services, thus shaping implementation procedures. If these demands go unmet, CSOs can mobilize citizens around initiatives to change a current policy, propose a new one, or propose revised policy implementation procedures.

Advocacy: To deliver citizens' demands for change to government, CSOs can develop [advocacy campaigns](#). These are described throughout Chapter 3 but the basic approach outlined in the text box on page 23 will be sufficient for most civil society-led initiatives. See also [Chapter 6](#) on MEAL for a discussion of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) relevant to engaging government approaches used in policy advocacy and other pathways.



Promoting peaceful elections in Ghana. Sam Phelps for CRS.

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Principles in Action: Policy Implementation: Nigeria's SMILE program

CRS has been implementing programs to serve OVC in Nigeria since 2005. The first program reached over 25,000 children through service delivery. In 2013, CRS launched the Sustainable Mechanisms for Improving Livelihoods and Household Empowerment (SMILE) project, which represented a significant shift in CRS Nigeria's approach. CRS and its local partners concentrated on strengthening the government's service delivery systems as part of an effort to increase the effectiveness of public policy implementation across several functional areas. Results part way through the program show SMILE has made measurable improvement in state- and local-level capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (MWASD). The five project states recorded improvement across eight functional areas: staffing and human resource management, resource mobilization and financial management, M&E and knowledge management, procurement, planning, physical infrastructure management system, multi-sectoral coordination and facilitation, and supervision and oversight of standards.



Some of the ways the program approached systems strengthening include:

Social Welfare Workforce. CRS addressed performance gaps in state and local MWASD offices by partnering with the American International Health Alliance to strengthen the capacity of community volunteers and social welfare officers. Trainees undergo a two-week training followed by six months field practicum and then a final two-week training before certification. The program is delivered through state-level polytechnics that are providing certified para-social workforce training. CRS and partners advocate with different state governments to ensure integration of para-social workers as part of the social welfare service delivery workforce.

Planning and Budgeting. SMILE has worked with the state-level MWASD offices to conduct rapid situation assessments on the needs of vulnerable children. These assessments informed the state ministry on prioritizing locations and for service delivery. The project has supported the ministry to overcome its resource challenges by mentoring government staff in developing and costing state plans for inclusion in budgets. SMILE has also strengthened the ministry's capacity to better represent its interests before the state government to justify increased funding requests for child welfare services.

Coordination. Through a multi-sector approach, the project has strengthened national MWASD capacity to convene the other ministries that play a role in ensuring child welfare. All five SMILE states have active, functional State Quality Improvement Teams as well as teams in each of the 42 local governments. The teams lead coordination of service delivery and quality monitoring based on national standards.

Child Rights Enforcement. CRS' local partners have supported the enactment of the National Child Rights Act. Once enacted, SMILE strengthened and/or re-established Child Protection Networks in the states; these networks led child rights advocacy efforts and case management at different levels. Higher-level committees became policy quality assurance mechanisms in the states. SMILE is also working with the MWASD to help train the judges, assessors and local police who work directly with children in the state, educating them on how to protect children's interests in the opaque legal process.

Data Systems and Information Management. Before SMILE, USAID had supported the national MWASD to develop and adopt an information system called the National OVC Management of Information System, a database of vulnerable children and the services they were receiving. SMILE provided technical support to adapt the system for state-level MWASD.



CRS' SMILE program works with the Nigerian government to strengthen service delivery systems as part of an effort to increase the effectiveness of public policy implementation across several functional areas. Laura Pohl for CRS.

ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- Increasing levels of equity and inclusion in public decision-making to develop the annual budget and local development plan at the communal level.
- Increasing local government capacity to generate own-source revenue to reduce their dependence on transfers from the central government.
- Working with national government ministries' policy units to identify, manage and adapt to risks to policy implementation caused by climate change.
- Supplying government ministries with technical support (i.e., secondment/ loaning staff) to improve public procurement for social services.
- Providing information and communication technologies (ICT) for governance (ICT4G) solutions for integrated financial management information systems to improve public financial management.
- Advising government in developing its framework for emergency response, including institutional arrangements, policies, protocols, procedures, funding, mechanisms for compliance and enforcement of laws, regulations and codes.

Tools for Policy Implementation

Performance assessment tools (indicator performance tracking tables)

- [WHO Tools for policy implementation steps](#)
- [Overview and Introduction to the RAPID lessons and tools, ODI](#)
- [Toolkit for Progressive Policy Makers in Developing Countries](#)
- [Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers](#)
- [Policy Framework for Policy Coherence for Development, OECD, Working paper No. 1](#)
- [Taking the Pulse of Policy: The Policy Implementation Assessment Tool, USAID, 2010](#)
- [Gender Tool Kit: Transport, Maximizing the Benefits of Transport for All](#)
- [Policy Implementation Assessment Tool \(PIAT\), Master Interview Guide](#)
- [Integrating Youth into Health Programs](#)

INCLUSION OF GENDER AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND NEEDS IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

CRS and partners should first determine whether and how a policy has taken into consideration the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls in its implementation. On the front end, participatory updates of a policy's impact on women and youth ([Step 6](#) above) can keep the focus on the policy's responsiveness to the issues that most affect men, women, boys and girls. The use of operations research can also be part of a larger effort to promote more systematic gender integration and the development of youth supporting public policy.

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3.5. POLICY CYCLE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluating public policy contributes to greater transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and responsiveness.⁴³ To realize their full potential, any efforts must focus on ensuring that the performance data and learning generated are utilized in making the necessary mid-course adaptations (monitoring) or eventual policy reforms (evaluation).⁴⁴ CRS and partners also often play a critical role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of civic participation in the policy cycle and how policy changes resulted in measurable changes in their lives. For specific steps, see the general guidance for MEAL and engaging government in [Chapter 6](#).

POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACHES

There are two broad approaches to policy evaluation CRS and partners undertake: formative and summative evaluations. Both of them can use qualitative and/or quantitative methods; in fact, CRS' recommends using an appropriate mix of both or mixed methods.

Formative evaluation provides feedback on program services and enables policy implementers to make the necessary midcourse adjustments to achieve the targeted objectives. Though called an evaluation approach, CRS teams have found it is also relevant to monitoring since it usually is undertaken to improve policy implementation, examining processes as they occur.

Summative evaluations are conducted once a policy has had sufficient time to achieve its objectives. They document the results, affirm its relevance, measure its effectiveness and efficiency, and forecast likely impact and sustainability. CRS and partners can use them to answer the following:

- Were the targeted policy objectives met?
- What is the overall impact of the policy, taking into account the needs and priorities of those affected by the policy, in particular the most vulnerable?
- Is there a need to improve or modify the overall policy?
- What resources are needed to address the policy's weaknesses and deficiencies?

Any approach must mirror the areas of policy analysis discussed earlier in this chapter, such as the impact on women and young people.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY MEAL IN CRS OPERATING CONTEXTS

In addition to monitoring and evaluation in the policy cycle, CRS has experience with accountability and learning activities related to public policy in diverse contexts. However, doing MEAL in developing countries can be challenging for several reasons:

Capacity and data quality. Depending on the regime type, government agencies may have little regard for those most affected by the policy. Even when that's not the case, low institutional capacity may limit their ability to design and operate performance management systems. Performance data may not be collected, or if they are, their quality may require validation. This tendency is especially true at the sub-national level where there are even fewer resources and less capacity and accountability.

Data control and access. The government may exert tight control over the flow of performance data, particularly in weak democracies or authoritarian regimes. Such regimes tend to perform poorly and, even when they do perform well, they may view any information about poor performance as an attack on their legitimacy. As such, they will restrict access to data and/or alter them so that they reflect better on the regime.



Policy Evaluation's Multiple Uses

Given the inherently political nature of public policy, the results of a policy evaluation may be used for different purposes by different actors. While some might use it for making evidence-based adjustments to policy design and implementation, others might use the same results to punish political rivals. All the more reason, CRS and partners should approach policy evaluation with equal doses of technical rigor and political awareness.

⁴³ Taking the Pulse of Policy-Policy Implementation Assessment Tool-USAID, 2010

⁴⁴ Monitoring Government Policies: A toolkit for Civil Society Actors in Africa, CAFOD, Trocaire, Christian Aid.

Evidence of corruption. Regardless of the form of government, most governments are reluctant to share information that may reveal incidences of public-sector corruption. CRS, its civil society partners and the Church should all practice caution when tracing corruption to minimize harm to their staff and beneficiaries.

Advising: As CRS works more directly with government on public policy at scale, it will become more involved in developing performance management policies, systems and procedures for and with its government partners. CRS is often responsible for strengthening the institutional capacity of the government partner's MEAL efforts. In the role as a technical adviser, CRS and partners can integrate gender and youth issues and priorities into proposed capacity strengthening activities.

Principles in Action: Advising Government on Monitoring Education in Burkina Faso

Few partnerships last for more than 50 years in any sector. But that is indeed the case in Burkina Faso where CRS and the Ministry of National Education and Literacy (MENA) began collaborating in 1962. At that time, CRS was responsible for national school feeding across the country and advocated for a national school-feeding plan.



Since MENA created the National School Canteen Department in 1988, CRS has strengthened its capacity in improving logistics, planning and monitoring, setting up management systems and tools, training end-use checkers, developing and disseminating a management manual. CRS and partners have contributed significantly to policies while also increasing MENA's ownership of the national program, including its performance monitoring system.

MENA currently employs end-use checkers to monitor progress in all provinces, and school canteens are central to MENA's strategy to improve primary education. From 2003 to 2009, girls' primary school attendance in CRS-supported schools consistently increased from 75 percent up to 96 percent, and the school retention rate was maintained at 87 percent for both girls and boys during the same time period.

Lobbying: National JPCs, Caritas and CPLOs are all well positioned to influence policymakers by carrying out formative evaluations of public policies and sharing recommendations with key decision makers. Many national CSOs lack the same credibility to do so, because they lack the moral authority and grassroots constituency. In many countries, including democracies, CSOs are also unfairly lumped into the opposition by those in power or portrayed as captive to external (donor) interests. By working together, national CSOs and Church structures can build effective civil society-led public policy feedback and accountability mechanisms (See [Chapter 5](#)).

Activism: Mobilizing citizens to monitor policy involves a broad range of participatory mechanisms that empower citizens, communities and independent media to hold government officials accountable. Social accountability mechanisms offer opportunities for informal oversight of government budgeting and expenditures, policy implementation and of the quality of service delivery. Over the last 20 years, CRS has strengthened diocesan and national JPCs' capacity to monitor the performance of government (and private industries) and helped form networks for local and international advocacy on extractives industries and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Several practical program examples can be found in CRS' [Social Accountability Case Studies](#) and CIVICUS' [Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Services](#).

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Advocacy: In developing countries, the Office of the Prime Minister/President, the Ministry of Finance and agencies such as the National Bureau of Statistics play key roles for MEAL. Line ministries may have their own MEAL units but they tend to be under-resourced. Even so, CRS should strengthen the capacity of CSOs to monitor how these agencies assess their own public policy and publish “[shadow reports](#)” if significant discrepancies are found. When using monitoring as an advocacy tool, CSOs should adopt a more incremental approach to address sensitive issues such as corruption, rather than confront governments openly and demand wholesale change.

Tackling Corrupt Practices

In all the work CRS and partners do, it is important to respect the principles of Do No Harm. Advocacy on issues such as corruption, however well nuanced, may be perceived as a threat to the interests of entrenched political actors, putting CRS and partners at risk. Therefore, CRS should exercise caution and consult closely with partners to safeguard against a potentially dangerous backlash by the powerful.

Principles in Action: Using Social Accountability to Monitor Corrupt Practices in Land Titling in Madagascar

The Lamina Project focused on increasing Malagasy citizens' access to quality land registry and management services, using two strategies. First, CRS and its local partners promoted the application of the principles of transparency and inclusion in land governance. Second, local partners built the capacity of both citizens and government land registry staff to monitor and evaluate the use of government services related to land tenure.



Lamina organized and conducted participatory community evaluations at the community level on land-related services using the Community Score Card (CSC). The CSC is a social accountability tool, and Lamina adapted it to gauge community perceptions on the access, equity and quality of land governance services. Local partners used the results to communicate citizens' views and specific recommendations to land registry agencies.

The CSC provided real-time evaluation to government land registry staff. Government Land Services Department agents were also trained in using the CSC and including them in developing the CSC led to its widespread adoption and use not only as a learning and accountability tool but also as a performance management tool. CRS and partners also emphasized the importance of respect for confidentiality in using the CSC given the sensitive nature of land tenure disputes.

In each commune, Lamina organized community gatherings in which the local populations assessed the land services based on 10 criteria. These were determined by local communities and approved by the Government Land Services Department. Lamina and local leaders then analyzed the results together, sharing them first with the government. Then they organized a second round of community gatherings at the commune level to share the results of CSC with the local population. Finally, the Government Land Services Department developed or modified an action plan to adapt their management practices in response to this feedback.

To disseminate these recommended changes, the Government Land Services Department offered a set of workshops, broadcasts and meetings. As part of this response, a center for support and legal advice was created in March 2013, supported by Diocesan staff. It enables the local population to access information on land issues and judicial procedures and provides counsel and information. Lamina's results include:

- 876 title deeds delivered and 400 percent increase in land certificates issued;
- 5,296 people trained on land rights issues, procedures to acquire title deeds, and securing title deeds and 649 people supported by the center for support and legal counsel;
- 48 instances of conflict addressed.

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR POLICY M&E

- Parent-teacher associations organize members to participate in public expenditure tracking surveys so that classroom construction is at budget and meets national construction standards.
- Community social cohesion committees collect and analyze data on trigger indicators for the conflict early warning early response or protection system.
- Local forestry associations monitor protected, mixed, and commercial areas to ensure sustainable use and management of timber and non-timber products.
- CSOs monitor public procurement in public services that are most vulnerable to corruption (e.g., healthcare, education, trade, and infrastructure development).
- CPLO engages with parliamentary appropriations committee members to insist that HIPC funds are used for their intended purpose.
- Coalition of youth associations demands that legislative and executive branch policymakers include youth in monitoring and evaluating policies affecting youth welfare and economic opportunities.
- Diocesan Caritas and JPCs build the capacity of sub-national government units' MEAL teams to improve monitoring of decentralized public service delivery.
- CRS strengthens government capacity to monitor implementation of UN Resolution 1325, which elevates the role of women in peacebuilding.
- Local universities strengthen the capacity of Parliament's public service committees to respond to and follow up on periodic audits of policies.

Tools for Policy Monitoring and Evaluating

CRS and partners use a variety of MEAL tools and resources to understand the effectiveness and impact of public policy efforts. Many governments also have specific M&E procedures and tools that they have created or that are required by donors directly funding government agencies. The following list includes those that CRS teams have found useful or which fill a technical gap identified by country programs working on policy.

- [CRS Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning \(MEAL\) Good Practices](#) 
- [A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Influence](#)
- [Monitoring Government Policy: A Tool Kit for Civil Society Organizations in Africa](#)
- [Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Influence and Advocacy](#)
- [Integrating a Gender Dimension into Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development Projects](#)
- [Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools](#)
- [Impact Assessment and Appraisal: Guidance Checklist for Policymakers](#)
- [Gender Impact Assessment: A Framework for Gender Mainstreaming](#)
- [Taking the Pulse of Policy-Policy Implementation Assessment Tool-USAID](#)
- [Monitoring Government Policies: A toolkit for Civil Society Actors in Africa, CAFOD, Trocaire, Christian Aid](#)

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INCLUSION OF GENDER AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND NEEDS IN POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is extremely important to develop indicators with and for vulnerable groups that go beyond gender and age disaggregation. Focusing on vulnerable groups means including them in all stages of the policy cycle, MEAL in

particular, and ensuring government actors involved with MEAL embrace the importance of these perspectives. By modeling the equality of women, youth and other vulnerable groups, CRS and partners help government institutions to understand the value of and means to practice greater downward accountability and to become more responsive to their needs and priorities.

A MEAL team's composition should also reflect this commitment and include men, women and youth with the capacity for undertaking analyses related to policy implementation and impact. Seconding qualified staff from women's and youth associations to government agencies' MEAL units is a reasonable short-term solution to increase diversity. Policy evaluation instruments, reporting and learning agendas should all intentionally integrate the interests of youth, women, and other vulnerable groups, analyzing any changes in gendered or age-based power relationships that the policy may have contributed with recommendations for addressing them.

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS RELEVANT FOR M&E OF POLICY EFFORTS⁴⁵

The indicators below come from CRS' [Peacebuilding Globally Acceptable Indicator](#) templates and provide good examples of indicators that can be adapted to a specific policy. They are in no way representative of the full spectrum of governance programming implemented by CRS and its partner organizations. Each template includes: definitions of key terms and concepts, how to further define them locally, possible theories of change, suggested qualitative and quantitative instruments, calculations for analysis, and tips for interpreting the results against the project's broader objectives.

- Number of joint initiatives between youth organizations and strategic governance agencies 'in x time period';
- Primary school net enrollment for girls;
- Number of joint activities undertaken by Church and other FBOs to advocate for increased equity on targeted issues (state targeted issues here) in 'X time period';
- Increased degree of transparency about extractive industry operations in the national budget, including tax and royalty payments and costs associated with regulation and oversight (measured by index score);
- Increased citizen participation in the government's annual budget development process (measured by participation index);
- Degree of social and economic inequalities between ethnic and other key identity groups in 'x time period';
- The amount of financial resources that the government allocated from its own budget to targeted issue(s): total amount or percent increase from pre- to post-intervention.

As both [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) and [Civic Participation](#) involve the quality, use, and impact of policy, please also see the [MEAL sections](#) in those two chapters for further guidance.

Great Source of Governance Indicators

USAID's handbook of indicators, covering all three Engaging Government pathways (and more!) has stood the test of time. It can be found [here](#).



Archbishop of Bangui, Dieudonne Nzapalainga, speaks to soccer teams before the start of the friendly competition of the 'Olympique Real de Bangui' hosted by Catholic Relief Services and its partners at the Stade Barthelemy Boganda Bangui, Central African Republic on May 28, 2014. Catianna Tjjerina for CRS.

⁴⁵ The following text is taken directly from CRS' 2010 publication [Globally Accepted Indicator \(GAIN\) Peacebuilding Indicators](#)

4. OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

This chapter leverages the depth of CRS' partnership and capacity strengthening experience with a range of groups—public sector, private sector, and civil society—to provide guidance specific to the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in working with *government* actors.

Government itself is, of course, a major part of what promotes good governance. Helping state institutions at all levels to function effectively is a specific and critical task. It is one that CRS and partners are involved with in numerous countries. And everywhere CRS works, programming is directly affected by the quality of state institutional performance. Examples include a public health sector rejuvenated by improved leadership; the state's capacity to distribute resources for local implementation of a national agricultural policy; or cross-sector coordination during a rapid onset emergency.

Capacity strengthening with government is an emerging area for CRS. The agency will continue to learn from the experience of programs and partners to provide technical assistance to government institutions to support them in their critical role providing essential public goods and services for their populations. As well, the potential for transformational impact throughout societies when governments do have this capacity is confirmed by both program experience and social science research. For example, strong public institutional capacity—particularly in terms of inclusion and accountability—is directly correlated with a reduced likelihood of political crisis and armed conflict.⁴⁶

CRS THEORY OF CHANGE FOR OPTIMAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

IF a government institution has the capacity to perform its operational functions equitably, AND

IF it has the capacity to perform its technical functions independently and through effective collaboration with other governance actors (public and private), AND

IF the participating government units have sufficient authority, autonomy and resources,

THEN the government institution progresses toward optimal institutional performance, generating positive results for itself, other levels and units of government and in the lives of constituents, contributing to political sustainability.

4.1. WHAT IS OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND WHY IT MATTERS FOR GOVERNMENT

Government institutions in all sectors must perform certain functions to be financially, programmatically, organizationally, and politically sustainable and promote equity within the population. Working toward OIP is a continuous process. It requires:

- Vision, planning, and respect for the rule of law;
- Coordination and collaboration among levels and functions of government;
- The ability to adapt to constantly changing contexts and available resources;
- Effective communication of the vision and changes to the institutions' constituents and stakeholders at all levels;
- Effective systems management, including for human resources, procurement, logistics, budgeting and other enabling functions.

⁴⁶ The World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2011), 84.

SUSTAINABILITY: FOUR COMPONENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

1. *Institutional sustainability.* The ability to continually manage external and internal forces in a manner that preserves and/or re-creates the main institutional structures needed to achieve the institution's mission.
2. *Financial and resource sustainability.* The ability to continually manage changes to the flow of resources (in and out) and financial management systems in a manner that preserves and/or re-creates the main institutional systems and ability to execute public-sector activities.
3. *Public function sustainability.* The ability to continually manage changes to public functions in a manner that preserves and/or re-creates the systems and structures needed to execute public-sector activities.
4. *Political sustainability.* The ability to continually manage changes to public image, functional networks, professional credibility, and legitimacy with constituency and stakeholders in a manner that preserves and/or maintains the ability to achieve the institution's public mandate.

How does OIP relate to CRS' Institutional Strengthening Guide (ISG) and HOCAI?

The application of OIP by government actors as presented in this guide highlights what CRS understands as important functions for any formal entity, whether in civil society, business or government. CRS supports such functions through capacity strengthening using the [Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument \(HOCAI\)](#), part of CRS' comprehensive guide [Institutional Strengthening: Building Strong Management Processes](#). Many CRS and partner teams will be familiar with HOCAI and ISG, which are useful references for further information on concepts, approaches, and program examples.

Governance's bottom line:

The most basic question that any citizen and other community member can answer is, "Is the government delivering?" In other words, each citizen knows full well whether government performance is making life easier or more complicated. All the more reason CRS and partners should focus considerable effort on strengthening government institutional capacity to operate effectively and equitably.

WHY OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE MATTERS FOR GOVERNMENT

A main government function is to deliver [public goods](#) and services. In order to perform this function, government must have political will and the requisite capacity, that is, individual and team knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs), and organizational systems and structures. The degree to which government units are able to deliver public goods directly impacts economic and social wellbeing. One of the most fundamental indicators of a healthy relationship between those who govern and those who are governed is the degree to which government consistently and equitably delivers high-quality services. Thus, service delivery affects economic development, political stability, and social cohesion.

Principles in Action: What does an optimally performing government institution look like? Support to MOLISA in Vietnam

In many countries, there is a gap between policies supporting people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) and the services actually reaching them, due to discriminatory practices that reduce PLWHA access to such services. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has this responsibility and also the access challenge.



CRS identified this as an opportunity to improve institutional performance. With US\$280,000 PEPFAR funding for 2008-09, the *Network for Children to Support Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Vietnam* program supported MOLISA in setting up a referral system between key service providers, developing monitoring system tools, and identifying community-based volunteers in eight provinces. MOLISA also recruited the national University of Labor and Social Affairs to develop curricula to mainstream social work with children infected and affected by HIV and teach it to more than 3,000 students.



CRS supported MOLISA in Vietnam to set up a referral system between key service providers, developing monitoring system tools, and identifying community-based volunteers in eight provinces. Jennifer Hardy/CRS.

47 Original definitions can be found on p. 41 of CRS' guide, *Institutional Strengthening: Building Strong Management Processes* (2011). Adaptations include replacing *organizational* with *institutional* and revising program delivery terminology with that of provision of public goods and executing public functions.

Believing that these efforts were only the beginning, CRS committed a further US\$300,000 in private funds in 2010 and launched a second phase, *Technical Support for the Implementation of the Community-based Network Model*. CRS worked with MOLISA to advocate for the network model of service provision in the National Plan of Action to support OVC, which was approved by the prime minister in 2014. Between 2010-14, phase II trained hundreds of people, including employees of MOLISA, the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health, and community-based workers in 10 provinces, improving services for OVC. The project supported almost 3,000 children from these provinces to access needed services. CRS, MOLISA and UNICEF then co-developed a national training manual, printed by the Ministry with their own funds. The manual set standards of care for this group of children within both the community and among government agencies, and the government has used it to train staff in 28 provinces. At the national level, CRS now plays an advisory role as MOLISA implements the National Plan of Action, developing an Inter-Ministerial Circular on Case Management for inclusive services for children infected by HIV and AIDS, and to develop indicators to monitor and evaluate progress.

MOLISA's path is a rich example of working toward optimal institutional performance—from service gaps, to setting up systems, to collaborating across government departments, to scaling to national reach and policy.

Optimal institutional performance also helps enable subsidiarity, recognizing people and organizations, in their own context, are best suited to identify and address their development needs. As subsidiarity includes the devolution of decision-making power, it is a key aspect of decentralization and important for effective government performance.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Public institutions, and CRS and partners in their support of government, face a number of factors influencing optimal institutional performance. Being aware of context and capacity issues, including the following, are especially critical for how CRS and partners approach working with government in capacity strengthening toward better performance.

Complex systems. Government is one part of an ecosystem that also includes civil society and private sector actors. Increasingly, aid actors now focus on more systems-wide approaches and effective ways to promote collaboration and evidence-based metrics of success among government efforts, private sector activities, and civil society development programs. Both macro and micro-levels of context analysis can help CRS, partners and government institutions anticipate and manage the benefits and drawbacks of these complex systems. For example, considering the best models for which sectors lead delivery of which public goods, both as a short-term solution to an urgent need and implications for long-term planning. Government, for its part, also has unique roles in addition to the delivery of public goods, such as managing monetary policy (e.g., inflation or interest rates), setting standards (e.g., building codes or business licensing), and the stewardship of resources for the common good (e.g., natural resources or coordinating donor efforts).

Uneven decentralization. The transfer of power and resources to subnational levels is an important goal, but often fails to live up to the promise. Limitations of decentralization include uneven distribution of public resources across sub-regions of countries and service delivery sectors. This can be due to preferential treatment of a region for political gains, shocks and stresses (per below), or simply poor planning. Decentralization can be made more effective by strengthening capacity in forecasting, planning and oversight.

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Nature of the civil service. Depending on the context, the culture, recruitment and management of the civil service can be an asset or impediment to strengthening OIP. Where there is regular turnover as civil servants are re-assigned to different roles, departments or geographies, the strategy for skills strengthening must adapt. Strengthening the capacity of whole units and partnering with those units to develop internal capacity for skills-building of new colleagues has been effective. Re-assignments can also help capacities get into other units and generate demand for further capacity strengthening.

Shocks and stresses. Government capacity to deliver public goods is frequently limited in contexts struggling with acute or long-term economic instability, internal or regional conflict, natural disasters or increasing impacts of climate change, and other shocks and stresses. As well, the capacity to adapt to changing (often rapidly) circumstances can vary among government units and at various levels, making it challenging for institutions to maintain progress. CRS and partners can help public institutions anticipate and plan for mitigating and managing shocks and stresses.

Technical expertise of CRS and partners. While the agency has deep expertise in institutional strengthening of CSOs globally over many decades, those evidence-based methods and tools have not consistently been used with or relevant to the work CRS and partners do to support government institutions' performance. CRS and partners increasingly recognize the value of program designs (and funding) that offers the flexibility to adjust activities relevant to evolving political power dynamics, agendas, influence, priorities, relationships, and favored decision-making processes, all of which are beyond the control of program implementers. Biases, personal agendas, limitations, and access to resources might affect the process of public sector capacity assessment and capacity strengthening efforts.

Watch this space!

CRS' partnership and capacity strengthening team is working hard to adapt its capacity strengthening approaches, methods and tools to public sector institutions. New products and services will soon be found at Institute for Capacity Strengthening: <https://ics.crs.org/>.

4.2. CRS' GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING APPROACH

Implementing experience has informed the CRS belief that successful capacity strengthening is comprised of three major components: All three components have elements of what many donors call "technical assistance."



CAPACITY BUILDING

Individuals and teams develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes via:

- Training and peer-to-peer learning
- On-the-job training
- Exchange visits and study tours



INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

Organizations develop systems, structures and policies via:

- Program and management quality assurance
- Business process mapping
- Compliance and regulations
- Standard operating procedures



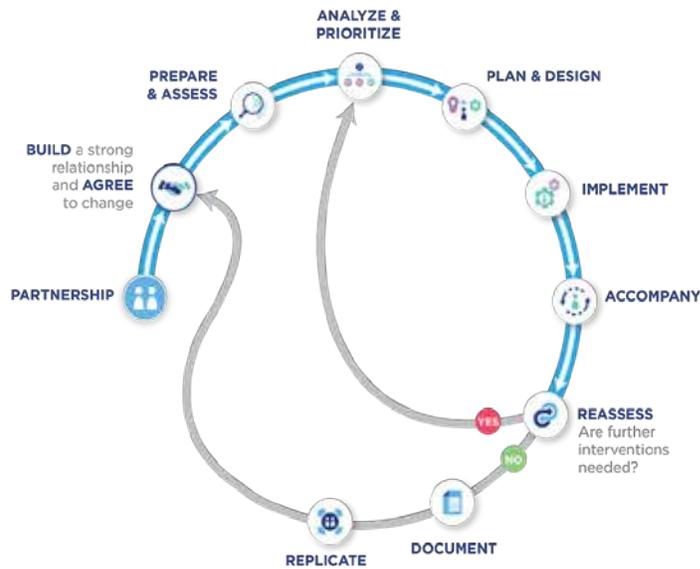
ACCOMPANIMENT

Master new skills and formalize organizational changes, via:

- Job shadowing
- Coaching and mentoring
- Communities of practice

The agency's approach to capacity strengthening is rooted in the [IHD framework](#), which regards effective systems and structures as essential for human development and wellbeing. Many CRS colleagues will be familiar with the capacity strengthening model in Figure 10 for civil society partners. It also applies to governance systems and the structures. Of course, public sector influence and constraints are different from those found in CSOs (and businesses!). Thus, CRS and partners can use this familiar model with important adaptations for working with government institutions. The above theory of change provides a starting place to create context-specific options for programming.

Figure 10: CRS' Capacity Strengthening Model



The OIP theory of change and the model for CRS' capacity strengthening (Figure 10) process are a useful combination whether the goal is: improving institutional capacity based on identified needs in existing systems, or longer-term political sustainability through more effective public systems to manage change. In both cases, the process of supporting optimal institutional performance begins with agreement about desired change with the relevant government ministries, units or departments, and staff and the design of an appropriate process. Where there are identified needs, implementation and accompaniment can focus on specific knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to effectively plan, coordinate, and deliver basic public goods. For longer-term strategic change management needs, implementation and accompaniment should also include skills and systems to respond to civic participation and incorporate adaptive capacity (see below) to anticipate and put policies in place for inclusive and equitable economic access, environmental resource management, or individual and identity group rights. The feedback loops of reassessment, documentation and replication are important for all kinds of institutional performance efforts.

KEY TERM

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Helping government and other systems, along with individuals and communities, address the challenges of recurrent shocks and chronic stresses is a focus for resilience programs and CRS' Pathway to Prosperity. Adaptive capacity is central to this goal. It refers to access to resources in order to cope with shocks and hazards as well as stresses and long-term changes. Transformative capacity is then the ability to initiate or navigate through change. The 2016 guide

highlights two large-scale CRS programs aimed at reducing long-term vulnerability. It notes a number of ways the programs worked with government to strengthen adaptive capacity, including support to government agricultural extension teams, health districts, and research institutes. The guide identifies opportunities for national policies and institutions to adapt and transform, including integrating DRR, health and agricultural practices responsive to the changing climate, and other development approaches. Recommendations include a focus on communities' empowerment to influence resilience agendas and priorities at local and sub-national levels of government for the provision of technical assistance, inputs, and other development goods and services that respond to local realities and priorities.

In analyzing the context, it is important to recognize that while there are similarities among approaches for civil society and public-sector capacity strengthening, there are also distinctions. The examples below highlight, in several key capacity areas, some of the considerations to be aware of when determining how to approach capacity strengthening with government.

A critical factor is that government structures often operate within legally delineated boundaries, which may be set by a different branch or level of government. For example, a central government line ministry like the Ministry of Education receives its annual appropriation from the National Assembly and must account for the impact of its spending to the appropriate parliamentary committees. Similarly, it retains the authority to recruit, hire and fire school teachers but local government units, e.g., communes or districts, are responsible for ensuring access to and quality of primary school education. Challenges arise because these lines of authority and communication are often unclear and sometimes contradictory.

There is also the question of political will. CSOs, driven by their commitment to achieve their mission, operate in ways that maximize the benefits of their programming to their members. Government actors and institutions are similarly motivated by a desire to achieve their policy agenda. To do so, they must navigate through the various, sometimes conflicting legal frameworks, competing political interests and multiple layers of bureaucracy. Political will, therefore, is the willingness of government actors to mobilize and use their personal political power and institutional authority to achieve their agenda's objectives. They might do so by manipulating, negotiating, building coalitions or just forcing key decisions. Regardless, the presence or absence of political will can enable or hinder capacity strengthening outcomes.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CAPACITY STRENGTHENING APPROACHES WITH GOVERNMENT

Human Resource Management

- Civil service systems in some countries have been impacted by external requirements for structural adjustment from international financial institutions, which puts limits on the public-sector workforce, including its overall size and distribution across job categories.
- Civil service laws can be clear and well-defined in some cases and contradictory and antiquated in others, leaving discretion (and the potential for corruption) about issues of staff hiring/firing, professional development and training, promotion and tenure.
- Securing a position working in government is often desirable and, in some contexts, can raise questions about qualifications, incentives and motivation working in an intense political environment.

Public Procurement

- Issues of administrative corruption, both small scale and systematic, can be a concern due to weak internal control systems and external oversight, lack of transparency, weak capacity of anticorruption agencies, and pervasive patron-client networks.
- Governments may limit the transparency of procurement systems by blocking or underfunding the work of government auditors, inspectors general or parliamentary committees that have the mandate and authority to investigate corrupt practices.

MEAL

- Monitoring and evaluation of government policy and programs is hindered by the general lack of resources, institutional capacity and a general aversion to accountability.
- Often monitoring and evaluation involves multiple offices across several government agencies or even levels of government, all of which must play a role for it to be effective.

OIP: The Nuts and Bolts of Governance

Government institutions' effectiveness relies in no small part on its capacity to perform well in certain core functions. There are several, and the few mentioned here are by no means a complete list. Nevertheless, based on assessment results, CRS and partners should focus on those functional areas that either are instrumental for effective institutional performance or have created bottlenecks to stymie it.

- Replacing paper-based systems for data collection, storage and analysis with information technology systems remains a challenge for the reasons stated above.

Financial Management

- Weak internal control systems and statutory and social accountability mechanisms reduce the incentives for more effective, transparent management of public funds.
- Past practice and cultural acceptance of the resulting systemic administrative corruption leads to the inefficient allocation and management of scarce public resources and sub-optimal policy outcomes.

4.3. CONTEXT ANALYSIS SPECIFIC TO GOVERNMENT CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The guidance in the [Context Analysis](#) chapter provides the basis for work specific to OIP. Further analysis may be required to determine how to approach the above theory of change, such as who should work with which systems or staff and at which level within the government institution. The following sections guide practitioners on how to map the actors—deciding who is best positioned to strengthen government’s capacity; negotiating and agreeing on the process of capacity strengthening with government; and conducting capacity assessments and creating capacity development plans. CRS and relevant partners should carefully sequence the following processes to inform and reinforce each other.

CONSIDERING FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT PARTNER

An institution’s theoretical and actual functions determine its required competencies. Like a CSO, a government partner will have stated functions (e.g., a national-level environmental ministry responsible for setting and ensuring standards for clean drinking water). Unlike civil society, government partner functions are largely determined by the law(s) that establish them and subsequent laws, policies, or procedures that govern their operations (e.g., staffing, financial resources, accountability, etc.). Other legislation and regulations provide each institution/agency with specific authorities to enforce laws and policies in their sector or area. In this way, government is quite different from CSOs that operate in a more general legal framework and determine their own mission, strategy, and program areas.

Targeting OIP support:

- Determine the mandate(s) and function(s) of that government entity or entities.
- Determine any other public entities (e.g., another ministry) that shares some or all of the mandate(s) and function(s).
- Explore the relationship between various public entities, some of which are prescribed by law (e.g., a sector ministry is responsible for identifying legal infractions while a ministry of justice is responsible for prosecuting cases in court).
- Determine government partner’s role, responsibilities, and authority—both in theory and in practice.
- Determine the competencies (KSAs and systems) that the government partner needs to perform its official and unofficial functions effectively.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND MAPPING THE SYSTEM

Thorough and ongoing macro or [sector context analysis](#) will help identify the larger political context in which specific government institutions are functioning. This includes the form of government, degree of decentralization, nature of the civil service, autonomy of institutions in general in the context, trust in government, public perceptions of the sector, and key relationships within and influencing the sector’s effectiveness.

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A more specific analysis can then focus on specific institutions' roles in the sector, the current and past relationships among actors in the sector, and technical and material resources to which institutions have access. Government actors in every sector and at each level are unique,⁴⁸ and CRS and partners might work with any number of these entities concurrently, depending on the portfolio and host-country priorities. To be effective in supporting performance improvement, CRS and partners need to have a realistic understanding the power dynamics, interests, assets, and other forces at work.

Targeting OIP support:

- Determine the appropriate sector and level (e.g., national, sub-national, community) for engagement and identify key actors. *With whom, exactly, does CRS plan to work with and why? What is their function? Does anyone else perform some/all of this function (officially and unofficially)?*
- Map the different actors and influencers (official and unofficial). *What enables key actors to do their job? What prevents it?*
- Begin to consider the unique priorities, talents, and resources of the different teams within these government bodies, including their interest in and commitment to change. *Who sets the agenda? Who has sway over the other actors?*
- Identify formal and informal incentives, influencers, and other drivers of change that affect the partner directly; consider how these forces fit into the overall political environment. *What parts of the system are open/closed? Is that likely to change?*
- Assess the political will of and obstacles faced by government partner. *What factors are explicit and how to understand those that are implicit?*

CRS EXAMPLES

Given the multi-sectoral nature of children's issues, multiple ministries are frequently tasked with supporting vulnerable children such as orphans or those affected by HIV. When strengthening capacity of the Ministry of Social Welfare, for example, CRS and partners would have to take into account other ministries such as Education, Youth, Health, or Labor. There are likely common technical areas (e.g., vocational training offered through youth groups or health education programs in schools) as well as organizational overlap to consider (e.g., budget allotments or legal jurisdiction).

A district-level ministry office in a highly decentralized health system may be authorized to manage funding and staffing, and ensure the quality of primary care in public clinics whereas a comparable office in a centralized system may have scant authority, responsibilities, or resources. These two bodies need different competencies to do their jobs.

APPROPRIATE CAPACITY STRENGTHENING MODEL

Once there is a solid understanding of the macro environment, and the focused system, it is also important to identify which actors should take which roles in capacity strengthening.

Context analysis can also help reveal if a capacity strengthening intervention will be most effective if performed by CRS, by a peer or another partner institution, or using a mixed approach.

Variables influencing the most appropriate model for government capacity strengthening include who has access to the government (e.g., Church partners, personal relationships), who the government actors feel most aligned with (e.g., a trusted agency, peers), and who has the [requisite skills](#) and capacity to share. For example, in CRS' AIDSRelief Rwanda project, one senior staff member was also a well-respected professor of medicine who had taught many leaders in the public health system. His reputation and existing relationships brought a

⁴⁸ Strategic triangle for public value: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/CSRI/publications/workingpaper_3_moore_khagram.pdf

Decentralization: Where the Action Is

Many of CRS' larger multi-sectoral programs operate at the sub-national level, strengthening the delivery of basic services, e.g., healthcare, agricultural extension, water supply, etc. Their success depends on the enabling environment created by a country's decentralization legal framework. Decentralization looks different in every country, so country programs and partners should familiarize themselves with this legal framework and how it is enforced. Such knowledge will be essential in understanding the legal, policy and operational parameters by which government partners must carry out their core functions.

vital credibility to the project's technical and organizational capacity strengthening efforts. Realistically, one partner may not possess all of these assets; implementers must make a transparent judgment call—in collaboration with the government partner—about how to proceed.

International bodies (including CRS and other INGOs) can bring substantial value, but the importance of leveraging local or regional resources cannot be overstated. Even in resource-constrained environments, high-caliber technical expertise frequently can be found in academic institutions, the private sector, and regional networking bodies. Examples include the West African Network for Peacebuilding, a former CRS partner that is now fully independent, and the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, which attracts many practitioners from across Southeast Asia for training and continued education. Peer-to-peer learning can be extremely effective and efficient with government partners as well; for example, staff in a high-functioning provincial health office could be paired with counterparts in a struggling provincial health office, or teams could participate in learning tours with regional counterparts.

Key actors throughout the organization must be interested in and committed to change and to the capacity strengthening process in order to be successful. The steps may vary, but will typically include some sort of formal agreement and/or application process, and a range of internal consensus building efforts led from within the organization.



CRS Global Fund Project Manager Albert Rushingwa speaks to mothers during an awareness program focused on preventing bites from mosquitos at the Shaloom Health Centre, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Sam Phelps for CRS.

4.4. ASSESSING CAPACITY

Even in the most challenging contexts, government partners have existing capacity. To most effectively strengthen that capacity, assets and gaps must be identified and prioritized through an assessment process. This is part of micro-level [context analysis](#). While capacity assessments of government institutions in part draw from contextual analysis findings, they are a distinct step in pursuit of optimal institutional performance in the public sector. An assessment team should be primarily comprised of people from the organization itself and the assessment should be highly participatory, open, fair, inclusive, and empowering. Furthermore, the organization undertaking the assessment owns the process and outcomes of the assessment.

Targeting OIP support:

- Accurately identify an organization's capacity strengthening needs and celebrate existing organizational capacities.
- Use data collected through the assessment to inform capacity strengthening priorities and action planning.
- Help to establish and/or nurture relationships among all involved parties.

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Capacity assessments always have the potential to raise sensitive issues; this feature may be especially true among some government bodies. Bear in mind a) the sensitivity of some of the information that will be sought in any kind of an assessment exercise, and b) the willingness of government agencies to share such information. Such information may not necessarily be *classified* but will still be sensitive if it reflects poorly on the government. In a more closed system, the kind of assessment might be rather limited. Regardless, assessment processes should be aware of the political costs/benefits to agencies (and their authorizers) of sharing information about their performance.

Tools and Resources

- [CRS Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument \(HOCAI\)](#) is designed to assist local institutions to conduct a facilitated self-analysis of their strengths and challenges, develop an action plan, and improve organizational performance through capacity strengthening. With HOCAI, CRS creates a standardized framework to help organizations engage in a process of continuous assessment and improvement that will sustain organizational capacities. 🔑
- [CRS' Institutional Strengthening: Building Strong Management Processes \(ISG\)](#) 🔑

4.5. ANALYZING DATA, PRIORITIZING NEEDS, DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

All organizations have areas in which they can improve; by analyzing capacity assessment findings, organizations identify and prioritize areas for improvement, taking care to consider how to leverage existing strengths and resources. Organizations might choose to prioritize certain capacity strengthening efforts for a range of reasons, including potential for rapid or large improvement, short or immediate results, and the organization's vision for the future. An outside capacity strengthening body can make recommendations and suggest criteria for setting priorities, but it is important that the institution determines its own priorities and commit to the resulting action plan and interventions.

The findings of the [contextual analysis](#) are likely to be especially critical when prioritizing capacity strengthening interventions with government partners. The formal and informal influences on government may affect priorities in ways that they would not for a civil society partner. For example, a subnational ministry might be mandated to enforce national quality standards, and rightly identify that they need capacity strengthening of staff in all districts and funding to fulfill the mandate. Piloting in one district, including standards training for civil servants and closely tracking costs and results, could give the subnational ministry proof of concept and data for a realistic funding request.

Based on identified capacity gaps in the initial assessment and/or using iterative self-assessment processes, CRS supports government units to create capacity strengthening action plans with set targets and measurable capacity outcomes.

Targeting OIP support:

- Prioritize needs and design action plan, capacity strengthening interventions
- Cultivate and reinforce institutional ownership of the process

Navigating Political Sensitivities

CRS and partners should be especially mindful of political sensitivities when probing questions of *revenue generation* and *budget allocation*. At the same time, such assessments also offer excellent opportunities for modeling transparency and accountability, two core principles of good governance.

Guided by the action plan, organizations participate in capacity strengthening activities facilitated by an organization such as CRS and partners. Capacity strengthening typically occurs concurrently with existing programming. A government institution must continue operating while it improves its systems and KSAs, and participants can apply new skills or systems to real-world situations.

Tools and Resources

The [Assessment to Action Planning Workbook](#) is designed to facilitate the processes of analyzing HOCAI results, prioritizing the areas to be strengthened or maintained, and developing a corresponding action plan with resource estimates. It has been developed to help organizations using the HOCAI take the results of that assessment and match them with a plan of action intended to strengthen priority areas of perceived weakness, as well as to ensure that important areas of strength are given the needed attention to remain strong. The tool also assists with tracking actual costs and beneficiary numbers, information that can help an organization better understand and monitor the financial and human resource requirements for their capacity strengthening efforts. 

4.6. HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS FUNCTION MORE EFFECTIVELY BY DEVELOPING NEW KSAS

Individual staff and teams must have the competencies (KSAs) to do their jobs. CRS and partners work with these staff/teams to use technical capacity assessment data to develop capacity improvement plans with clear outcomes in KSAs in the areas detailed in their priorities and action plan. The methods for KSA development should also be chosen in consultation with targeted staff/teams.

Targeting OIP support:

- Improve technical and organizational skills among staff/teams so that they can better do their job, particularly in relation to their unit's function.
- Identify strong KSAs available to use during the peer-to-peer support.
- Assist with learning management and maintenance to ensure continuous learning and growth.
- Reward good performance of individuals and teams.

Illustrative Activities:

- *Conduct pre- and in-service trainings* for government officials and civil servants on functional areas, governance principles including the roles and responsibilities of public officials and citizens, analysis approaches such as [PEA](#) and identified KSA needs. Include elements of action development to assist government staff in applying new KSA towards a particular real-life activity, such as a prioritized service delivery plan for vulnerable children.
- *Facilitate peer-exchange learning* amongst government staff with similar roles to develop and build KSAs (permanent secretaries from different ministries; district officials from different districts; etc.). Within a peer group, there may be differing levels of understanding and experience in a particular KSA area. Exchange activities allow peers to share and learn from each other with facilitators helping. Exchange visits can be made to other countries with government officials to see how another government has succeeded in a specific initiative, such as civil service reform.

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- *Identify or develop e-learning tools* in the KSAs areas required. E-learning can be made available through both online and offline platforms and allows for government staff to learn on their own time. A system for tracking performance can help identify further capacity support.
- *Conduct teambuilding exercises* with government staff that work closely together to help develop a deeper understanding amongst colleagues of each other's communication and management styles. Teambuilding can be incorporated into other training sessions and can offer practical tools to teams for giving and receiving feedback; planning; and managing change or conflict more effectively.
- *Developing curricula and capacity for public sector training* institutions to lead all of the above as part of planning for sustainability.

Tools and Resources

- [ICS online courses](#) offer a number of relevant skills building options.
- [USAID's Integrated Financial Management Information Systems guide](#) is one ICT4D application for government capacity, accountability and good public-decision-making. 

Principles in Action: Service Delivery and Resource Management

In Guatemala, the six-year U.S.-funded DFAP Food Security Program Focused on the First 1,000 Days (SEGAMIL in Spanish) focused on child nutrition and supporting municipalities in disaster preparedness and response. It built the skills of mayors' office staff, municipal city council members and personnel of the Municipal Planning Departments (MPD) in development and food security legislation, and other issues critical to food security issues in their localities.



Justice and Rule of Law. In Cameroon, CRS worked in collaboration with the Cameroon Bar Association and the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions of Yaoundé and Douala to implement the *Protecting the Rights of Inmates and Detainees* (PRIDE) program. From 2010-12, this U.S. State Department-funded program strengthened justice sector actors' capacity to implement Cameroon's new Penal Procedure Code by extending legal protections to those accused and convicted of crimes. The program worked intensively with judges, police officers, court officials and local council representatives (over one-third women). The Lawyer Association joined the partnership to ensure longer-term capacity support to the justice sector and help manage the dynamic relationship among stakeholders on these sensitive issues.

4.7. HELPING INSTITUTIONS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS BY DEVELOPING SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Even the most dedicated, talented staff member will be limited by ineffective systems and structures. CRS and partners promote strengthening of this institutional capacity to enable skilled staff and to help ensure that organizational success transcends the presence of individual team members. Systems strengthening can also include work across governmental agencies and departments to improve coordination, reduce overlapping mandates and replication, as well as overcome bottlenecks or gaps in communication. Developing capacity of government units and KSAs of staff is closely linked in order to ensure staff understand new systems and can operate such systems effectively.

Targeting OIP support:

- Enhance efficiency and sustainability by strengthening systems and procedures.
- Create enabling environment for individual/team performance.
- Ensure organizational, political, programmatic, and financial sustainability.

Modeling Good (Institutional) Behavior

Government workers must often work in less-than-optimal environments, making capacity building efforts all the more challenging. Team building exercises can expose them to new, improved individual and small group behaviors that are within their manageable interest to apply in their work settings.

CRS seeks to strengthen institutional capacity areas including: information management, financial accounting, internal governance, communication, procurement and supply, partnership management, human resources management, performance monitoring, auditing, evaluation and public procurement.

The systems and structures of government partners can be significantly more complex than many civil society counterparts. For example, CRS and partners often identify a capacity need at a district level, such as a reporting database, but the government process for addressing it could require upgrading the reporting system throughout an entire ministry. Such unplanned initiatives often take political champions or significant time to make happen. However, opportunities might exist to pilot a new system or structure for eventual scale up, such as in the example from CRS Nigeria's SMILE program below and in [Chapter 3](#).

Principles in Action: Scaling up capacity for national information systems in Nigeria

Nigeria's SMILE program worked with their national ministry partner to develop a curriculum for training volunteer social workers to provide direct household support to vulnerable children and their caregivers. The volunteers help gather data that is entered into the Ministry's Nigerian OVC Management Information System (NOMIS). CRS helped to roll out NOMIS from the national level to five states including their local governments by providing equipment and training to facilitate implementation.



ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

- *Support the development of coordination mechanisms that can strengthen program quality assurance.* The government institution can take the lead in convening key actors and stakeholders in either technical working groups or quality improvement teams. These groups can include civil society, private sector as well as other relevant ministries, agencies and departments. The project can support the lead to develop agendas, circulate and track action items, etc.
- *Provide equipment, software and training of government staff on how to use them for underdeveloped systems.* Technology can facilitate and improve effectiveness of many key government functions including budgeting, information systems management, procurement and financial management. Before investing further, assess if existing systems are appropriate and ensure costs to maintain investments are reasonable and planned for.
- *Focus on the priorities of women and youth, per the examples in Table 2 on the following page.*



CRS' SMILE program in Nigeria worked with government partners to scale up capacity for national information systems in Nigeria. Photo by Laura Pohl/CRS.



Click on the image above to watch "Improving the wellbeing of vulnerable children: SMILE Kids Club".

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Table 2. Strengthening Government Capacity to Address the Priorities of Women and Youth

Category of support	National level government (national and technical/line ministries)	Sub-national level government (Province, District, Village)
<p>Institutional strengthening: <i>Systems, structures and institutional environment are more gender/youth-responsive</i></p>	<p>Provide technical support in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a gender audit of the institution and identify inequalities in operations, policies and procedures • Mapping youth-serving government programs to determine strategic alliances • Drafting national policy and strategy documents related to youth, women and gender • Revising human resource policies and procedures to improve gender equality • Establishing Gender Focal Points • Developing and implementing gender- and youth-responsive MEAL systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development and implementation of gender- and youth-responsive MEAL systems • Promote youth internships/mentoring for young staff members in government offices • Support the creation of civic engagement channels for women and youth
<p>Capacity building: <i>Teams and individuals possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for more gender/youth-responsive provision of public goods</i></p>	<p><i>Ensure capacity building activities are delivered equitably across both sexes within a government institution and locality.</i></p> <p>Training and support tailored for new civil servants and established government officials/civil servants in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and youth awareness (minimum) • Gender analysis, action planning, budgeting, responsive MEAL systems • Positive youth development 	<p>Training and support with consistent information at all levels in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and youth awareness (minimum) • Gender analysis, action planning, budgeting, responsive MEAL systems • Positive youth development
<p>Accompaniment: <i>Ongoing coaching and mentoring promotes equity and participation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondment of gender or youth expertise for policy and strategy development, oversight and monitoring • Coaching and mentoring for women working in government and their supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer to peer coaching and mentoring of women in government (CRS/partners/government) • Mentoring local government on gender/youth-sensitive service delivery and monitoring • Coaching and mentoring for women working in government and their supervisors

4.8. ACCOMPANIMENT FOR OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Accompaniment combines thoughtful and consistent on-the-job coaching and mentoring with specific interventions such as workshops, conferences, or on-the-job training. Success is when accompaniment includes other methods of continuous technical assistance and learning. As discussed above, government partners have their own internal power dynamics, mandated functions and roles, specific constraints and opportunities, etc. and all these should be considered during accompaniment.

Several of the general accompaniment and technical assistance best practices are particularly relevant to government institutions, including:

- Helping institutions resolve their own problems, not do the work for them;
- Recognizing and appropriately communicating roles, limits, and expertise of government and CRS/partners;
- Supporting institutions to continuously reflect and self-assess, judging their own systems, approaches and behaviors rather than imposing judgment; and
- Understanding CRS and partner roles as accompaniment (or “walking beside”) individuals within an institution and with the institution as a whole.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCOMPANIMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

- Job sharing, secondment, peer-to-peer learning, coaching, observing program and management quality assurance, or any combinations can be accompaniment roles. CRS and partners can also facilitate support for public institutions by recruiting other mentors or technical experts to ensure technical consistency and mitigate doing harm.
- Initiating institutional changes may appear overwhelming to public sector groups unaccustomed to managing such processes. Through consistent coaching, CRS and partners can help leaders establish a comfortable process for understanding challenges (some of which have very complex causes and will require multiple steps to resolve) and feeling equipped to address them.
- Given government’s wide-reaching role in different sectors, there can be unique opportunities for accompaniment. For example, civil society or private sector partners might be able to scale-up their program by offering to have their experts (e.g., a database developer) accompany a government counterpart (e.g., a national-level health management information systems manager).
- Mentoring can also help build government staff confidence in inviting reflection on a public institution’s progress and challenges. If CRS or a partner is playing an accompaniment role with multiple ministries, departments or units, they can also play a convening role to bring government groups together for reflection and, in the process, improving communication, decision-making, and other systems and processes.

4.9. MEAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Through a number of large service delivery programs involving government, CRS and partners are learning that generating and making use of information on institutional performance leads to significantly improved results. Such information generation is also enhancing public transparency, accountability, and equity in service delivery. Monitoring and learning efforts are looking closely at whether these interventions lead to adherence to higher standards for service delivery and improved internal systems, processes and KSAs among public sector individuals and institutions.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR MEAL IN OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

- *Establish ownership.* MEAL processes with public institutions are most effective when they become a regular feature of the institutions work, not as part of one-off donor-funded programs. This requires political will, resource commitment and technical capacity.
- *Ensure consistency across levels.* Plan capacity strengthening leading to monitoring compliance with performance standards to be consistent across levels, from the ministry/organization level, to departments/organizational units, to individual public officials and civil servants. While such compliance is sometimes legislatively mandated at the highest levels, the quality of monitoring data is dependent on accurate work at lower levels.
- *Action planning for capacity building.* Establishing action plans with individuals as well as departments/units is useful in case of staffing changes, a frequent challenge with the public sector. Brief tests of knowledge among key individuals before and after capacity support can inform necessary adjustments to action plans, identify larger institutional strengthening needs and lay the foundation for working with people newly assigned to the department/unit.
- *Monitor impact on constituents.* Identify constituents and other structures of government or stakeholders that can benefit from improved OIP and assess intended and unintended impacts.
- *Actively learn from the process.* Adaptations, progress, and setbacks to plans all offer useful lessons to future capacity strengthening efforts when CRS and partners work longer-term with a public institution. Lessons can also be applied to work with other institutions in the same context. Documentation and strategic dissemination of institutional strengthening processes is also part of modeling transparency, accountability and learning that can serve others.
- *Integrate MEAL processes by/with government institutions with citizen-led participatory government monitoring processes.* As discussed in the [Civic Participation](#) chapter, this approach has numerous benefits. It can facilitate gap analysis between government self-assessment and constituent perceptions, showing where there is alignment in priorities for government capacity strengthening versus where institutions might not be aware of their own strengths or shortcomings.
- *Mechanisms for responsiveness to public inquiry.* Establishing channels for questions and feedback on public service delivery, policy priorities and implementation must be matched with channels for responding to the public's inquiry. Institutional strengthening is often needed to establish two-way channels that are transparent and accessible to all. Capacity building can focus on helping government staff determine effective messaging and means of disseminating findings of MEAL efforts to keep the public informed and grow trust in public processes.

Many of these points relate directly to the relationship between government's optimal institutional performance and roles of civic participation in good governance. [Chapter 5](#) explores this further.

CRS' MEAL community of practice is constantly looking for new ways to expand and improve on its good practices. Be sure to regularly visit [their site](#) on CRS Global.



In 2009, CRS built a settlement for the return and accommodation of the elderly coming from collective centers in the Municipality of Fojnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sam Tarling for CRS

5. CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The previous two chapters described ways in which government *supplies* public goods; this chapter will outline ways in which citizens demand them. At the core of citizen *demand* is civic participation, which includes four broad components: Awareness, Action, Response, and Engagement. This chapter provides descriptions of each of these four components (the “what”) while proposing the idea of collective impact as a model (the “how”) for designing approaches. This chapter also includes specific CRS examples, relevant tools, and a few considerations.

Civic participation is defined as **how citizens and other members of communities actively engage in public affairs** and is a cornerstone of a strong relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. CRS’ and partners’ experience in strengthening that relationship informs the following theory of change.

CRS THEORY OF CHANGE FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

IF citizens acknowledge the value of engaging with governing structures, AND
IF they have the capacity and confidence to do so, AND
IF they are mobilized around an issue or set of issues that is meaningful to them,
THEN they will articulate their needs/priorities to public officials and hold those officials accountable for responding to them.

When combined with accountable [public policy](#) and strong [public institutional capacity](#), civic participation contributes to social change through citizen and civil society demands for more inclusive, equitable, transparent and accountable governance.

5.1. WHY CIVIC PARTICIPATION

At its heart is the principle of subsidiarity, the idea that no higher-level body should perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level by people who have a better understanding of the issue.⁴⁹ Civic participation applies this principle and is a critical way for integrating governance into other areas of programming. Nevertheless, it is still important to consider how civic participation contributes to improving and is improved by public policy and institutional performance.

MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

The success and sustainability of programs depend on the active participation of people most directly impacted by these programs. Their participation helps us and our partners to better understand their needs and priorities. A more responsive public decision-making process will likely be more effective than one that is not.⁵⁰ Civic participation connects people with shared interests and increases their knowledge of government functions. This, in turn, empowers them to voice their concerns on challenging issues and to influence government decision-making in response to citizen demands.

STRENGTHENED BONDS, SOCIAL CHANGE

Civic participation also involves mechanisms to resolve differences nonviolently and to hold government accountable for their actions and performance. It provides community members with the knowledge, skills and motivation they need to reclaim their rights and to assume responsibility for governance in their communities. CRS’ experience has shown that when people work together in right relations they can transform unjust systems and structures.

KEY TERM

Civic participation is defined as **how citizens and other members of communities actively engage in public affairs and is a cornerstone of a strong relationship between those who govern and those who are governed.**

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49 Catholic Relief Services Guiding Principles: <http://www.crs.org/about/guiding-principles>.

50 Public Administration and Democratic Governance: Governments Serving Citizens UN Publication No.: ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/. 2007.

Figure 11: Sample application of John-Paul Lederach’s strategic triangle

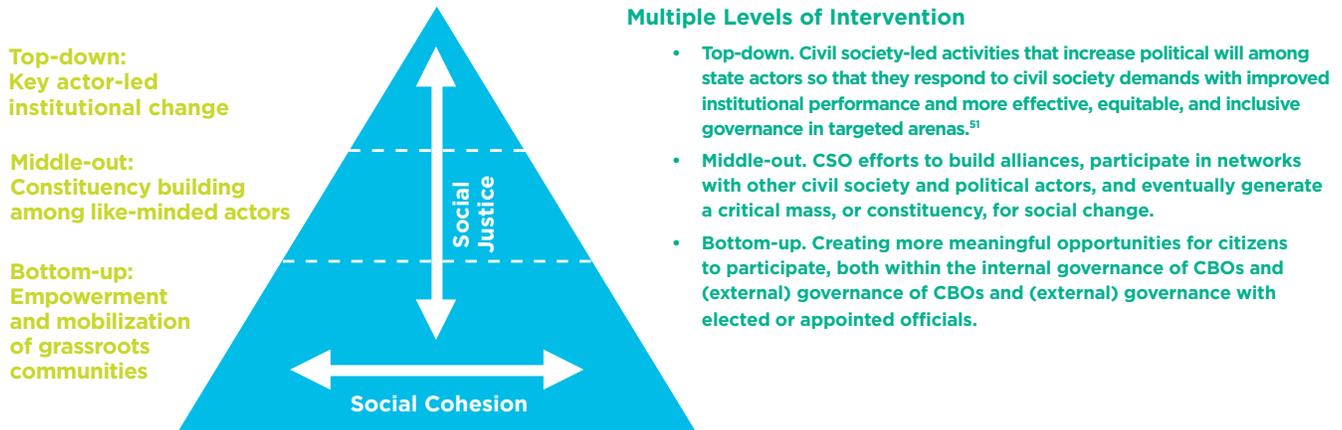


Figure 11 above summarizes how to apply John-Paul Lederach’s strategic triangle, first introduced in [Chapter 1](#), to civic participation. Framed in this way, civic participation contributes to improving both *horizontal* and *vertical* social cohesion. For the former, it brings together diverse groups with shared interests to work on common concerns, such as public housing in a post-conflict setting, or prioritizing early childhood development. For vertical social cohesion, more responsive governance improves public perceptions of government credibility, thus strengthening public trust in it.

Principles in Action: Sequencing work on natural resource management laws in Senegal

The CRS Senegal SCOPE project introduced in [Policy chapter](#), targeted interventions at multiple levels, linking and sequencing them to improve local enforcement of national NRM laws and resource management as well as prevent resource-based conflict.



- **Grassroots.** In community awareness and civic action sessions, CRS and partners used a participatory process to bring men, women, girls and boys together to inventory their natural resources, identify major constraints to sustainable NRM, and develop an agreement containing a set of rules and community sanctions that form the basis of local enforcement of national NRM and other environmental laws.
- **Middle.** Civic participation was channeled through village and inter-village committees and eventually regional platforms to harmonize local enforcement of national NRM and other environmental laws. These structures developed alliances among key actors and mobilized more people to revitalize customary governance structures and to support broader efforts at advocacy before state authorities.
- **Top.** The local law was submitted to national advisory services for review and comment and then presented to local councils for deliberation before approval by the Authority representing the state (the Sub-Prefect).

5.2. POLITICAL WILL, CIVIC SPACE AND POWER DYNAMICS IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION

As discussed in the [Policy chapter](#), social change is, in part, a contest among different social, political and economic interests. Those holding power—be they individual political leaders, prominent government ministries, powerful

⁵¹ Adapted from Aaron Chassy, CRS. “Civil Society and Development Effectiveness in Africa.”

economic interests or privileged community groups—are rarely eager to share it. Still, civic participation offers the best way for citizens to demand that power be used more justly.

Individuals can become disillusioned when they perceive that they have been excluded from public decision-making. They can also grow frustrated by the lack of response by ruling elites or feel a response is insufficient. Depending on the context, citizens may respond by peacefully taking action or by leaving the civic arena and resorting to violence to express their anger against injustices, real and perceived.

Any of these actions can produce a response by government, the most extreme being the use of security forces to silence citizens, which closes rather than opens civic space. The challenge is offering ruling elites the right incentives so that they are willing to keep this space open while at the same time improving institutional performance so they have capacity to respond to demands for social change.

The potential to increase civic participation varies depending on the sociopolitical context, cultural norms, and regime type. In 2015 alone, there were over 100 countries with confirmed cases of government action against civil society space and civic participation.⁵³ In many countries where CRS operates, weak governments attempt to divide and govern. They play one identity group off of another and refocus group members' attention and energy on their inter-group conflicts rather than on working together to improve governance and achieve social change.

Among the most under-represented in civic participation are women, young people, the rural poor, persons with disabilities, and racial, religious and ethnic minority groups. Efforts to improve and expand civic participation discussed in this chapter can motivate these groups to choose to remain in the civic arena and participate in governance, help government reduce inequalities of access to public information, and see value in expanding public decision-making to include diverse people.

5.3. COMPONENTS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION: AWARENESS, ACTION, RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT

The rest of this chapter is organized around the four broad components of civic participation as illustrated in Figure 12 below. Underscoring each component is CRS' belief that citizens and community members enjoy both (human, civil and political) rights and responsibilities to help government function more effectively and justly. These components are incorporated into the civic participation theory of change at the start of this chapter.

Figure 12. Four Components of Civic Participation



⁵² <https://monitor.civicus.org/whatiscivilspace/>

⁵³ CIVICUS. State of Civil Society Report 2017. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2017>

KEY TERM

*Civic space*⁵² impacts every CRS partner, but especially CSOs. It is foundational for any open society. “When civic space is open, citizens and civil society organizations are able to organize, participate and communicate without hindrance. In doing so, they are able to claim their rights and influence the political and social structures around them. This can only happen when a state holds by its duty to protect its citizens and respects and facilitates their fundamental rights to associate, assemble peacefully and freely express views and opinions. These are the three key rights that civil society depends upon.”

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These components of civic participation could be strategic objectives for a governance program designed and implemented by CRS and partners. For a program focused more on agricultural livelihoods, health or emergency response, they might be more appropriate as intermediate results. Depending on the context and the overall purpose of the program, they can be undertaken either together in a sequence or individually.

5.4. AWARENESS

Many vulnerable people are unaware of their rights and responsibilities. Even when they are aware of them, they lack opportunities to express their concerns or feel threatened when they try to exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities. As mentioned above, significant barriers exclude them from fully participating in the governance of their communities or more broadly at the national level.

Raising public awareness can both address this sense of disempowerment and contribute to collective impact by developing systems for bi-directional communication and mutually accountability. It can also help build a shared commitment to social change by maintaining a sense of urgency about the social issue and the need for action. Lastly, it offers many opportunities for justice and peacebuilding integration, especially through civic education (see below).

CBO/CSOs typically raise public awareness through community organizing or through campaigns using broadcast, print and social media. Information dissemination through networks, platforms and alliances is also effective. To extend their reach, CSOs form umbrella groups and national platforms that bring together women's rights associations, youth cultural groups and JPCs among others.

USING MEDIA TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENES

In societies where communication channels are open and accessible, CBOs and CSOs can use media to disseminate information and raise public awareness of social issues. As a result, citizens will be better informed about economic and public affairs. Such efforts are more effective when carried out in the languages that are understood and spoken by the majority of their targeted audience (see text box below).

Principles in Action: Media's reach in Southern Sudan

In April 2010, what is now South Sudan voted in national elections followed by a national referendum in January 2011. CRS collaborated closely with SUNDE, a network of civil society organizations, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Catholic Radio Network in a radio-based, interactive voter education campaign. Initially, the radio programs were developed in only English and Juba Arabic, which were not spoken by most Southern Sudanese. CRS and Catholic Radio Network translated the programs into an additional 12 national languages, enabling the campaign to reach approximately 427,000 people across two states (Eastern and Western Equatorias) and for the referendum an estimated one million people from across the country.



KEY TERM:

Collective impact is the commitment of groups from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. It emphasizes a systems approach highly relevant for civic participation. Collective impact is referred to throughout this chapter and discussed in detail in Section 5.5.

Radio call-in programs and online engagement offer low-cost, effective ways to increase citizens' access to public information and solicit their opinions. They can serve as a space where citizens can voice their concerns on wide-ranging civic matters. Community radio, in particular, while limited in its broadcasting reach, offers access to marginalized communities. Programming includes a mix of the socio-cultural (e.g., deaths, marriages and birth ceremonies); economic (e.g., climate information); and civic information (e.g., live broadcast of community assemblies). CSOs can partner with media outlets and associations to design and conduct

public awareness raising campaigns on critical issues such as reporting on public sector performance. In many parts of the world, however, media access is restricted and controlled by governments or powerful elites. In these circumstances, access to independent media is difficult and, in some cases, impossible. According to the annual [Freedom of the Press report](#) published by Freedom House, only a small percentage of the global population enjoys access to a free media.⁵⁴

Other strategies include using social media, alternative media, and informal communication channels within churches and mosques. Youth leaders of the Arab Spring were able to maintain effective communications through social media, despite authoritarian rule and martial law. Another example is that of youth election monitors who in the 2000 Senegalese elections used cellphones to report irregularities at the voting centers in real time, to the national electoral commission and media outlets.

Some CSOs inform the public by creating Facebook pages or websites, which can serve as platforms for disseminating information and gaining public feedback. Ubiquitous cyber cafés have given citizens— especially youth— opportunities to become more informed about policy issues and engaged in civic participation. Overall, the Internet has increased citizen access to public information and created a new virtual community and a sense of civic participation.

Still, it is important that activists understand the risks associated. Authoritarian governments, e.g., China, Russia and Syria, are becoming increasingly adept at tracking activists' online activities. Activists are paying the price with imprisonment, torture and even loss of life. While the choice is theirs to make, CRS and partners should encourage activists to consider the risks prior to engaging in such online activities and the legal services available to protect themselves.

Principles in Action: Youth-led media campaigns in Lebanon

Prior to the Arab Spring, CRS, Nahwa al Muwataniya, the Development for People and Nature Association and the Social Media Exchange helped young people launch a nationwide media campaign. The campaign shifted public discussions about the election away from identity politics and toward issues such as government transparency and accountability. The project organized 15 village youth teams. Youth received valuable training in platform development, research, social media activism, voter mobilization, municipal election laws and conflict management. Youth teams formed to meet with municipal councils to discuss local issues and to encourage them to establish youth committees. Nationally, the project received responses from 1,400 young people about their involvement in the public sphere. Youth committees shared their research with the Union of Mayors and the Ministry of the Interior to propose pragmatic solutions.



CIVIC EDUCATION

Another way to raise public awareness is to conduct legal education campaigns so that citizens understand their rights as well as the basic legal principles behind them. CBOs and CSOs can build on this understanding to increase citizens' confidence in their right to undertake collective action as part of a larger effort to reform or advance public policy. In this context, civic education is most effective when the targeted policy is likely to produce concrete, tangible benefits for the citizens and communities participating in the efforts to reform or advance it.

⁵⁴ In 2016 it was just 13%. <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press>

Principles in Action: Civic education in Mindanao

Many civic education programs include development of formal education curricula, targeting students and teachers. CRS and nearly a dozen local partners designed a peace education curriculum for 50 *barangays* (villages) in three provinces in the southern Philippines. The Peace Governance in Mindanao (PGM) project (2010-2014) built the capacity of public, Catholic and Islamic parochial schools' faculty through culture of peace trainings and curriculum/module development to institutionalize peace education in school curricula. PGM also engaged with key Catholic Church structures to promote peacebuilding within their hierarchies and to increase the commitment and skills of Catholics to dialogue with other religious groups.



Civic Education: The 3 R's

Civic education provides a basic understanding to community members of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Expanding it a bit, CRS and partners can add a third “R,” the roles of elected and appointed government officials. This knowledge will enable them to hold these officials accountable for meeting their expectations around commitments made, e.g., for improved service delivery, as well as for operating within the law, as part of an effort to practice social accountability.

For example, members of a water user management committee are likely to be interested in reforming laws that grant property rights for access, use and management of water resources. The better they understand the laws the better they will do their job—to conserve and manage water use in their community. That they may have also increased their legal knowledge, while important, is secondary to having improved the institutional performance for their committee.

Civic education, as a form of socialization, often takes time. It might target behavioral change that may not always be compatible with local customs. For example, encouraging women's participation can be a challenge in some societies where customary practices discourage or even forbid it. CRS has responded to such challenges by working initially at the household level to increase women's access to decision-making and then working upwards to the community level. To the extent that such approaches can be institutionalized, they contribute to social change.

Shorter-term civic education efforts are also needed to address targeted or time-bound topics. These may include voter education for an upcoming election or a community-level decision-making process concerning refugees' access to a forest for fuel wood. In both of these examples, it's important for targeted audiences to have increased access to the public information, resources and decision-making on the issue so that they can benefit from the ensuing changes.

DISSEMINATING PUBLIC INFORMATION

One way to disseminate public information is through community assemblies or official meetings such as a local council's budget hearing, a parent-teacher association or health center management committee meeting. Similarly, informal public gatherings such as an unofficial gathering under the “palaver tree” or in a place of worship are both customary and common in many societies. Both can be used to engage citizens around a particular issue or set of issues.

Such assemblies are safe spaces for dialogue and two-way information sharing between CBOs/CSOs and their members or the communities they serve, as well as between public officials and their constituents. Assemblies may be occasions for consensus building or venting public concerns and dissent. They can also contribute to greater transparency and inclusion, since they are open to the public, providing marginalized groups with an opportunity to participate.

The challenge remains, however, in motivating these groups and constituencies to make their voices heard. For that reason, CRS and partners often will initially divide such assemblies into men, women and youth sub-groups. Each sub-group has an opportunity to address the issues raised in the relative safety of their own group so that all may have the opportunity to form and share their views and concerns. Later, facilitators, often CRS partners, bring these groups back together for a

larger plenary discussion during which each sub-group presents the results of its discussion. Even within sub-groups it is important to pay attention to power dynamics. An individual's sense of identity can be multidimensional based on a combination of race, gender, ethnicity, class, religion and/or place of origin, all of which may affect the ways in which they access, share and use information.

To be successful a public awareness raising campaign, regardless of whether it uses civic education and/or the media, should pursue the steps in the box.

OUTLINE OF PUBLIC AWARENESS STRATEGY

Questions for CRS and partner teams to ask themselves:

1. **Identify the issue.** What is the social issue we want people to be aware of? What exactly – which aspect of the social issue – do we want them to pay attention to?
2. **Identify the audience.** Who do we want to be aware of the social issue? Why is it important that these segments of the general population increase their awareness?
3. **Identify the objective.** What kind of change do we want to see in the targeted audiences? Increased awareness or attitudinal, behavior or other forms of change?
4. **Frame the issue.** How do we communicate about the social issue in a way that grabs people's attention and motivates them to stay focused on the issue? How do we do so inclusively, in a way that connects rather than divides the targeted audiences?
5. **Know the audience.** What is their current level of awareness or knowledge of the social issue? What preferences do they have in how they receive information? Which media should we use to deliver the information?
6. **Track the issue.** How are the social issues we are monitoring changing? How are we communicating these changes (and their importance) to targeted audiences?
7. **Track the objective.** How do we know whether and by how much targeted audiences have increased their awareness about the social issue? What have been the other (intended and unintended) resulting changes in their attitudes, behaviors, etc.?
8. **Track the audience.** What are we learning about why the targeted audiences have changed? What are the most effective approaches and means of communicating to them? What changes should we make to the message, means and media?

5.5 ACTION

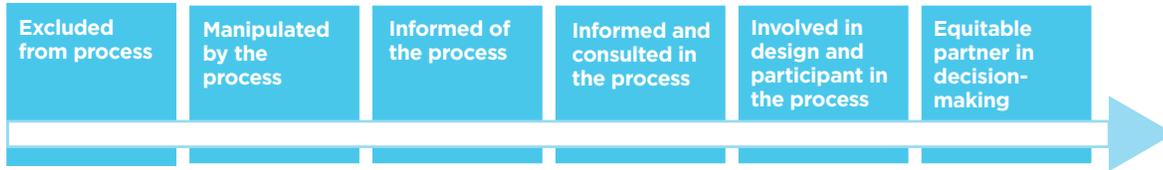
Active participation contributes to achieving collective impact by creating space for influential champions to emerge as activities are developed. Such activities, if designed using participatory approaches, will promote locally generated and driven measures. They will also provide ample opportunities for leveraging and strengthening Church structures and for justice and peacebuilding integration. Finally, active participation in CBO/CSO revenue generating activities, e.g., service delivery, can help ensure that there are adequate financial resources.

The degree to which mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making is formal and structured is a good indicator of their effectiveness. In some cases, local government units are required by law to use a citizen participation mechanism. How well they use and manage that mechanism will determine whether citizens view it as a genuine opportunity for meaningful participation or just a staged exercise without any real benefits.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

One way to assess the quality of the mechanism can be found in CRS' [Peacebuilding Globally Acceptable Indicator \(GAIN\)](#), which measures the quality of citizen participation along the following continuum.

Figure 13: Quality of citizen participation continuum



In some settings citizen commissions or committees exist as an advisory body for a mayor or the local council. Such committees can provide opportunities for citizens to share information, coordinate activities, and participate in decision-making. They also help widen viewpoints, share responsibilities, and produce widely accepted outcomes. If specialized knowledge or technical judgment is required, experts from partners can support the committee.

ELECTIONS

One of the most important forms of civic participation is voting and participation in the electoral administration process. Where political systems are relatively democratic and open, CBOs and CSOs can encourage and support their members' involvement in elections and the candidates' campaigns. In this scenario, elections offer an opportunity for citizens to provide direct, sometimes binding input on public policy issues. CBOs and CSO can:

- Participate in the regular maintenance of voter registration rolls;
- Urge and help people to register to vote;
- Mobilize participation at candidates' events or electoral forums;
- Educate voters about their voting rights and about issues at play in an election;
- Provide voters in need with travel assistance to the polls on the day of the election; and
- Train their members to serve as monitors of the electoral process.

In authoritarian settings, elections can be viewed as meaningless or rigged in favor of ruling elites. Even in this scenario, however, CBOs and CSOs can use the elections as an opportunity to advocate for more transparent electoral administration. They can also raise issues that would otherwise be ignored, as illustrated in the text box below. Marginalized groups that are excluded from voting can draw attention to the need for a more just, free and fair election.⁵⁵

Principles in Action: Elections monitoring and the Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

If democracy is the power of the people, by the people and for the people, one must respect the people. In the current situation, the people battered, bruised and frustrated, watch powerless, a process that has never reflected its will and which appears in places to be nothing more than an arrangement between political actors...We want peace...It is in the name of peace that the Church will continue to call political leaders to justice, love and truth.



-- National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), January 11, 2012

In 2011, the DRC held its second presidential and legislative elections since the end of the Mobutu era. Prior to the election, the Parliament revised the constitution to eliminate a second-round presidential vote even if no candidate

CRS' Comparative Advantage

There are several other organizations that have already established their predominant capability in various aspects of elections programming: the National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, the Carter Center, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and others. Where CRS partners can and should intervene is in broad-based voter education, nonpartisan election monitoring and high-level dialog and negotiations to mediate disputed electoral outcomes.

⁵⁵ Contents of this text box taken directly from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Background on the Democratic Republic of Congo. USCCB, Office of International Justice and Peace: Washington, DC. 2012.

won more than 50 percent of the votes in the first round. According to official results, incumbent President Joseph Kabila won the election with 49 percent of the vote while Etienne Tshisekedi received 32 percent. Throughout the campaign and after results were published, the government arrested and intimidated opposition party candidates and their party members, resulting in about 40 deaths. The large majority of international observers concluded that the election results lacked credibility due to logistical problems and fraud. The U.S. Government stated that due to fraud and mismanagement it was not possible to declare definitively which candidate won the election.

The Catholic Church is a major institution in the DRC. Fifty-five percent of DRC's 60 million people are Catholic, making it the largest Catholic population in Africa. In the absence of functioning government structures, the Catholic Church, along with other churches, has for decades provided most of the basic services such as health care and education. CRS supports the Church with a multi-sector relief and development program throughout the DRC. In the last few years it has significantly expanded its programs in the East.

The Catholic Church deployed 30,000 election monitors during the recent election. The Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a scathing statement on the elections that declared: "We believe that the electoral process was tainted by serious irregularities that bring into question the published results. We urge the election organizers to call up the courage and the honesty to draw the conclusions that are required."

The Bishops' Conference characterized the process of compiling the final results "shameful for the country" and called on the government to admit its errors and open a dialogue. The Church warned that the government runs the risk of creating a serious crisis that would be difficult to resolve and called on political leaders to be politically mature. The bishops also urged the government's electoral commission to correct the errors that have undermined people's confidence or resign. Thus far, the Government has not responded.

DIRECT ACTION

Direct action is a form of organized collective action. It is used when other channels, such as participation in local governance or elections, are unavailable, and includes a wide array of tactics.⁵⁶ These tactics may include the wearing a special item of clothing or use of an iconic symbol, such as the umbrellas used by pro-democracy groups in Hong Kong or the three-finger salute in Thailand.

People can also participate in mass demonstrations and assemblies that draw attention to an issue and put pressure on government to change policies. Two examples include:

- In Guatemala, citizens mobilized to force the resignation of political leaders who were accused in a UN report of engaging in large-scale corruption.
- In Brazil, the Movimento Passe Livre in Brazil citizens protested fare increases in public buses, convincing government officials to rescind the increases.

Protests may threaten those in power and can turn violent if political leaders resort to severe measures of control or if undisciplined protesters or opportunistic groups become involved. In those cases, it is important for CRS and partners to maintain the commitment to nonviolence and staff safety. This is both a moral concern and a practical consideration, and while CRS has no formal policy for project participants' involvement in direct action staff should follow the principle of Do No Harm to avoid putting anyone at risk of injury.

Nonviolent direct action is also consistent with Catholic social teaching, which calls for respecting the sanctity of life and the dignity of all. Nonviolent forms of action attract more public participation and support. They enable participants to maintain the moral high ground in opposing corrupt, repressive public policies. Research shows that nonviolent action is more effective than the use of violence in achieving policy objectives and helping to create more democratic outcomes.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, three volumes (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

⁵⁷ Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

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Tools and Resources

Local Government

- [Civic Participation in Local Governance](#). World Bank.
- [Democracy at the Local Level. The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management, and Governance](#).

Elections

- [Democracy and the Challenge of Change: A Guide to Increasing Women's Political Participation](#). NDI.
- [Monitoring and Mitigating Electoral Violence Through Nonpartisan Citizen Election Observation](#). NDI.
- [Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes](#). NDI.
- [Political-Process Monitoring: Activist Tools and Techniques](#). NDI.

Direct Action

- [Nonviolent Civic Action: Study Guide Series on Peace and Conflict](#). USIP.
- [Organizingforpower.org/](#) - website with various tools and templates for direct action
- [Civil Disobedience Training](#) - ACTUP manual focused on HIV and AIDS activism with a focus on New York City but relevant to other contexts

Everyone's Favorite Radio Station: WIFM

In community organizing, self-interest is one of the primary motivations for individuals when they choose to participate in collective action, i.e., response. It is important to call for action in a way that not only appeals directly to a shared vision of their communities but also their individual interests.

Principles in Action: Civic participation in the West Bank and Gaza

As noted in [Section 3.1](#), the large-scale Civic Participation Program in the West Bank and Gaza supported by USAID enabled CRS to address the poor relationship between citizens and elected officials in the Palestinian Authority. CSO grants helped mobilize citizens to engage with the Palestinian Authority and to advocate for more inclusive, decision-making on social issues they identified as priorities. Advocacy campaigns covered a range of issues. "One organization implemented a campaign advocating for the rights of people with disabilities; other activities included developing a pamphlet on those rights, holding workshops on building modifications necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities, and running a national conference on disability issues that included representatives from government ministries and CSOs."⁵⁸



5.6 RESPONSE

CRS programs strengthen efforts by civil society to increase and mobilize citizen demand for improved service delivery. For such efforts, the first question to ask is, "What's in it for me?" In other words, what will motivate citizens to voice their demands? The answer is simple: self-interest. Citizens will participate actively when doing so is likely to benefit them. A tangible improvement might be an increase in the quality of the service being delivered. The second question is, "Where do I start?" One answer is with CBOs and CSOs. CBOs/CSOs provide a platform for mobilizing citizens to take action.

However, before they can expect a response from government officials, CBOs/CSOs must first demonstrate their own willingness and capacity to "be the change (they) want to see."⁵⁹ To do that they must first adopt democratic

58 Government Accountability Office. Audit of USAID/West Bank and Gaza's Civic Participation Program. Audit Report No. 6-294-13-003-P. Cairo, Egypt: U.S. Government. 2012.

59 Johnson, Richard L. (ed.). *Gandhi's Experiments with Truth: Essential Writings by and About Mahatma Gandhi*. Rowman & Littlefield. 2005.

management practices. That is why we strengthen CBO/CSO partners' capacity for (democratic) internal governance. As well, we strengthen their operational and technical capacities so that they operate and serve their membership more effectively. One measure of effectiveness is their increased capacity to deliver services, i.e., value, to their own members.

In this way, CRS enables CBO/CSO members to learn an important lesson: democratic management is good management. When based in the principles of good governance outlined earlier in this guide, democratic management positions the CBO/CSO to achieve social change, and increases its capacity to achieve its mission. As CBO/CSOs model democratic management practices, they become more effective at serving their members and communities. Over time, improved institutional performance will increase their confidence to demand that government institutions adopt and use these same democratic management practices so that *public* service delivery (and more broadly, local governance) is more effective *and* equitable.

CRS has used this strategy to integrate good governance into development and humanitarian programs, especially the signature program areas. These integrated programs directly appeal to citizens' socioeconomic interests: improved service delivery, first as members of a CBO/CSO and later as members of a community/society. As a result, CBO/CSOs can advocate more credibly that government become more transparent, accountable and responsive to citizens.

Key to this strategy is capacity strengthening. CRS country programs should use the [Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument \(HOCAI\)](#) and [Institutional Strengthening Guide](#) to develop plans and approaches for strengthening CBO/CSO institutional capacity. Once a partner CBO/CSO has engaged government actors to improve service delivery, it is likely that they, too, will need capacity strengthening so that they can respond better to citizen demands. [Chapter 4](#) of this Guide provides extensive guidance on how to do so.

DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY BY CIVIL SOCIETY

As mentioned above, direct provision of services by CSOs to community members offers an opportunity to model the values CSOs have adopted and socialized among their members. SILC groups, for example, "...adopt issues relevant to their homes and community and motivate the community and local government to engage in development issues that go beyond monetary returns, including conflict resolution, reducing domestic abuse...(and) improving education..."⁶⁰

Improved service delivery might be an intended result of a CRS emergency response or development project, and providing aid is often the center of an emergency response. However, it is important to consider that the government may have assets it can and should use. There are implications for sustainability if programs inadvertently enable government to "burden shed," i.e., free itself from its institutional obligation to deliver these services. Working through CSOs to strengthen the capacity of government to deliver vital public services holds greater promise for social change and is discussed in greater detail in the Optimal Institutional Performance chapter.

Tools

- [Local Government Participatory Practices Manual. A Toolkit to Public Participation Support in Municipal Decision-Making.](#) International Centre for Municipal Development.
- [Guide to Good Governance Programming.](#) Mercy Corps.

⁶⁰ Guy Vanmeenen. *Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC): A Basis for Integral Human Development (IHD)*. Baltimore, Maryland: CRS. 2006.

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Principles in Action: Campaigning in India

The Institute for Social Research and Development (ISRD) in India focuses on a range of child-rights issues, including trafficking. It works throughout Ganjam District (Odisha State) and addresses prevention, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration through networking, advocacy, and media outreach with initiatives such as the Campaign against Child Labor in Odisha State. It also began to undertake direct service delivery once it recognized that there was a stigma attached to trafficking within rural tribal communities. ISRD began by promoting children's right to education, which is less controversial than working on trafficking directly, and then gradually broached the topics of child labor, early marriage and sex-trafficking.



ISRD is able to rely on the government infrastructure and limited public resources because it builds strong relationships with local law enforcement and is highly regarded by local government. Its own dedicated volunteers also provide anti-trafficking services and rescue survivors. As a result, when opportunities for collaboration with government arise ISRD is always contacted. ISRD was tapped to run the district's telephone-emergency helpline. Its frequent interactions with government give it influence, both in formal and informal settings. Its grassroots early intervention model focuses primarily on prevention and early rescue, relying heavily on local infrastructure and existing government schemes for support. ISRD's relatively low cost means that its approach can and has been more easily replicated countrywide.

Social accountability is no substitute for more formal, statutory mechanisms of accountability, e.g., regular performance reviews, parliamentary audits, inspector general investigations, etc. Still, in the challenging political environments where CRS and partners work, social accountability may be one of the few mechanisms available to citizens to use their voice and demand better service delivery, less corruption, etc.

5.7 ENGAGEMENT

Civil society oversight of government performance also serves as a potential check on governmental power. Participatory performance monitoring of state structures, or social accountability, "...refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate...efforts...to (affirm) and (operationalize) direct accountability relationships between citizens and the state."⁶¹ USAID, DFID, and other donors increasingly are requiring their partners to integrate some form of social accountability into their large multi-sector programs.

Social accountability empowers citizens to gather, analyze and present information about government performance to appointed and elected officials. For collective impact, it creates locally driven measurement of activities while reinforcing bidirectional communication and mutual accountability. Lastly, it can strengthen the Church's commitment to use its good offices for verifying that public policy is being implemented consistent with [Catholic social teaching](#) principles: achieving the common good, subsidiarity and option for the poor.

Principles in Action: Feedback systems in emergency response in Southeast Asia

During recovery from Typhoon Haiyan, CRS institutionalized a feedback system, as documented in the Accountability Framework Guidelines and maintained through a database. Components included hotline/text line, feedback boxes, and help desks. Orientation sessions were conducted with communities, and Information, Education and Communication materials were posted in Waray language to ensure beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries understood how to provide feedback. The feedback system logged 7,202 entries with the community. Over 50 percent of the feedback originated from the community feedback boxes and another 20 percent from the help desk.



⁶¹ *Social Accountability Sourcebook Chapter 2 Social Accountability: What Does It Mean For The World Bank?*
http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/PrintVersions/Conceptual%2006.22.07.pdf

Illustrative social accountability activities and mechanisms:

Integrity Pacts. CRS partner, communities and local governments can co-develop and co-sign integrity pacts. Integrity pacts put into writing government officials' stated commitments to respect certain standards of accountability, transparency and integrity in carrying out their duties. To enforce an integrity pact, government officials should combine regular public reporting of the results with more rigorous internal oversight, e.g., audits. Together, they can help create and/or strengthen public institutions' internal control systems.

Participatory Budgets. Participatory budgets⁶² focus on a local government unit's global budget or on a specific sector's budget. For the latter, a local government can form a smaller group to focus on specific problems. In these smaller groups, citizens elect delegates to represent them at the larger group. The larger group then proposes the final allocation of funds for approval by the mayor and the local council. Along the way, a weighting system can be used to rank priorities and resolve conflicts. Civil society representatives who serve as delegates can also continue as intermediaries between government and citizens to monitor whether priorities are being met.

Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys. Inclusion of priority social investments in the budget is often only half the battle. All too often the resources allocated to a new school, health center or market road never materialize at their intended location. Or if they do, the resulting projects are only half-complete or fail to meet specifications laid out by the project design and by national standards. CBOs and citizens use these surveys to track the resources actually expended on the ground while monitoring project outputs to verify that they were produced on time, at or under budget, and meeting government standards. This tool is effective in following the money to identify leakage points and administrative bottlenecks in the project's implementation.

Citizen Report Cards. Citizen report cards are a customer satisfaction survey, administered, for example, by using household surveys, post-distribution monitoring forms (in an emergency response), or focus groups. Questions target experiences with service providers rather than just opinions, so that they are more objective. Survey results measure citizens' level of awareness of government service and indicate where they encounter challenges in accessing them. CSOs and local governments can use the results to pressure service providers for improvements. They can also enlist local media to increase public awareness of the problems revealed.

Many accountability measures used in emergency response such as post-distribution monitoring forms could be of use in creating citizen report cards. These forms ask about services received and how they were delivered using methodologies to ensure representation and opinions gained immediately following service delivery.

Freedom of Information Laws. In partnership with media, CSOs can press for increased access to public information. Along with "Right to know" or "sunshine" laws, these are statutory mechanisms that require the government to disclose public information related to its operations. One obstacle authoritarian (and even democratic!) governments will often use is a claim that access to such information may compromise national security. Disputing such claims can be difficult, especially if the judiciary is under the influence of the executive branch. Still, these laws offer a powerful tool to raise public awareness and hold governments accountable.

Anticorruption Surveys. These surveys identify leakage points and administrative bottlenecks that are indicative of corrupt practices. They also

⁶² The following descriptions of the additional social accountability mechanisms comes from case studies provided in CRS' 2003 *Manual on Social Accountability Mechanisms: Citizen Engagement for Pro-Poor Policies and Reduced Corruption*.

generate evidence for proposed reforms. Rather than limit informants to the public sector, an anticorruption survey also targets businesses and civil society representatives. The resulting data are disseminated through the media to engage civil society and increase public scrutiny of public goods and services.

To be effective, CRS and partners should consider using social accountability at three levels (see text box).

THREE LEVELS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1. Community level:** With some capacity strengthening from partner CSOs/CBOs, community members should be able to monitor the delivery of basic services. At a minimum, community members and/or CBOs should be able to determine whether the services delivered are meeting their expectations.
- 2. Program level:** Public policy implementation involves any number of programs to help achieve their goals. CRS staff should develop tools with and for CSOs/CBOs to measure the impact of these programs. CRS and partners may focus on the program's impact on a specific segment of the population, region or social issue. The results can provide a strong evidence base for partners' efforts to influence public policy, approaches for which are discussed in [Chapter 3](#).
- 3. Policy level:** Public policies may involve not only multiple programs but also multiple agencies and even branches of government. Developing social accountability mechanisms at this level serves as a shadow audit. To add value to discussions, CRS and partners should consider the following learning questions:
 - How and to what extent did the policy achieve different outcomes for different segments of the population?
 - What was the *process* for citizens to realize the benefits of these outcomes and why was it different for different segments of the population?
 - Were the standards used to measure these outcomes for each of these segments the same or different? If different, why?

Independent (i.e., non-state) journalists offer some of the best sources of information on corrupt practices. At the same time, CRS and partners should proceed cautiously when engaging with journalists. Their media outlets are sometimes owned and/or controlled by various political interest groups, reducing their objectivity and credibility. As well, CRS and partners need to take care not to put truly independent media groups at greater risk on account of their collaboration with international organizations, which can be a risk with corrupt governments.

Tools

- [Promoting Good Governance through Citizen Engagement: CRS case studies in social accountability mechanisms](#). CRS. 
- [Citizens and Service Delivery Assessing the Use of Social Accountability Approaches in Human Development](#). World Bank.
- [Cultivating Accountability for Health Systems Strengthening](#). Leadership Management & Governance Project. USAID.
- [Social Accountability](#) and other topic guides from Transparency International.
- [A Social Audit Toolbox for Philippine Civil Society](#). Transparency and Accountability Network: Manila, Philippines.

Principles in Action: Social accountability in Burundi and Rwanda

With funding from USAID Food for Peace (2014-2019), CRS' AMASHIGA project in Burundi aims to improve under-five mortality where it is worst, in Muhinga province. CRS and partners strengthen Local Development Committees' capacity to engage in gender and conflict-sensitive approaches to DRR action planning and risk mitigation. As a result, their commune-level DRR plans are integrated into existing Annual Communal Investment Plans and are better resourced. Communal councils have increased their transparency by sharing and



validating these DRR plans with citizens. They now allow for participatory monitoring of early warning systems at town hall meetings and annual progress reviews. One partner, the *Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix*, is training government and CBOs (SILC groups, religious institutions, producer organizations, youth groups) to promote land rights for women and minority groups to prevent and mitigate land conflict.

In Rwanda, a grant from the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Multi-Party Trust Fund helped CRS support the establishment of a Civil Society Alliance (Rwanda SUN CiSA). CRS then provided capacity inputs to help the Alliance serve as a platform for Rwandan civil society to advocate on national nutrition policy. The national alliance is supported by 29 district-level civil society platforms, which convene local civil society actors to advocate before district-level authorities to include nutrition in district development plans and to monitor their follow-through on nutrition program commitments. Continuing engagement of the SUN CiSA is part of additional CRS programming, including the USAID Gikuriro nutrition project.

5.8 ADVOCACY IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION

As described in the [Policy chapter](#), advocacy efforts can take one of two kinds of approaches. They can adopt an “outsider” approach, building a constituency for social change around shared interests and values. Or they can apply an “insider” approach, using evidence-based approaches to influence policy and decision-making. While much will depend on the context, an optimal strategy combines both so that they complement and reinforce each other.

It is unnecessary and inadvisable for a single group to have to do both. As noted below, civil society can form coalition or constituency for social change. These constituencies might strategically form a division of labor among its members. Individual organizations can specialize and take on the approach that is best suited to their comparative advantage, strengthening their individual efficacy and that of the constituency for social change.

CRS and partners can mobilize this constituency, using the approaches and tools used in the previous sections in this chapter. This constituency amplifies citizens’ voices and builds a critical mass of support for its efforts. It also provides political leverage to channel citizen demands so that partners can engage with decision makers on a more level playing field.

Using Lederach’s [strategic triangle](#), CRS and partners typically start at the grassroots level, working from the bottom up to address the root causes of inequity. They form coalitions, comprised of like-minded actors to build a constituency for reform, both from the bottom up and from the middle out. This process of building a constituency is where applying the collective impact model will be the most relevant.

Using a combination of insider and outsider approaches (described in [Chapter 3](#)) also increases the likelihood of the constituency achieving collective impact. It builds a shared commitment to social change by relying on locally driven and measured activities. As with engagement in civic participation, it also leverages and strengthens Church structures’ willingness to use their good offices. Finally, advocacy transforms development and humanitarian sector service delivery programs through justice and peacebuilding integration so that they contribute to reforming that systems and structures that form the enabling environment: laws, regulations, quality standards, etc.

CRS understands and undertakes advocacy through a variety of overlapping forms. This includes influencing upstream decisions at the policy level, mostly at the initial steps of the policy cycle: agenda setting, design and analysis. On downstream decisions, the focus is mostly on policy implementation (i.e., programming). CRS’

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experience lies mostly in this latter area. Programs in agricultural livelihoods, health, education, protection, etc. have targeted changes that increase equity in the access, availability and quality of services for the most vulnerable.

Advocacy initiatives comprise a broad range of actions and activities, many of which have been described in the previous sections. All should include four key components (see box).

CRS country programs must never engage in advocacy directly overseas. Instead, work through partners, the Church and local CSOs, to wage such campaigns.

1. Advocacy strategy components

- **Goal:** To transform targeted unjust structures or imbalanced power relationships.
- **Objective:** To influence targeted key decision makers
- **Approach:** To leverage the relationship of partners with beneficiaries to build a constituency for social change (outsider) and/or with key governance actors to influence decision-making (insider).

2. Solid understanding of the context, including both formal rules or structures and informal rules, i.e., politics.

3. Knowledge of the main players, i.e., the key actors, stakeholders and their respective interests, incentives, resources and alliances is also critical to identify leverage points for increased influence.

4. Do No Harm, i.e., minimize or mitigate the harm CSOs, media and activists are likely to experience from the negative reaction from those in power.

CRS country programs must never engage in advocacy directly overseas. Instead, work through partners, the Church and local CSOs, to wage such campaigns. Coalitions, as described, can do so, too. Their members can raise public awareness, increase participation, take direct action, etc. as assigned and based on their respective comparative advantage. Such coalitions may include human rights organizations, pro-democracy groups, labor unions, faith-based organizations, professional and trade associations such as bar associations and mayor's associations, as well as youth or student organizations.

Tools and Resources

- [Advocacy Training Module: Making Justice and Solidarity Real for CRS. Just Associates.](#) 
- [Foundations for Civic Impact: Advocacy and Civic Engagement Toolkit for Private Foundations.](#)

Principles in Action: Advocacy country examples

Global Fund sponsored HIV and AIDS Advocacy Program in Ghana.

In collaboration with the Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA), CRS Ghana implemented the Community Capacity Enhancement program. ADRA and CRS trained CSOs to use advocacy as a tool to support reduction of stigma and discrimination against people infected or affected by HIV and AIDS in the Eastern Region of Ghana.



GAVI CSO Project. CRS partners with a CSO network, the Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI), to advocate for better government-supplied immunization. This is an example of civil society playing a critical role in expanding access to and uptake of immunizations by raising public awareness and by advocating for improved government services, especially for underserved communities. Working through CHAI, CRS strengthens CSO capacity to engage with government and other stakeholders so that they advance the immunization policy agenda. Member CSOs report that they have improved their collaboration with other CSOs involved with immunization issues, which in turn improves immunization coverage and health outcomes. CRS provides similar support to national civil society platforms in 24 GAVI-eligible countries.

5.9 ACHIEVING COLLECTIVE IMPACT⁶³

In [Chapter 3](#), this guide introduced the 4-Cs model to describe approaches to building a constituency in support of policy implementation. It can be applied to civic participation, too, since it was first used for developing civil society advocacy strategies. The collective impact model⁶⁴ is relevant to all four of the components of civic participation discussed in this chapter thus far. It also works with multi-stakeholder initiatives to achieve social change and is helpful for how teams design and coordinate activities across the four components.

Adapting the Collective Impact Model
 In some situations, the collective impact model presented here may need adaptation. Levels of donor funding may not allow CRS or partners to implement at the scale or for the duration at which achieving impact is always expected. Challenges and complexity increase in countries with limited rule of law and restricted civic space. To overcome these challenges, CSOs often act in coalitions. Diverse actors bring different agendas, capabilities and resources. A foundation to collaborate exists as long as there is at least some common point of interest. Building and maintaining coalitions to develop and execute a strategy that achieves shared objectives requires planning and sustained support.



To illustrate how to apply the collective impact model to programming, this section draws on CRS' experience responding to the 2015 Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Before working with any of the four components of civic participation, CRS and partners can benefit from working through the steps of the collective impact model. These are summarized in Table 3 and illustrated with examples from CRS' response to the 2015 Ebola epidemic.

Table 3. Collective Impact process and practical examples

Category of support	National level government (national and technical/line ministries)
<p>1. Map stakeholders. Prior to carrying out a contextual analysis, CRS should identify potential partners and other stakeholders who should participate in the contextual analysis and the resulting strategy.</p>	<p>Very soon after the Ebola outbreak was declared to be a public health emergency, CRS identified who was doing what and where to stem the epidemic in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.</p>
<p>2. Contextual analysis. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a contextual analysis can be used as a coalition-building exercise. It can help meet an important condition for using the collective impact model: forging a common agenda. A <i>participatory</i> contextual analysis helps by building local partner/stakeholder ownership for designing a strategy and collaborating to achieve its objectives.</p>	<p>From its rapid contextual assessment, CRS identified 5 challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced numbers of health care workers and decreased health facility visits. • Ebola affected incomes of households where members became sick or died; access to local markets became restricted. • Almost 17,000 children were orphaned and faced stigma and discrimination; families struggled to meet basic needs. • School closure deprived at least 5 million children of a year's education, and families held children back from school. • Traditional burials were important but exposed people to infectious bodily fluids.

⁶³ Woodrow, Peter. Towards a Framework for Collective Impact in Peacebuilding. Preliminary draft, 2016.
⁶⁴ Kania, John and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*: 36-41, 2011. "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work." Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January 2013. "Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity." John Kania and Mark Kramer, *Stanford Innovation Review*, January 2012.

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<p>3. Assess existing networks. CRS will often work with the Church, given its significant reach, active presence in multiple sectors and strong relationships with both local stakeholders and key actors. Criteria for deciding which network to use include network members' access to network information, decision-making and resources as well as their capacity in various areas.</p>	<p>CRS worked with the Church and faith-based healthcare systems in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Through the support of CRS and the International Confederation of the Red Cross, St Joseph's Catholic Hospital (Liberia) reopened, and the hospital now boasts one of the most advanced triage systems and isolation wards in Liberia.</p>
<p>4. Determine the Level of Collective Action. CRS has been most successful when it has facilitated coalitions that operate at and across various levels. A coalition's effectiveness is built on structures that enhance the quality of its members' relationships with each other.</p>	<p>CRS decided to work in all three countries affected, with special emphasis in Sierra Leone, because it was where the disease-toll was highest and where CRS' programming and infrastructure were best-established.</p>
<p>5. Set the objective, scale and scope of collective action. To manage multiple stakeholders, a coalition's objective should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Even if the greater goal is social change, it is critical to focus the coalition members' energy on doable actions. This approach removes obstacles to social change while building momentum to target bigger challenges.</p>	<p>All three countries remain among the least developed countries in the world, with poor governance; a fragile, poorly resourced infrastructure; and widespread, extreme poverty that relies on subsistence agriculture and petty trading. CRS' and partners' strategy was two-pronged: contain the Ebola outbreak while strengthening healthcare, education, protection and livelihood systems for increased resilience to future shocks.</p>

Forming alliances and building coalitions around a single issue can present several challenges, especially when doing so involves multiple organizations that might otherwise have little reason to associate with each other. All the more reason to identify and support an influential champion, someone who can articulate and maintain focus on what connects the diverse members of the coalition.

PRECONDITIONS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT: CHAMPION(S), FUNDING, SENSE OF URGENCY

There are three *preconditions* before the collective impact model can work: an influential champion; adequate financial resources, and a sense of urgency for change.⁶⁵ Meeting these preconditions presents significant challenges for engaging government activities, especially where there are authoritarian regimes and restricted space for civil society.

1. Influential Champion. In identifying and encouraging potential champions to assert themselves, it is critical to minimize their exposure to potential harm. Collective impact initiatives should try to depersonalize the pursuit of political objectives by making them more about promoting the common good than advancing individual or organizational objectives. It is also useful to work with multiple, competing champions, so that they can check and balance each other's natural desire to accumulate and consolidate more power.

Organizing this diverse group of champions, similar to the key decision maker committee described in the [policy analysis and design section](#) of Chapter 3, will add to the coalition's political power. Through facilitated consensus building the leaders will emerge with a commitment to assume greater responsibility for achieving the coalition's objectives. At the programmatic level, creating a division of labor among the coalition's members will empower each to assert its technical leadership according to its respective comparative advantage.

2. Adequate Financial Resources. Despite soaring rhetoric about the importance of democracy and governance, levels of donor funding, especially for civil society-led programming, continue to decline.⁶⁶ Donors have chosen to focus

⁶⁵ "Channeling Change," p.3. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work
⁶⁶ "Will USAID fund its own mission statement?" Devex website: <https://www.devex.com/news/will-usaid-fund-its-own-mission-statement-86249>, May 28, 2015.

instead on strengthening state institutional capacity even when governments' absorptive capacity and political will remain too low to commit to carry out such reforms. Even with the recent push for more integrated democracy and governance programming, donors have yet to fill this gap. Civil society is often used in an instrumental way, i.e., to increase participation in project activities, with little regard for its development as an institution.

All the more reason CSOs must identify alternative models for funding so that they can reduce their dependency on donors. Social enterprise, fee-for-service and public-private partnerships offer three potential options for more sustainable revenue generation. Sustainability is important, because, once underway, a collective impact initiative "can last a decade or more... There is no shortcut in the long-term process of social change."⁶⁷

In West Africa, CRS and partners called for U.S. government support to lead the development and funding of a coordinated, long-term humanitarian and development strategy, similar to the CRS leadership in response to HIV and AIDS worldwide. CRS committed more than US\$1.5 million of its own private funds, which was leveraged to finance programs worth more than US\$15 million to execute that strategy.

3. Sense of Urgency for (Social) Change. As mentioned in the [agenda setting](#) section of Chapter 3, it is important to frame a social issue in terms that command the attention of both the general public and key decision makers. Unless there is a window of opportunity that forces the hand of decision makers, a long slog is the more likely scenario. Such windows of opportunity sometimes take place following elections when newly elected leaders may retain some sense of obligation to those who elected them to deliver on the promises they made.

Similarly, shocks may create space for greater political will to work on thorny social issues. For example, new food security policies were designed in response to the recent global rise in food prices. Similarly, governments in Central America agreed to anticorruption reforms as a condition for assistance rebuilding after Hurricane Mitch. The real challenge will be how to maintain levels of attention and the sense of urgency while managing expectations about what can be realistically accomplished.

CRS responded to the urgency of the West Africa Ebola epidemic with market-based recovery activities to support farmer families. These activities included direct cash distributions and food-based vouchers to reach the most food insecure households in Ebola-affected regions. CRS distributed food to affected families, orphans, widows, discharged patients and other vulnerable communities, thus reaching more than 120,000 people. Throughout the epidemic CRS and partners regularly produced and disseminated situation reports to maintain public focus on the outbreak.

ADDRESSING THE FIVE COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS

The table below outlines the five basic conditions that must be met in order to achieve collective impact. These have been modified to be more consistent with Catholic social teaching and use CRS' response to the 2015 Ebola epidemic to illustrate the conditions.

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⁶⁷ "Channeling Change" p. 4 https://ssir.org/articles/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work

Table 4: Addressing the Five Collective Impact Conditions

Collective Impact Conditions	CRS' Modification (consistent with Catholic social teaching) and Application
<p>Common Agenda: Participating organizations share a vision for social change that includes a common framing of the social issue and a joint approach to solving the problem.</p>	<p>Shared commitment to social change (<i>Rights and Responsibilities</i>): In Sierra Leone, CRS managed thousands of safe, dignified burials in three districts to prevent further infections and respect families' religious practices. CRS collaborated with traditional and religious leaders to ensure access to, and acceptance of safe and dignified burials.</p>
<p>Shared Measurement System: Agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported with a short list of key indicators across all participating organizations.</p>	<p>Locally-generated/driven measurement (<i>Stewardship</i>): CRS worked with local partners to implement national guidelines on hand washing, temperature taking, and other key Ebola prevention activities for children returning to school. These guidelines harmonized the ways in which such interventions were designed, implemented and measured.</p>
<p>Mutually Reinforcing Activities: Engagement of diverse stakeholders, across sectors and different levels, coordinating activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.</p>	<p>Justice and peacebuilding integration in activities (<i>Common Good</i>): CRS supported government and faith-based health facilities in infection control, internal governance, service delivery, finance, infrastructure, and supply chain management. It trained hundreds of healthcare workers in infection control and provided safety equipment to protect hospital staff that had contact with patients, as they were among the most vulnerable to infection.</p>
<p>Continuous Communication: Frequent communications among key decision makers within and across organizations to improve cohesion, learning and adaptation of the shared strategy.</p>	<p>Bidirectional communication and mutual accountability (<i>Subsidiarity</i>): CRS, together with local partners Caritas Freetown and Caritas Makeni, provided psychosocial support and counseling to help them cope with the trauma and loss they experienced. CRS developed five short films that addressed discrimination, grief, social connections, safety and security, and resilience. Community volunteers were trained to use the films to help children process the impact Ebola had on their families and communities. The volunteers led child-friendly group exercises as part of its Ebola-screenings and training on good hygiene for infection control.</p>
<p>Backbone Organization: Dedicated, independent staff facilitates execution of the strategy by guiding the vision and strategy; supporting aligned activities; establishing shared measurement practices; building public and political will; advancing policy; and mobilizing funding.⁶⁸</p>	<p>Leveraging and strengthening the Church's capacity to use its good offices (<i>Solidarity</i>): CRS' local partners remain in place, following through on humanitarian response, recovery and other activities, including work with farmers to promote self-sustaining saving and lending groups (SILC) while broadening their farming knowledge and business management skills to strengthen their livelihood security.</p>

68 "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact": Part 1 |Stanford Social Innovation Review.

5.10 MEAL FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

There are numerous opportunities to integrate participatory methods into MEAL approaches introduced in the [Policy](#) and [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) chapters. A major benefit of participatory MEAL will be a policy process and service delivery that are more effective and responsive to citizen needs and preferences. Participatory MEAL also reinforces mutuality, transparency, accountability, and other partnership and governance principles at the core of CRS' Engaging Government Framework.

Participatory MEAL (P-MEAL) can be defined as stakeholders at various levels from civil society, government and the private sector, sharing control over the content, process and results of MEAL activities. Participatory methods are thus both an end *and* a means. They encourage the formation of trust-based relationships among governance actors and a broad framework (see box for objectives).

OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATORY MEAL

- Key stakeholders are not just sources of information, but decision makers in how government performance will be assessed and how the data generated will be used;
- Local people build their capacity for data collection, analysis, and decision-making;
- Key stakeholders at various levels engage in more systematic shared learning;
- Broad ownership is built around actions taken, based on findings and analysis;
- Key stakeholders make commitments, both individually and jointly.

CHALLENGES OF MEASURING CIVIC PARTICIPATION

CRS and partners face challenges in measuring civic participation, both through conventional or participatory methods. The “complex web of formal and informal interactions...” among public and other groups involved in engaging government efforts “...are difficult to disentangle.”⁶⁹ Which groups are contributing to what kind of civic participation and with what impact? How do the different interests and incentives of various actors affect their participation or influence how they support or block each others' participation? A related challenge is the role of relationships with external groups, i.e., donors, and their particular national interests and foreign policy objectives.

Results of [context analysis](#) paired with P-MEAL approaches can help teams designing MEAL efforts for civic participation to understand these complex relationships, informing the selection of indicators and measurement methods. Periodic updates to the initial context assessment will enable us to trace how relationships and influence are evolving. This will help civic participation programs adapt to political realities while respecting the principle of [Do No Harm](#).



For example, the threat of violent conflict or humanitarian emergency at the design phase of a project will often reduce citizens' and CBO/CSO willingness to work on achieving the project's objectives. Or it may provide an unexpected opportunity that can boost civic participation. For example, CRS' and partners' response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines integrated civic participation in beneficiary accountability mechanisms and post-disaster planning.

The Power of P-MEAL

P-MEAL provides a real sense of agency to participants, especially when the results will be used to hold the powerful accountable.

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⁶⁹ ODI Working Paper 343. Citizen voice and state accountability: Towards theories of change that embrace contextual dynamics.

Tools and Resources for MEAL related to Civic Participation

- [ODI Working Paper 343. Citizen Voice and State Accountability: Towards Theories of Change That Embrace Contextual Dynamics.](#) ODI.
- [So what Difference Does It Make? Mapping the outcomes of citizen engagement, Working Paper DRC.](#) Institute of Development Studies (IDS).
- [Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives.](#) IDS provides a useful critical discussion of methods used to assess transparency and accountability initiatives.
- [Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Review of the Literature and Donor Approaches Report.](#) DFID.
- [Evaluating the Impact and Effectiveness of USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs](#) in *Evaluating Democracy Support Methods and Experiences*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEARNING (MEAL) FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

This chapter offers general guidance and considerations for CRS and partners doing MEAL activities as part of programs that engage government, whether to effect policy change, promote civic participation, or to strengthen the capacity of government partners. It links with the [Context Analysis](#) chapter and is relevant to the more targeted MEAL guidance found in the [Policy](#), [Optimal Institutional Performance](#), and [Civic Participation](#) chapters. It also builds on CRS' established MEAL approach (see [Table 1: Roles and Resources for Key Staff to Implement the MEAL Policies and Procedures](#) for a visual representation of CRS' integrated MEAL approach), which is guided by the [MEAL Policies and Procedures](#), and the [Basic Guide](#).

Since work with government actors and engagement with government programming is so diverse, this chapter does not provide one model for MEAL planning and activities. Rather it presents major considerations and general guidance that will help CRS and partners as they:

- *Design programs* with strong theories of change, goals, objectives, and indicators that incorporate rigorous MEAL thinking for good governance or programmatic work with government actors.
- *Implement programs* with MEAL systems and approaches that seek to understand governance impact, as well as model the principles of good governance and partnership through accountability to communities, government and other partners, and donors.
- *Learn* through insightful analysis of data and research or learning agendas to draw out engaging government lessons for use by CRS and partners, as well as other stakeholders.

For information about assessing the quality of governance itself, see the [Context Analysis](#) chapter.

6.1. WHY MEAL IS CRITICAL FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Governance and the role of government plays a part in nearly all CRS and partner programs – whether directly or because of governmental influences on the programs' operating environments. Yet, across program areas, how governance contributes to the success or limitations of interventions is often not investigated, particularly when governance is a crosscutting theme and not an explicit objective or intermediate result of the project. Donors increasingly require evidence-based approaches and analysis that includes governance and government's role for local ownership, sustainability, and scale (see text box below). This chapter responds to the need and opportunity to incorporate rigorous and creative MEAL approaches into all steps of the project or program cycle, including during the MEAL design phase and project implementation.

DONOR REQUIREMENTS FOR MEAL

Many donors have their own specific MEAL requirements or methodology; programs engaging government are no exception. As with any type of programming, CRS and partners should develop MEAL systems, tools, and activities that respond directly to donor requirements. It takes attention and creativity to ensure CRS and partners meet donor requirements while also reflecting the latest evidence-based best practice for engaging government. For example, USAID provides a useful overview of all types of related funding mechanisms, including notes about MEAL, in the [Users Guide to Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Programming](#).⁷⁰

Recommended MEAL resources by external groups and CRS country/regional initiatives are noted throughout this chapter and at the end of chapters 3 and 4. For the agency's primary guidance related to MEAL, users of this guide can always find the most up to date resources at the [CRS MEAL Policies and Procedures site](#). Additionally, see:

⁷⁰ <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/users-guide-democracy-human-rights-and-governance-programming>
See also USAID's "Performance monitoring and evaluation tips: Preparing a performance management plan."

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Tools and Resources

- [CRS Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, and Protection Assessments: A basic guide for busy practitioners](#). As discussed in earlier chapters, justice & peacebuilding integration is a core competency for CRS and partners and these “good enough” guidelines for assessment help with integration. 🔑
- [ProPack III](#) – provides guidance on conducting SMILER workshops, during which several MEAL design components discussed in this section are developed and/or refined. 🔑
- [CRS Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning in Emergencies: A resource pack for simple and strong MEAL](#) has general guidance applicable for working with government actors before, during, and after humanitarian events. 🔑
- [CRS Quick Guide](#) on incorporating partnership and capacity strengthening in proposals 🔑

6.2. PLANNING FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

Design and MEAL planning need to also take into account the levels of government involved. As discussed in the [Policy](#) chapter, most countries develop policy at the national level, implementation is the responsibility of provincial and district level units, and real impact is felt at the community level. Thus, many MEAL systems will need to be designed to track the performance, results and impact of a policies at these various levels.

The MEAL Policies and Procedures identify the foundational components that should be developed during any project’s MEAL system design and early planning phase (these components are laid out in [MPP 1.1 and 1.2](#)). Many of these key MEAL components are particularly important to develop in engaging government related projects and will be outlined within this section below, including a clear theory of change, results framework, [Proframe](#) or a Performance Management Plan (PMP which identifies the indicators against which progress will be measured as well as the *methods* which will be used to measure the progress), and stakeholder analysis. These are some of the components that make up a strong MEAL system, and which lay the foundation for all projects, including those that engage government.

The MEAL design components are often developed or refined during a SMILER workshop. SMILER, which stands for Simple Measurement of Indicators for Learning and Evidence-based Reporting, workshops are recommended for all projects.⁷¹ SMILER workshops provide teams with the time and space to bring partners together, including government partners in all governance work. Bringing government into the MEAL design stage of a project will yield greater engagement through the course of a project since government actors will have had substantial input in the early decisions and planning phases.

6.2.1 THEORIES OF CHANGE FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

The [context analysis](#) chapter introduces the concepts behind theories of change for engaging government. Programs designed by CRS and partners intend to improve a given context for a target population; that is to make a positive change that will affect political, social, economic, and/or environmental conditions. Such change often involves how governance structures and processes operate and the way people think or act related to them. Engaging government in programming is thus based on **“a theory of change [which] explains why we think certain actions will**

Beyond basics: Engaging government theories of change

In its simplest form a theory of change articulates what outcome we believe our actions/ interventions will produce. If we do “X,” then “Y” will happen.

For engaging government programming, theories of change will need to be more sophisticated to reflect the multiple layers of intervention (and outcomes) that are interwoven together:

- * individual behavior
- * organizational performance
- * institutional reform
- * societal transformation

⁷¹ ProPack III: The CRS Project Package. A guide to developing a SMILER M&E system. 2010.

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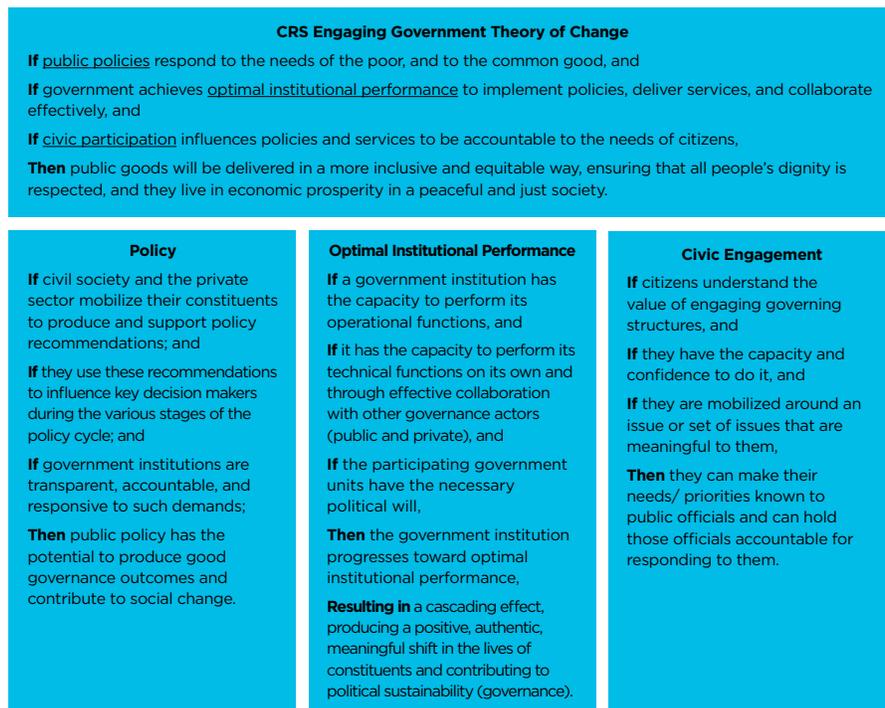
- produce desired change in a given context.**⁷² The theory of change helps to:
1. Clarify which factors of governance, government capacity, or political will are the focus and which are critical for project success;
 2. State clearly what the intended outcome of programs will be; and
 3. Fully articulate how and why the program will address these factors and achieve intended outcomes, providing a starting point for defining specific objectives and indicators.

One of the key steps in developing a theory of change is to identify critical assumptions, which is of utmost importance in governance projects where change may largely rely on government capacity, engagement or actions. Critical assumptions are defined as factors or conditions outside the project design team’s control, yet the existence of which is critical to allowing the project to achieve it’s next-highest-level objective.⁷³ When identifying assumptions, it may be helpful to determine which factors are within the projects’ control, and which are outside. This will help to determine what support the project can provide to influence what is outside of direct control. The influence needs may then be included as key strategies to consider when developing a theory or change and subsequent project activities.

Many programs choose to have a simple theory of change for each of the project’s objectives, which all contribute to an overall program goal or a broad theory of change identified by a government strategy, donor, CRS/partners or other stakeholders.

An example of this relationship among broad and more specific theories of change is this Guide itself. Figure 14 includes the CRS Engaging Government Theory of Change presented in [Chapter 1](#) and the three theories of change discussed in the programming pathway chapters of Policy, Optimal Institutional Performance, and Civic Participation. Note the common terms and ideas that connect these theories of change, how it might be relevant to combine them in various types of programming, and how they collectively contribute to CRS’ overall goals related to governance and partnership with government.

Figure 14. Relationship among CRS Engaging Government Theories of Change



72 USAID. “Theories and Indicators of Change Concepts and Primers for Conflict Management and Mitigation” http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaed180.pdf

73 ProPack I, p. 70.

ADAPTING THE ENGAGING GOVERNMENT THEORIES OF CHANGE FOR PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

The three theories of change for engaging government program pathways (summarized in Figure 14) offer a starting place for teams developing context and program specific theories of change. These theories of change offer two important benefits. First, individually, they build on CRS' previous experience in engaging government and help country programs build on what has worked in each of the program pathways. Second, considered together, they provide a more comprehensive framework to help design programs that better reflect and respond to the complex challenges of engaging government.

Engaging government is often something that CRS and partners come to as a natural next step in ongoing work. Thus, established theories of change can be revised or updated based on opportunities to work with government. Three example situations are below.

Developing a theory of change for a new activity, not part of existing programs. For example, a CSO network working on post-disaster resettlement has identified a gap in policy that allows for discrimination against female-headed households. The network is a CRS partner on other programming, so there is an established relationship. Supporting the network to mobilize constituents to produce policy recommendations is a facilitation role CRS has the capacity to play. As a starting point for focusing the effort, CRS could facilitate a meeting to consider the [Policy](#) and [Civic Participation](#) theories of change and what elements could be adapted for this need in this context.

Developing a theory of change responsive to a new funding opportunity. For example, a funding opportunity is announced for working with the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen their ability to work under a new multi-year poverty reduction strategy. The CRS country program could look to the theory of change for [Optimal Institution Performance](#) to see if there are ways to integrate their experience working with farmers' associations and CSO partners to improve market access in the most marginalized region. There may be ways to translate that knowledge and expertise into government systems and capacity to help scale such efforts nationally.

Developing a theory of change to shift a government connection into program partnership. For example, for years CRS and partners have been sharing and informally discussing health outcomes data from work with the Ministry of Health. But a formal system to analyze the data with that from other service providers does not exist. To improve accountability, transparency, and effectiveness, CRS, ministry representatives, and other stakeholders could meet to choose elements of [all three theories of change](#) to start crafting strategies for requesting public and/or donor funds to develop policies, systems, and capacity for analysis and community engagement for better health outcomes.

The theory of change should be considered a living document, and one that can be revisited and revised throughout the life of a project, based on findings from evaluations and other MEAL activities.

A program's theory of change provides the bridge between context analysis and programming, helping CRS and partners ensure their efforts are relevant and appropriate. Making sense of analysis is thus about asking questions such as, "What needs to change in this particular context to ensure engaging government leads to a more economically prosperous, peaceful and just society?"

The theory of change should be considered a living document, and one that can be revisited and revised throughout the life of a project, based on findings from evaluations and other MEAL activities. Once the theory of change has been initially developed and tested, the next step is to develop a results framework, which will essentially lay out the project strategy and objectives based on the theory of change.

INFORMING THEORIES OF CHANGE THROUGH RAPID ASSESSMENT AND RELATIONSHIP MAPPING



The [context analysis](#) chapter discusses many ways to gather the information that will go into developing theories of change, including the dynamics among government actors at various levels, across areas of responsibility, and requirements of governance processes. If CRS or partners are new to a context or have limited time for new program design, such as designing the response to a humanitarian emergency, ensure that any [Rapid Assessment](#) tools used – for any level of analysis – capture the broad dynamics of public decision-making. Here it is important to keep an open mind about relationships and potential roles of government and other actors. CRS and partners can help reveal common interests or complementary resources among groups that have previously had poor or non-existent relationships and facilitate new types of

Tools and Resources

- [CRS Guidelines](#) on constructing a theory of change for a project 
- [CRS ProPack 1](#), Chapter V, section 4: Articulate and test the theory of change 
- [Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development](#). USAID.

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As an example of a stakeholder analysis with government partners, see the discussion of CRS' Borderlands Coffee Project in [Chapter 3](#). The initial analysis and subsequent updating was a fundamental part of establishing partnerships and the successful influence strategy. See also the [ProPack 1](#), Section 2: Conduct a Stakeholder Analysis.

6.2.2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Developing a stakeholder analysis during the design phase of the project is particularly important in projects engaging government, recognizing that in such projects, stakeholder needs and perspectives may vary widely. Stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups, and institutions important to the success of the project. During the MEAL design phase, the primary purpose of a stakeholder analysis in the context of governance work is to understand government partners' expectations and information needs and to determine how best to meet information needs within the MEAL project system.

6.2.3. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

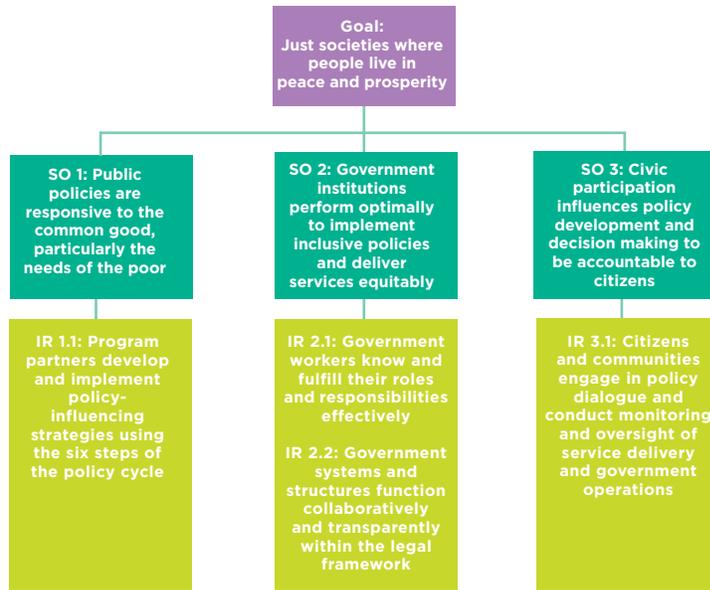
Results frameworks lay out the project strategy and objectives based on the theory of change. They are a crucial MEAL design element that should be developed during the proposal stage and provides the foundation for other MEAL design components developed during SMILER workshops.⁷⁴

Often, depending on the project's strategy and the theory of change, the project may either aim to influence policy or to strengthen government capacity to contribute to the goal. In these cases, influencing policy or strengthening government capacity should be included in the results framework as strategic objectives. Then, the means to influence policy or strengthen government capacity (i.e., "how-to") will be laid out as intermediate results in the results framework. In developing intermediate results, the critical assumptions developed with the theory of change will serve as a useful reference to determine within and outside of control in the project content, noting that intermediate results should reflect changes within the sphere of direct project influence.

Figure 15 offers an illustrative results framework for engaging government programming. It draws on strategic objectives and intermediate results from various CRS programs. Further discussion can be found in [CRS ProPack 1](#), Chapter V and the EQUIP and PCS teams can contribute to proposal design processes.

⁷⁴ This definition of results framework comes from the CRS MEAL Glossary: <https://global.crs.org/communities/ME/MEAL/SitePages/Glossary.aspx#r>

Figure 15. Draft Illustrative EGG Results Framework



Results frameworks in donor solicitations (RFP/RFA) often target higher-level outcomes to reflect their country-wide, as opposed to project-level, focus. CRS and partners should take this difference into account when producing their results frameworks.

6.2.4. DEVELOPING A PROFRAME

Once the theory of change, stakeholder analysis, and results framework have been developed, the next step in the MEAL design process is to develop a Proframe.⁷⁵ The Proframe provides performance indicators and measurement methods associated with all levels of the results framework and the critical assumptions that have been made about project performance and plans.⁷⁶ See [CRS ProPack I, Chapter VII](#).

It is important to establish the indicators, their definitions, and the methods by which they will be measured, for all intended changes reflected in the results framework. There are numerous methods by which indicators are measured, including both traditional methods and more innovative methods, many of which can be useful in governance projects. These methods will be explored in more detail below. The following subsection also discusses in more detail the process of indicator development and the unique challenges faced by governance programs.



In Todee Community in Liberia, young people marched to promote peace ahead of the national elections in October 2017. CRS is supporting several activities to promote peace in Liberia, including marches, sporting events, workshops and door-to-door outreach. Michael Stulman/CRS.

⁷⁵ CRS ProPack 1, p. 87.

⁷⁶ This definition of Proframe comes from the CRS MEAL Glossary: <https://global.crs.org/communities/ME/MEAL/SitePages/Glossary.aspx#r>

INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT

Monitoring and evaluating governance programs and programs which engage government in other ways poses challenges for organizations like CRS and partners. The elements of the [Engaging Government Framework](#) largely reflect processes of decision-making and principles requiring behavior change, which are highly contextual and not as easily observed as other types of change, such as many health, agriculture, or humanitarian response outcomes. As well, such programs work at multiple levels and often over longer timeframes.

MAKING ENGAGING GOVERNMENT INDICATORS SMART

An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.⁷⁷ As with any kind of indicator, those for engaging government should be “SMART” – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. The tools listed in the next text box are a good starting place for design and implementation teams so they do not have to invent fully original indicators for engaging government, but can use these tools as they are or take inspiration for adaptation to the context and programming needs.

IDENTIFYING INDICATORS FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

The process of identifying indicators to measure objectives at all levels that are reflected in the theory of change for engaging government follows general CRS guidance. The tools section below gives many sources of indicators for governance and various ways of engaging government. All indicators for such programming should have:

- Utility in identifying and understanding change toward the principles of governance and partnership;
- Clarity in how they are defined, poorly articulated measures can have far-reaching implications;
- Relevance to understanding the political dynamics and processes that drive governance change;⁷⁸
- Means to disaggregate data based on sex, age, and other relevant demographics;
- Ability to be analyzed together or compared to form a picture of governance change that no one indicator can convey;
- Guidance for interpreting how change affects key and other stakeholders, as well as communicating findings about the change;
- Measurement of the changes in capacity and practices toward public management and delivery;
- Utility in identifying the changes in civic participation toward policy development and policy enforcement; and
- Measurement of the changes in community awareness toward specific social norms such as discrimination toward marginalized groups.

Note that if a program is using government created indicators, CRS and partners can review them and suggest any improvements based on best practices, but while recognizing the government’s existing effort and retaining their sense of ownership.

⁷⁷ OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

⁷⁸ Williams 2011.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Per CRS' general MEAL guidance, projects should include a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. Including both is particularly critical for engaging government efforts since the qualitative nature of governance is so important. Doing so allows for diverse types of reporting and accountability. It also helps support the practice of looking at an issue from multiple perspectives in order to create a fuller picture of what change is actually taking place and some of the implications. Even quantitative indicators are context dependent; how data is collected and from whom, by whom it is analyzed, and the dynamics of that political moment, for example, all factor into understanding the change an indicator is trying to observe.

A significant trend regarding indicators relevant to engaging government efforts is a shift away from strict categories of output and outcome/impact level indicators of changes and towards adding indicators for effectiveness of process. For governance, process often is the outcome.

Tools and Resources

- The [USAID DG Indicators Handbook](#) offers a fairly comprehensive collection of indicators, their definitions, and possible methods for measurement.
- [CRS: GAIN peacebuilding indicators](#) are relevant to engaging government, as well as general guidance in "Selecting Performance Indicators" 
- The [World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators project](#) is often used as a starting place for many donors, INGOs and others and easiest to view on their online portal.
- [A Users' Guide to Measuring Local Governance](#). UNDP.
- [Governance Targets and Indicators for post-2015 strengthening](#). ODI.
- [Measuring Change and Results in Voice and Accountability Work](#). DFID Working Paper 34.
- [Guide to Good Governance Programming](#), Chapter 6. Mercy Corps.
- ["Towards Better Governance Monitoring and Evaluation of Governance Programmes."](#) CARE.
- ["What makes a good governance indicator?"](#) The Policy Practice.
- [The Governance and Gender Overview Report](#)
- [Afrobarometer and other regional barometers](#)

A significant trend regarding indicators relevant to engaging government efforts is a shift away from strict categories of output and outcome/impact-level indicators of changes and towards adding indicators for effectiveness of process. For governance, process often is the outcome. So much of what governance is trying to address is increasing the efficiency and equity of a decision-making, service delivery or dispute resolution process. Establishing means of assessing the process of engaging government can facilitate factors of accountability and other governance principles to be part of analysis.

Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

Indicators, once chosen and mapped against objectives during MEAL system design, should be monitored and evaluated during implementation to determine progress, identify challenges and inform ongoing project management decisions. Program designers and implementers have often reflected that it is hard to develop guaranteed and cost-effective ways to measure progress of engaging government during specific project timeframes. Even so, donor demand for results and aid effectiveness, as well as political science research and practitioner experience, emphasize the public sector's role in scale and sustainability of all types of development and humanitarian work. There is also an increasing awareness about the complex system in which programs operate, to which approaches such as [political-economy analysis](#) for context and planning are highly valuable for CRS and partners engaging government. Thus, the good news is that considerable advances have been made recently related to measurement toward governance goals and government capacity in a wide variety of contexts.

Traditional monitoring and evaluation methods will often prove to be useful in programming which engages government actors, whether government engagement is the objective or means to reach a distinct objective. Details can be found in the [ProPack series](#). A few of the less common methods summarized below may provide additional benefits in response to the challenges cited above due to the increased degree of stakeholder participation and greater beneficiary voice they afford.

[Outcome mapping](#) is part of the family of participatory methods being used increasingly with engaging government efforts, given the emphasis on behavior, process, and systems change.⁷⁹ Outcome mapping is not based directly on intended changes, but instead explores changes in behaviors and relationships between groups of people and organizations, also known as boundary partners, directly involved in program activities. Further, outcome mapping differs from traditional methods in that it does not seek to confirm achievement of intended impact but instead explores the contributions made to impact by boundary partners and their behavior changes.

[SenseMaker](#) is a methodology that recognizes the influence of complexity on project outcomes and does not simply seek to confirm predetermined linear cause-effect relationships as part of monitoring and evaluation efforts.⁸⁰ SenseMaker offers an opportunity for project participants to share their experiences with a project as well as what they found significant about their experiences. SenseMaker as an approach involves project participants sharing personal micro-narratives and then tagging their own stories using questions (signifiers and multi-choice questions) that give those involved insight into the patterns of experience—nature of changes and possible explanatory variables. This approach helps to reduce the biases associated analysis of the micro-narratives. In this way, SenseMaker combines the advantages of a qualitative database of self-signified personal experiences with the value of larger-scale statistical analysis, which enables the exploration of patterns and agency-wide metrics.

[Participatory Impact Assessment](#) is a flexible methodology that aims to understand the changes experienced by project participants and the multiple factors that have contributed to these changes.⁸¹ Participatory Impact Assessment was designed for common challenges with the use of traditional MEAL methods, many of which are directly applicable to the content of governance work, such as a sole focus on outputs or only those changes intended within the project strategy.

[Most Significant Change \(MSC\)](#) is an inquiry process intended to understand results and impact of specific indicators as well as larger dynamics of programming and context.⁸² MSC asks participants to recount the change they experienced during the project that was most important to them, and further, why this change was more important than others. The stories generated can then be categorized to understand various types of changes and channeled through a review process in which different stakeholders identify the changes they see as most important and why. MSC is a useful tool in understanding a range of changes, both intended and unintended, the value they hold for participants and stakeholders.

6.3 PLANNING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT CYCLE

This section summarizes key quality aspects of a MEAL system related to accountability and learning in the content of government engagement. It is important to note that this summary is not intended to provide a comprehensive guidance for accountability and learning, but instead is intended to highlight specific aspects of accountability and learning that provide additional value

79 <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/>

80 <http://cognitive-edge.com/sensemaker/>

81 http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/PIA-guide_revised-2014-3.pdf

82 <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

Alternatives to the “Gold Standard”

In recent years, donors have sought to spread the use of quasi-experimental evaluation methods, such as randomized control treatment (RCT), to increase “rigor” of evaluating governance programs. Some of the methods described here, e.g., SenseMaker and Outcome Harvesting, offer alternatives to RCT that are just as rigorous and more cost-effective.

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in the context of governance work. By fostering a culture of learning and accountability, CRS and partners can better understand if programming is having the intended impacts, if strong learning is resulting in ongoing improvements and if accountability efforts are producing greater transparency. In doing so, government actors and the people they serve see not just a focus on outputs but how the values of IHD and CRS' principles of governance and partnership are embedded in governance systems and structures.

6.3.1 ACCOUNTABILITY IN ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Accountability, for CRS, is not only part of the MEAL system, but also recognized among both the governance and partnership principles noted in [Chapter 1](#) and as a strategic priority for the agency. It involves 1) ensuring voice and opportunity for people to influence decisions affecting their lives, 2) holding CRS and partners to account, including to each other, and 3) for CRS and partners to be responsible stewards of donor resources. CRS' general guidance and procedures on accountability in MEAL also applies for engaging government and can be found in the [ProPack and other MEAL resources](#). See also the compendium of accountability mechanisms that have been used in various countries.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

In many places, when talking about accountability it is assumed CRS and partners mean financial or donor accountability. Thus, some specific activities to raise awareness about accountability towards the people served may need to be planned with government partners. Examples can help, such as: did the government honor its engagement in reaching X number of children on antiretroviral treatment? Were most marginalized community members also reached as part of project efforts? If yes, how can the strategy be documented, shared with others and bring public recognition? If no, what were the barriers and what are the factors that can help ensure that this number is reached and that programming is inclusive next time?

It is particularly important to ensure when working with the public sector or toward governance goals that accountability reflects the sensitivities of context and the methods used reinforce related principles, such as transparency, equity, and inclusion. Establishing two-way communication mechanisms with government actors, communities, and donors goes a long way toward meeting this need. Some specific ways CRS and partners can foster such communication and accountability with a range of stakeholders include:

- *CRS and partner staff.* Orientation of all program staff on beneficiary, government, and donor accountability standards, competence assessment, and capacity building as needed to ensure they have the KSAs to meet commitments, particularly to beneficiaries (see [Competencies](#) chapter 7). Seek input from diverse program staff about sensitivities, opportunities and ways to address them so the program benefits from this guidance and there is broad ownership in accountability. A useful tool is [CRS' Accountability Orientation Module](#).
- *Project participants.* Formal and informal mechanisms for collecting, documenting, and responding to all community feedback relevant to government partners (and other actors) and their actions, as well as that of CRS and partners in a key action for improving accountability to direct beneficiaries. Robust community outreach about the objectives and activities of programs and actively seeking beneficiary reflections builds a rapport important for people to trust feedback mechanisms. Active, regular encouragement about safely using feedback mechanisms, is also particularly critical in politically sensitive contexts where engaging government programming can bring about serious concerns and complaints. Additionally, involving beneficiaries and communities, whenever possible, in MEAL design and implementation will ensure greater accountability. This can be done through consulting beneficiaries

Practicing What We Preach

By practicing downward accountability to project beneficiaries through good MEAL practices, CRS and partners model the behavior they seek to promote by, and beneficiaries demand from, government officials.

during the MEAL design phase, working with beneficiaries to develop and then monitor community defined indicators, and communicating and disseminating project findings back to communities when possible.

- **Government partners.** Partnering agreements between CRS, government actors, and other partners outline how groups will work together through the program, according to common partnership principles. This is separate from other program documents, such as project agreements, which detail *what* each partner will do, budgets, etc. It is a social contract to set norms for the relationship, such as: shared principles, complementary aspirations, mutual learning interests, open information sharing, and how disputes will be managed. It can establish expectations for regular meetings for joint analysis and reflection on project monitoring and accountability data. Such meetings ensure time to adjust project activities in a timely way, identify emerging trends relevant to the political context, capture lessons as part of ongoing capacity strengthening, and build trust so disputes or other issues are handled effectively and with dignity. Equally as important to accountability in partner relationships are processes for partnership reflections and anonymous feedback surveys, such as the [CRS Partnership Scorecard](#). Communication and dissemination plans for stakeholder engagement with MEAL findings. Participatory methods discussed above offer an opportunity for reflection on results and implications related to the overall governance goals of the program and others that partners and communities may have. In this way, accountability activities can reinforce partnership principles of mutuality.
- **Donors.** Regular donor communication, in addition to required quarterly or other reporting for MEAL, to share incremental success, early challenges of political will or capacity that can impact longer-term program effectiveness, or emerging political issues in the context. Such communication is often particularly welcomed from implementers working on engaging government programming since they have more access, such as to remote or disaster- and conflict-affected areas, and are hearing first-hand from real people what donors can mostly observe on a policy level.

Principles in Action: Modeling accountability for government in the West Bank-Gaza

Accountability is often at the objective-level of engaging government programming or a goal of working with government partners. Yet, such governance and partnership principles are often easier to endorse than to practice, so modeling can be a powerful way to increase political will and motivate change in behavior. For example, as part of the West Bank-Gaza Youth Voices for Community Action project, six local youth-led context analysis reports and a White Paper were generated and shared with local/national leaders to inform ways of contributing to a culture of non-violence. The research helped officials to see the value of more direct collaboration with youth and the project was able to help establish platforms for youth to continue engaging with Palestinian leadership to place conflict issues on local and national agendas. By modeling the accountability, they sought from local government, participants opened a new avenue for government to be accountable, improve effectiveness, and gain credibility with important constituents.



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Open Government and Open Data as a measure towards accountability

Open data, is “the idea that information should be freely available for everyone to access, use and republish as they wish, published without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control.”⁸³ Information created by government is thus termed *Open Government Data*. Even governments with limited data management systems or capacity collect large amounts of data through their regular work. This contributes to the imbalance of power between government authorities and those who are governed. The lack of diverse data sources in many contexts also hinders government effectiveness since it skews public priorities and decision-making on policies and service delivery.

⁸³ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/theme/open-data>

POTENTIAL BENEFITS WHERE GOVERNMENT DATA IS OPEN

- *Transparency*, for governed populations to know what their government is doing, to be active participants in governance themselves, and to analyze and share that information with others;
- *Efficiency*, to enable better coordination and efficiency within government, by making data easier to find, analyze and combine across different departments, agencies or levels; and
- *Innovation*, as data is a significant resource for political, social, and economic activities such as enabling the start of new business or services provided by a civil society organization that meet a gap in the delivery of public goods.

For organizations such as the [Open Government Partnership](#), “the vision of open data is for government information to be ‘open by default.’” Over 65 countries, including both donor and aid recipient countries, have signed on to work with the OGP to start or expand open data initiatives. Their rationales range from practicing principles of transparency and accountability, to interests in enabling economic potential, to expanding the actors generating ideas for how government services can anticipate evolving needs, such as adaptation to climate change. OGP also reports that, in addition to central government interest, there are many others working for and with open government data, including government actors at provincial and community levels, CSOs and INGOs, national and multi-national businesses and their associations, and journalists and media outlets at all levels.

Other initiatives working on open government issues relevant to CRS and partners:

- [Open Government Data Working Group](#). World Bank.
- [Focusing on civic space and the legal environment for civil society](#). CIVICUS.
- [Open Government initiative](#). USAID and other U.S. government agencies.
- [Open Data Guidelines](#). Sunlight Foundation, focused largely on the US government, with implications for global partners.

6.3.2 LEARNING IN ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

As an organization deeply committed to learning, CRS programs engaging government seek to learn in collaboration with formal and informal governance actors, and support public sector knowledge and skills for research and analysis related to their mandates.

Learning is a broad area and thus one that is often neglected in planning for program time, budgets, and partnerships. But CRS’ emphasis on theories of change as a way to establish program strategy out of context analysis invites questions about whether the strategy was effective and whether the critical assumptions held true. MEAL findings contribute to the answers. Learning agendas in engaging government programs can also dig deeper, helping CRS and partners understand complex dynamics of governance processes and systems, when and how various levers of change work or do not, the broader implications of lessons learned, and even elevate additional questions to guide future programming and policy advocacy.

CRS also supports learning agendas at the program, country and regional levels, as well as for technical aspects that take into account global lessons. How learning agendas are designed depends on what CRS and partners want to learn and why. In the simplest form, two open questions can develop a learning agenda:

1. What do (we think) we know?
2. How we know it?

International Standards, Local Access

When a government commits to participate in the OGP, it provides an excellent entry point for discussions about increasing civil society’s levels of access to public information and decision-making.

Bringing together a broad group of CRS, partner and community colleagues to ask these questions can sharpen the learning agenda questions and reveal shared learning interests.

For engaging government topics, this leads to two main categories of learning agendas:

- *Learning for impact.* CRS seeks to become more effective in achieving its mission through engaging government. Integration of governance along with peacebuilding, gender, protection and youth is a core competency for impact across all technical sectors. Impact also implies scale. Thus, areas for learning include how governance contributes to helping diverse initiatives reach more people more effectively through government partnerships on new or strengthened policies, better performance of public institutions, or improved civic engagement (see the [West Bank-Gaza example](#) above). Likewise learning agendas can help CRS and partners manage risk associated with engaging government efforts, contributing to positive impact for current programs and future application of good practices. Teams involved with learning agendas, especially through programs, should discuss how what is learned is expected to inform internal project decision-making, including possible adaptations to project activities or strategy or risk analysis.
- *Learning for influence.* CRS and partners are often in positions to influence local, national and regional governance actors themselves and find real value in having an evidence-base for recommendations (see the [LACRO example](#) below). As noted above, donor representatives working in the same context also rely on what CRS and partners are learning from engaging government since especially governmental donors such as USAID or DFID often have more limited access to affected communities due to security restrictions and because of the political nature of their role with the host government. Peer organizations as well often look to what CRS and partners are learning about governance issues or as they work with specific government partners to inform their actions and can create new, joint-learning opportunities on issues of shared concern. In these ways, CRS is often an industry thought leader.

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Partnership with diverse university and other learning institutions gives CRS important insight into scholarship and emerging thinking relevant to country programs and technical sectors, as well as research expertise to add rigor to learning agendas. For insights into engaging government in particular sectors, CRS has often worked with universities and research organizations based in the respective countries and regions. For example, the story of CRS' work with two international research and training institutions is captured in the book, [Working together, Learning together: Learning Alliances in Agroenterprise Development](#), published by USAID. Their research captured issues of smallholder farmers, local and global market conditions, and examined governance dynamics such as structural adjustments in the role of government and what policy and systems changes would facilitate better outcomes for farmers.

This EGG is itself a beneficiary of university collaboration. Early in the process of taking stock of CRS' experience in engaging government and framing the agency's approach, the opportunity to integrate a political science perspective was identified. CRS' established relationship with the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and their policy studies lead fit the bill. In addition to contributing to this guide, the partnership also led to a scholar-practitioner essay co-authored with a senior CRS staff member about the relationship among relevant political science, practical experience from implementation, and Catholic social teaching.

Aside from formal learning agendas, there are numerous ways country programs and others learn in the process of implementation and partnership. This includes through partner experience with governance in the context, mentoring and accompaniment processes with specific government actors, and

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participation in networks, conferences and informal lessons learned sharing events with peer organizations and donors. Keeping a focus on learning is particularly critical in highly politicized contexts, so informal learning can be immediately integrated into programming, or inform formal learning agendas.

Action research is another approach for improving learning. CRS and partners' work over many years in specific contexts and on specific sectors offers an important vantage point on the root issues limiting development. But observations shared with donors or relevant government actors are often not enough to motivate investment, policy change, or other action on an issue. Thus, building an evidence base for recommendations is often a valuable role for CRS and partners. Action-research⁸⁴ starts with an observed need through program experience, and informs information collection and analysis specifically intended to motivate action on an issue. Often government actors have an interest in such research because it can help make the case for resources and capacity they need to address an issue they also care about or is part of their mandate.

Observations shared with donors or relevant government actors are often not enough to motivate investment, policy change, or other action on an issue. Action research can help make the case.

Principles in Action: Action research across the Latin America region

After several years working in natural resource management and with poor farmers' groups in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, CRS observed a common need in each country for improved national government policies, programs, and practices in the rain-fed agriculture sectors. What they lacked was the research to inform such government action. The *Global Water Initiative* (GWI 2.0, 2012-15) secured US\$5M in financial support from the Howard G. Buffet Foundation to conduct action-research which confirmed that problems related to water access and availability in the region were generally problems of poor water management, not scarcity. Water resources were wasted as a result of poor policies and management at micro, local, national, and regional levels, disproportionately affecting the poor. Fortunately, the CRS research also found good practices by municipal and national water services as models for scaling up. This led to a series of policy recommendations focused on 1) making water services financially viable and equitable and 2) protecting water sources for current and future water demand. CRS then worked with local organizations in each country to contribute to the development of technical-legal planning documents, such as the Declaration of Protected Areas, which includes focus on the role of the community in managing local water sources and watersheds, as well as a package of legal tools such as protected area management plans. CRS Colombia took a similar approach in work with the coffee sector, with details in the 2015 paper "[Using Scientific Evidence to Link Private and Public Sectors in the Planning Process.](#)"



Tools and Resources

- [CRS Communication toolbox: Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with stakeholders, including government actors.](#) Describes how to make a systematic communication plan and improve accountability in emergency and development contexts. 
- [The Humanitarian Accountability Report.](#) Humanitarian Accountability Partnership.
- [Advocacy Impact Evaluation](#)
- [Making a difference: M&E of policy research.](#) ODI.
- [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in NGO Advocacy.](#) Oxfam/ODI.

⁸⁴ Hinton, R. (2011) Action research - testing underlying theories of change, Prepared for the INTRAC, PSO and PRIA Conference on monitoring and evaluation.

6.4 ENGAGING GOVERNMENT IN MEAL DESIGN

The foundation of any strong MEAL system is thoughtful and intentional MEAL design. CRS' IHD approach suggests, and this guide supports, that integrating good governance into the design of development and humanitarian projects will help produce more enduring positive impacts on people's lives. Per the [Engaging Government Framework](#), governance integration in design helps ensure that projects increase equitable and inclusive access to and influence on systems and structures that affect the lives of the people served by CRS and its partners.

The ideas and activities in the Context Analysis chapter, including the [Programming Matrix](#), are the start of the project design process for engaging government. These tools help CRS and partners make sense of macro-level and sector/problem specific context information and channel it into the approach pathways of Policy, Optimal Institutional Performance and Civic Participation. Each of those chapters then discusses design options and ways to combine them at the program goal level, or as strategic objectives.

Facilitating government actors to play a major part in MEAL design and activities is critical for governance efforts, as it was in the [context analysis](#) phase. Benefits include:

- *Modeling principles of partnership, particularly local ownership.* Design and MEAL collaboration is a direct application of CRS' commitment to subsidiarity and local ownership. It can be a recognition of government efforts, helping them gain credibility and leverage for further change. It also gives the opportunity to model other principles of partnership and governance that programs espouse (value of mutual accountability, sustainability, methods of transparency, equity, and inclusion, etc.).
- *Realistic Ideas.* Broadening the pool of creative ideas, as well as giving program designers more direct understanding of what is feasible since governance timeframes are often very different from those of donor-funded projects.
- *Capacity building and accompaniment.* Often more effective than a training setting, working together on design and MEAL activities is an applied way to share technical knowledge, increase analysis skills, and motivate behaviors for accountability and learning beyond a given program.
- *Trust building.* Collaboration on design and MEAL with CRS, and especially local CSO partners, is a means for governmental and non-governmental groups to build effective working relationships and the trust necessary to stay engaged with each other on challenging issues.
- *Managing Bias.* Taking a collaborative approach to design and MEAL activities should manage bias by ensuring representation of a range of perspectives are reflected and range of information needs as met (see further discussion in the [Context Analysis](#) chapter). A collaborative approach recognizes that the definition of success or meaningful change may look slightly different from group to group, and therefore, a wider range of information needs will be met by jointly designing MEAL system and activities. This will help avoid the potential pitfall of only looking for change or progress that reflect one group's perspective.
- *Increasing Ownership.* Engaging government partners with MEAL design from the beginning can contribute to greater ownership or MEAL processes and results, with an aim to ultimately continue government engagement in interpretation and use of MEAL results.
- *Contributing to Sustainability of MEAL Systems.* Ownership may in turn contribute to creating MEAL systems that will outline current partnership agreements and be useful in informing ongoing improvements in longer-term government policy.

Engaging government in MEAL design and activities will likely require more time during the design/planning phase of a project cycle due to logistical coordination and navigating decision-making with multiple stakeholders. However, in the long run, it will allow for more a much more efficient and useful MEAL system and improve the relevance and use of MEAL results.

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6.5 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEAL IN ENGAGING GOVERNMENT CONTEXTS

MEAL can present sensitive issues in many kinds of programming and partnerships. There are several that are especially important when working on governance issues or with government actors. [Context analysis](#) can alert CRS and partners to some of the points below. Further analysis may also be critical to fully understand the specific dynamics of the issue that will or could influence their work.

Institutionalizing indicators as program transition. Often MEAL during a program generates some of the most thorough information and perspective on an issue or area of service delivery that government actors are accountable for in the much longer-term. It is part of effective engaging government programming to build in time and attention to help responsible ministries or units institutionalize data collection methods and strengthen their capacity to continue monitoring useful indicators and establish new ones. Not a task of applying a specific tool or method, this is more a process of jointly identifying the need and working with available resources to create a feasible approach. See the [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) chapter for further discussion of options and considerations.

Many of the points relevant to working directly with government actors in the design phase of the program cycle are also relevant to MEAL (see the [context analysis](#) chapter and [Section 6.1](#) above). More specific points about working with the public sector on MEAL for specific topics are also noted in the chapters on [policy](#), [optimal institutional performance](#), and [civic participation](#).

Complex programs. Projects that involve several countries (LACRO examples above), consortiums of partners, and are multi-sectoral (DFAP examples above) often have strong engaging government components because of the public sector's leadership role in scaling-up and sustaining program outcomes. This role may be established from the outset or evolve during the course of implementation. Either way, it is critical to involve government actors in planning for and doing MEAL in complex programs, as well as helping establish the systems and capacities for their longer-term management of efforts started through programming.

Long-term, iterative programming. On issues of major social change, CRS may work for decades on a topic or in a sector. How government is involved varies significantly, but MEAL can be a way to invite a more direct role for the public sector and help build a platform for partnership.

Principles in Action: Evolving programming over two decades in Mindanao

The Peace Governance Mindanao (PGM) program stands on the shoulders of prior justice and peacebuilding programming in the Philippines implemented for over 20 years. The goal of the most recent effort was to strengthen local governance structures supporting peace and development initiatives through community participation, supporting formal engagement with local government units (LGUs). As such, PGM provided the platform for structural and institutional changes in LGUs and civil society-government partnerships in the delivery of basic services and conflict resolution mechanisms. CRS, local partners, and barangay LGUs worked together to:



- Monitor the implementation of barangay development plans.
- Jointly conduct annual validation visits to all covered barangays to check/validate performance vis-a-vis project targets. This was also true for schools, with the school validation process guided by a peace education integration checklist of six indicators.
- Increase transparency in resource allocation for projects identified in the barangay development plans, through jointly designing and implementing PGM's monitoring system.
- Track and document conflict cases, including those resolved.

Many of the points relevant to working directly with government actors in the design phase of the program cycle are also relevant to MEAL.



Key leaders and staff of local partner organizations participate in governance capacity building sessions increasing their skills to strategically engage government actors and institutions in Mindanao. David Snyder for CRS.

This partnership has contributed to increased political will of leaders from the community to the national level to govern based on not only their own interests, but also the shared interests of their constituents. CRS and partners have also increased the trust and technical capacity needed for successful collaboration on sensitive issues of the Local Government Code and the national peace program. For example, in one municipality, the partner and LGU are already using the PGM dialogue mechanism to present municipal budget to all barangay leaders.

Political hurdles. One consideration is whether government actors are willing to be involved in collaborative MEAL processes (or any planning or program activities) also involving CSOs and how leadership of the process is determined. In some places, CSOs are viewed by government as not genuine or politically linked to opposition groups; thus, they often avoid sharing information with CSOs. Elsewhere, divisions within government can mean no one governmental actor is trusted by all to lead a MEAL process, so an impartial CSO can be selected for the role. Project teams must navigate these contextual nuances.

Program versus government timelines. On the very practical level, timeframes are an issue that often challenges engaging government projects. Public ministries can have five or 10 year strategies, whereas CRS and partners are often on one to five-year grant cycles. Local departments can wait months and years for funds to be made available from central governments, delaying activities even where CRS and government partners are fully aligned on plans. The regulations and timeframes for accessing public data vary from country to country and even within departments. Elections and other political moments can also dramatically alter the timing of collaborations; either slowing them down when campaigning becomes the priority over governing, or speeding them up if public officials want to get something done before a change in the political context or to be able to show accomplishments to constituents. Informal governance structures also have wildly different relationships with formal structures, including how often they meet and the windows of time available for joint decision-making. A related time issue is that many government offices do not have the incentive to think about MEAL creatively and anything seen as additional is rejected because it takes time away from reaching the minimum targets mandated, even if it might save time in the long run.

Realistic information about governance processes and practical experience, including from partners, should thus be part of program design and MEAL planning for engaging government programs and related learning agendas. CRS and partners can discuss with government partners the cost-benefit of investing time in MEAL. Working with donors to incorporate a level of MEAL flexibility can help such efforts adapt and still meet program goals and donor requirements.

Turnover of government roles. Turnover can be a MEAL challenge if access to public information or joint-information collection activities are part of program deliverables or learning agendas. Participatory analysis processes can be significantly changed when individuals are replaced with colleagues that do not have the capacity and/or level of trust established, or have different political agendas than their predecessors. Turnover can also be positive if someone comes into the program or learning partnerships with more political will, personal influence, or other perspective that makes them effective.

Ways to mitigate the negative impacts include CRS and partners institutionalizing relationships with government ministries, departments, units, offices, etc. instead of relying fully on connection with individual officials or staff. Partnering agreements, discussed above, can help facilitate this. See also the [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) chapter for a discussion on partnership development with government.

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Information is Power

Access to public information through “sunshine”, freedom of information, right to information and other laws are the cornerstone of any government seeking to work in the interest of the common good. The reality is, however, that not everyone working for the government sees their primary purpose as working for the common good. For that reason introducing and enforcing such mechanisms will safeguard against unethical, illegal behavior, e.g., corrupt practices, while increasing the free flow of information needed to optimize institutional performance.

Navigating gaps between country strategies and observed needs. As discussed in chapters 3-5, there may be gaps between government strategies or stated priorities for issues CRS and partners are working on and the actual observed needs of communities. CRS and partners thus play an important role in navigating these gaps, often involving MEAL activities for programs, learning agendas, and government capacity strengthening related to MEAL. For example, in Vietnam, after a few years working in a community, CRS deeply understood the gaps local people faced in accessing services for children affected by HIV and AIDS. The program team applied the basic tools of the [Network Model](#) for needs identification and tracking access to services to their program, creating a new MEAL system and data collection mechanism. They then introduced the mechanism to the relevant ministerial partner, first to show the gaps more specifically, and next to give a model for how the government could use information it generated itself to update its strategy. As a result, CRS had a good relationship to provide support for the development of a National Plan of Action (NPA) for children affected by HIV and AIDS and a set of indicators which track implementation. The program and NPA monitoring systems reinforce each other, ensuring several layers of information from multiple sources that can keep being used to revise government services if population needs change.

Responsible data collection, access and right to information. The ability to collect data and the right to information is at the core of engaging government programming, whether related to policy, optimal institutional performance, civic participation, or learning for impact and influence. The right to information (RTI) is protected through the guarantees of freedom of expression found in the main international human rights treaties.⁸⁵ And many countries have RTI legislation, also referred to as freedom of information or access to information laws, that establish a general presumption that all information held by government should be accessible and set out using the mechanisms by which it can be accessed. The reality is often different, especially in countries that have not deeply invested in information systems and thus are not able to facilitate access, or where government has an interest in limiting access to information or restricts what new data can be collected. See the [Open Government box](#) at the end of this chapter.

CRS and partners need to be aware of both the laws and norms related to data collection and RTI at different levels of government for realistic program design, MEAL, and learning agendas.⁸⁶ In some cases, formal partnerships where CRS and government actors are both independently accountable to the donor, can incentivize access to information. Trust built through other programming or plans for direct engagement in analysis also influence government actors' willingness to provide data or agree to participate in data collection.

Management and use of beneficiary and other sensitive information.

The security and responsible use of MEAL and other data from engaging government programs should also be treated with sensitivity to the context, partners, and beneficiaries involved. For example, consider the pros and cons of managing specific data about institutional performance of government actors, such as when [citizen report cards](#) versus greater privacy will be more effective in motivating capacity strengthening and behavior change. Data and analysis contributing to policy development can also be politically sensitive, such as the evidence used to justify new protection policies and procedures, which also shines a light on the failings of law enforcement. Careful attention to what information is shared, when, and through what means can strike a balance, honoring the public's right to know about and advocate for changes, and optimizing the chances for political support of key stakeholders.

⁸⁵ OPG. The Open Government Guide. 2016. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/resources/open-government-guide>

⁸⁶ Freedom House and other organizations that track and analyze political rights and civil liberties around the world are good sources of information for such planning. See for example, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/overview-essay-anxious-dictators-wavering-democracies>

Clear systems for keeping beneficiary information safe is also a protection issue, with special considerations for women, youth, refugees or displaced persons, minorities, and other vulnerable and marginalized populations. When choosing whether (and which) government actors will be directly involved in data collection or analysis, consider what information certain populations will and will not be willing to share. Always be prepared to honestly discuss with all stakeholders how information will be managed and used. Doing so is part of CRS and partners' commitment to accountability. The investment in credibility can facilitate further trust and access for program impact and influence.

CAUTION WITH RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON PROMISING PRACTICES

Given the very different political dynamics and governance processes among and even within countries, CRS and partners should be cautious about using MEAL data to draw conclusions and make claims of the potential for replication of activities or approaches in different contexts. Identifying promising practices is responsible and needed as long as it is accompanied by specific information about the context and other factors that contributed to success. Such information enables others to consider those factors as part of assessing their own context and doing the analysis to see if an activity or approach might be effective or inadvertently do more harm than good. Here there is a role for learning agendas to examine engaging government approaches across diverse contexts and offer nuanced guidance so effective practices can indeed be recommended.

Humanitarian and conflict-affected contexts. All of the above points are of special concern during humanitarian response or when working in conflict-affected areas. Oversight and efficiency of formal governance structures is especially stretched in these contexts and the roles and relationships of both formal and informal governance actors may be shifting rapidly. As such, MEAL systems must take into account the level of trust CRS and partners have with various actors and communities and political dynamics, being prepared to adapt and innovate methods. Returning to and updating [context analysis](#), including conflict analysis, can be important here. Of utmost concern is the safety of stakeholders, so the [Do No Harm](#) principle should be prioritized over consistent data collection and learning, even over accountability. For example, consider how shared analysis about trust in government varies across districts could inadvertently influence areas targeted by non-state combatants.



On a technical level, developing or working toward an established engaging government theory of change and understanding who/what contributed to the change can be incredibly challenging in complex, rapidly evolving contexts. CRS and partners must be realistic in planning and willing to report ambiguities or questions to be researched in future programming. It can be possible to measure quantitative indicators of CRS and partners' own contribution to government capacity in such contexts, as well as qualitative proxy indicators assessed through participatory processes that indicate changes related to such things as trust in government, social cohesion and other factors critical to dynamic political contexts.

On a practical level, the quality and access to information will nearly always be limited. Triangulating government provided data with other sources (e.g., from other CRS programs, other INGOs/UN, donors, CSOs) is critical. Rapid staff and government partner turn-over also complicates programming in complex contexts. Here, local partners can help ensure consistency, given long-standing relationships with leaders and thus access even if their official positions change. There is also need for caution, transparency and trust related to political affiliations and views of partners to understand whether program activities are putting them at increased risk or how their bias factors into their work. A related point is the very low level of capacity of some government ministries, departments, and agencies to collect, store and analyze data (see also the [Optimal Institutional Performance](#) chapter). Often government M&E or MEAL units are understaffed and under-resourced, reducing data supply and data quality.

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7. STAFF AND PARTNER COMPETENCIES FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

CRS and partner staff working with government actors or toward good governance goals may need different or additional KSAs, or competencies, than personnel not directly engaging government. As well, government is a major actor in all contexts; a basic awareness of their interests and ways of working is relevant to the work of CRS and its partners everywhere. This section suggests competencies relevant to directly engaging government through each of the three [pathways](#) (Policy, Optimal Institutional Performance, and Civic Participation), with considerations relevant to program planning, hiring, and supporting staff and capacity strengthening.

Any staff engaging government should become familiar with CRS' [Engaging Government Framework](#) and [Engaging Government Planning and Program Decision Matrix](#), and be able to fulfill the roles suggested in this guide, as prioritized by the program or initiative.

A country or program team may not find all the required competencies in one person. Rather they should carefully assess the needed competencies for a particular initiative or program, and then engage the right person or assemble an appropriate team to work effectively with government or on governance goals in the context. This can include CRS staff, how partners are selected, or options for advisors to programs with specialized knowledge.

The following lists of KSAs for engaging government can be used in:

- ☑ Proposals, to show the KSAs your teams and partners possess and/or will build through a program;
- ☑ Job descriptions for staff or partners;
- ☑ Selecting partners with important KSAs;
- ☑ Developing CRS and partner capacity building plans.

CRS TOOLS FOR STRENGTHENING COMPETENCIES

CRS' [Institute for Capacity Strengthening](#) is a web-based platform for the PCS learning framework and has courses and resources, including strengthening staff skills. Specific competencies discussed include many of the topics in this chapter, such as communication and facilitation, as well as other chapters, such as participatory MEAL and accompaniment.

7.1. PERSPECTIVES FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Government partners at all levels can differ dramatically from CRS' usual Church and CSO partners. For example, government agencies may have authority over the agency's work in a way that CSOs do not (see box), and offices in the same ministry may have vastly different resources or influence. Despite these challenges, effective government partners also offer overwhelming opportunities for development work. Thorough context analysis will reveal these challenges and opportunities.

CRS and nongovernmental partners might need to consider their own assumptions about working with government and adjust their perspectives and mindsets. Patience, diplomacy, and knowing how government systems work—both officially and in practice—are important to successful government engagement. It is also useful to remember that government is comprised of individuals who have their own motivations and are members of communities themselves. CRS experience shows that, at every level of government, there are people who want to make a difference and are eager to engage.

Patience, diplomacy, and knowing how government systems work—both officially and in practice—are important to successful government engagement.

KEY TERMS

KSAs

Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

7.2. COMPETENCIES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

Strong and consistent analysis is critical to effective engagement with government, as is a good understanding of and exposure to the deliverables for which government is responsible. CRS staff and partners can strengthen the government capacity to deliver public goods effectively, efficiently, and sustainably only if we understand the systems, processes, and policies in those areas.

ESSENTIAL KSAS FOR CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- ☑ Able to distinguish between correlational and cause-and-effect relationships, such as how communities actually experience a policy being implemented.
- ☑ Familiarity with how to operationalize principles of good governance (discussed in Chapter 1) and how those principles are viewed in the specific country or program context.
- ☑ Identifying interdependencies within broader structures and systems, such as among line ministries or across regions within a country.
- ☑ Strong facilitation and inter-personal skills to elicit information from colleagues, peers, and government staff and intended beneficiaries in the affected communities; and to convene them to contribute to analysis and what findings mean for programming or other initiatives.

7.3. COMPETENCIES FOR PUBLIC POLICY

CRS and partners working via the policy pathway must know how policy is created and changed, and know who the key stakeholders and institutions are in the policy process. Staff members need to understand how differences in institutional strengthening affect the structures, systems and procedures of government, including the public policy process, and how they affect social change. Understanding political and governance systems, especially how they operate around the processes of decision-making, resource allocation and dispute resolution, as well as implementation of policies by the government agencies is critical for being able to understand and influence the actors, factors and dynamics associated with power and social change. Each government context is unique regarding factors including regime type, degree of transparency, inclusion, and accountability.

Principles in Action: Competencies for advising legal frameworks in Vietnam

The CRS OVC program staff in Vietnam has been working with national government for over five years. One of the main objectives of the cooperation is to establish and strengthen a legal framework to facilitate the social service and protection system for children affected by HIV and AIDS. In order to support the process, CRS Vietnam staff has to:



- Know the country's ongoing strategies toward children affected by HIV and AIDS, as well as government agencies' gaps in capacity and improvements needed in technical guidelines to fulfill the strategies.
- Be able to manage within the existing environment and address the problems.
- Involve a partner at the national level to pilot the work closely with CRS.
- Be open and flexible toward how the government partner receives technical input. At the same time, be assertive about working in some important areas
- Persevere to achieve the shared goals while dealing with policy works.

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ESSENTIAL KSAS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

- ☑ Academic or practical background in public policy, public administration, political science, economics, sociology or regional studies, relevant to the sector a program is focusing on.
- ☑ Understanding of a country or region's challenges, opportunities, historic and recent trends.
- ☑ Awareness of legal frameworks and how they lay out autonomy, lines of authority, accountability and communication for decision-making, resource allocation and dispute resolution, with ability to consult experts.
- ☑ Identifying implications, rights and responsibilities for people and communities directly affected by policies and their implementation.
- ☑ Knowledge of different political systems, i.e., presidential versus parliamentary, and how they affect government structure and levels of responsiveness, accountability, transparency and inclusion; decision making processes and structures.
- ☑ Applied knowledge in governance from experience in a technical field, e.g. in health, agriculture, etc.
- ☑ Knowledge of international treaties and conventions establishing human and civil rights frameworks; as well as in-country laws, policies and government mandates that support international laws.
- ☑ Knowledge and experience with applying social accountability tools and institutional accountability mechanisms to reduce government impunity.
- ☑ Skills in sound policy assessment, analysis and design.
- ☑ Strong familiarity with quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods used for research and evaluation in public policy.
- ☑ Experience in facilitation of multi-stakeholder policy dialog; experience in developing policy agenda of interest groups that include vulnerable groups, marginalized communities (and key targets of program).
- ☑ Knowledge on basic public advocacy especially on approaches in empowering local communities to represent their issues and concerns.

KSAs linked to context analysis

Most of public policy is designed using models based in the social sciences, especially economics. For that reason, CRS and partners will benefit from, at a minimum, studying and understanding the basis and conclusions of the economic analyses used for shaping government interventions in the sector they seek to influence.

7.4. COMPETENCIES FOR OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

The skills and practice in institutional strengthening, capacity building and accompaniment are instrumental for successful capacity strengthening. Understanding of why and how capacity strengthening is done with government partners and knowledge of CRS' partnership and capacity strengthening framework are two other important areas for CRS staff competency. This supports ownership of the capacity strengthening process and results by those government groups involved. In addition, knowledge of capacity strengthening definitions and model/steps, especially those available at CRS, is fundamental for the staff engaged in capacity strengthening of institutions.

ESSENTIAL KSAS FOR GOVERNMENT CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

- ☑ Approaches to partnership and capacity strengthening (e.g., application of partnership principles and steps of the capacity strengthening cycle organizational capacity assessment, analysis and action planning, adapted to the functions of government).
- ☑ Training and adult learning (e.g. application of the steps in the experiential learning cycle).
- ☑ Organizational development, such as defining the essential functions of an institution and describing how organizational challenges are a combination of systems, processes, and people.
- ☑ Facilitation and group dynamics, with particular attention paid to relationships of power and influence.
- ☑ Mentoring, coaching and accompanying to master balancing the constraints of government timeframes, understanding constituent needs, negotiating based on diverse interests, etc.
- ☑ At least some experience in organizational management or working within a government unit.

7.5. COMPETENCIES FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

CRS and partner staff often have a major role as facilitators, conveners and catalysts of social change. If using civic participation approaches or activities, staff should be skillful in helping citizens and communities to engage government themselves, including expressing their views, advocating for their rights and influencing the policies and reforms that affect them.

Essential KSAs for civic participation

- ☑ Basic knowledge of relevant laws, policies and government mandates to effectively push to change agenda of a program.
- ☑ Identification of critical social as well as political and economic issues, community asset mapping/participatory rapid appraisal (PRA); building consensus on priority issues and concerns across diverse set of actors/groups in the communities.
- ☑ Mapping of interests and influence of critical government actors/stakeholders in relation to identified priority issues and envisioned changes.
- ☑ Community mobilization or organizing, and empowerment with focus on marginalized groups.
- ☑ Coalition and constituency building across sectors, networking; ability to develop and facilitate collaborative actions between communities and government (vertical); among communities (horizontal).
- ☑ Lobbying appropriate government actors at relevant levels.
- ☑ Civic education in formal contexts (schools) and informal settings (for CBOs).
- ☑ Developing an advocacy agenda and plan that defines priority issues and envisions change; developing campaign strategies and executing them.
- ☑ Working with broadcast and print media; managing traditional and social media for transparency, accountability, and reaching and engaging intended audiences.
- ☑ Building inclusiveness and collaborative participation on community issues.
- ☑ Experience with risk mapping and [Do No Harm](#) approaches, important given the risks that may be associated with increasing civic participation.

7.6. CROSSCUTTING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES

Table 5 on the following page includes KSAs important to all three engaging government pathways. Initiatives integrating multiple pathways should also consider these crosscutting KSAs to minimize negative unintended consequences and maximize the potential of a multi-faceted program.

MANAGING COMMUNICATION

When trying to influence policy, CRS may be combining approaches of policy development and civic engagement, bringing together government and non-governmental groups. Staff need skills to support strong communication 1) among both types of actors together as well as 2) when each goes back to their respective constituents to represent the process. If such communication is consistent it can build trust in the process and help make space for creative options. If not, it can erode trust and be a rapid end to policy processes that are otherwise in both government and non-government groups' interest.

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Table 5. Crosscutting KSAs for Engaging Government

Knowledge and Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to play different roles at different times in a process, based on need and the realities of a dynamic context, including roles of: catalyst, convener, facilitator, mediator, impartial information source, partnership broker, bridge builder, etc. • Ability to communicate effectively across differences which requires listening and negotiation skills; written, oral, and multimedia communication. • Clear, logical, sequential, pragmatic thinking to solve problems. • Strategic and purposive, linking vision with actions. • Gathering, synthesizing and using evidence for influence. • Research skills; designing and implementing surveys and questionnaires. • Understanding bias; recognizing own biases or prejudices; managing bias by seeking, engaging and being informed by multiple perspectives; ability to navigate through biases to facilitate collaborative activity. • Identifying group interests and goals as well as personal interests and goals. • Mediation of disputes; facilitating dialogues across diverse set of actors. • Working with diverse groups/understanding of diverse cultures, histories, values and contestations that shape societies. • Deliberation and bridge building across differences. • Committing to collaborative decision-making and setting up the processes to make it effective. • Understanding of gender- and youth-responsive programming, including in analysis, concepts and approaches for all forms of engagement. • Ability to be inclusive of major stakeholders often marginalized from governance processes, especially youth and women. • Strong contextual assessment and analysis skills. • Expertise in facilitating participatory MEAL processes, including methods for and capacity strengthening to support diverse stakeholders in data collection, analysis, and use of findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally appropriate; • Humility and mutuality; • Patience and flexibility; • Continuous learning; • Trust building; • Empowering and optimistic; • Commitment to principles of partnership and governance (Section 1.3); • Commitment to local ownership and leadership, with CRS and partner roles focused on facilitating, catalyzing, and convening.

Key attitudes for engaging government: curiosity and skepticism vs. cynicism

When dealing with governments it is all too easy to become discouraged and even cynical. Resist that temptation! By all means remain skeptical; after all, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. But always be on the lookout for potential champions and serendipitous opportunities. Government is not a unitary institution; its multiple, sometimes contradictory mandates, structures and systems create any number of entry points for those who have a little patience and entrepreneurial spirit.

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ANNEX 1. PUBLIC GOOD IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: ROBERT ROTBERG AND AMARTYA SEN ON GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM

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Note: This background was developed by David Cortright of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, as part of his contribution to the CRS Engaging Government Writeshop that developed the EGG and other resources.

ROTBERG ON THE 'POLITICAL GOODS' OF GOVERNANCE

The capacity of governing institutions is often understood as their ability to deliver public goods, a framework of analysis developed by Robert Rotberg. The very purpose of governance, he contends, is to supply political goods.⁸⁷ He bundles these into five categories: 1) safety and security, 2) rule of law and transparency, 3) participation and respect for human rights, 4) economic opportunity, and 5) human development. The effectiveness of a governance system can be evaluated based on its ability to provide these goods.⁸⁸ They are the deliverables of governance.

Pippa Norris, Francis Fukuyama and others share this emphasis on governance capacity. State capacity has two broad components. The first and most important is protecting the safety and security of people, by maintaining sovereignty against external threats and maintaining internal social order and stability. The second dimension is the ability to implement public policies, collect revenues, and deliver basic goods and services to enhance social welfare and economic growth.⁸⁹

Security is the most important and fundamental political good, according to Rotberg. It derives from the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of armed force. Security includes the ability to project power within a defined territory. It can be understood as the duty of ruling authorities to protect citizens from armed attack or predation. Without public safety it is difficult or impossible to provide other political goods. "There can be no economic growth or social elevation, and no societal strength as opposed to failure, without fundamental security," Rotberg argues. "State failure always leads to civil war."⁹⁰

In Rotberg's analysis, the rule of law is closely related to the security function. For contending social groups to be able to resolve disputes without violence, the governance system must provide predictable, recognizable, and systematized methods for adjudicating disputes. This implies an enforceable body of law, accountable police and security services, and an impartial and independent judicial system. Judicial systems must be able to dispense justice in a timely and efficient manner while guaranteeing basic legal rights to all in an equitable manner. When these capabilities collapse or are lacking, dispute settlement by violence becomes the norm. In such settings justice is denied, fear increases, and security collapses. The social science indicators for measuring compliance with the rule of law show a direct relationship between high ratings for the rule of law and a reduced risk of armed conflict. States with high scores for the rule of law tend to be more peaceful.⁹¹

87 Robert I. Rotberg, "The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States," in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, ed. Chester A. Crocker et al., (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 83.

88 Robert I. Rotberg, ed. *On Governance: What It Is, What It Measures and Its Policy Uses* (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2015).

89 Pippa Norris, *Making Democratic Governance Work: How Regimes Shape Prosperity, Welfare, and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 44-45.

90 Robert I. Rotberg, "The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States," 85.

91 Institute for Economics and Peace, *Pillars of Peace: Understanding the Key Attitudes and Institutions Underpinning Peaceful Societies* (2013), 13-14, available at <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Pillars-of-Peace-Report-IEP.pdf> (accessed January 14, 2014).

Participation and political freedom entail the ability of citizens to participate in politics openly and without hindrance. They are characterized by effective political institutions that have a high degree of accountability and provide mechanisms for the representation of citizen interests. They include tolerance of dissent, the presence of an independent media, and the protection of civil and human rights. These freedoms are guaranteed by an independent and empowered judicial system. Also necessary is a “fearless and un-self-censored media” that has the ability to criticize and hold ruling elites accountable.⁹² States with high ratings for political freedom tend to be more peaceful.

To promote stability and peace, governance systems must create an enabling environment for economic growth and prosperity. This encompasses protections for the rights of property, guarantees of entrepreneurship and innovation, prudent financial and banking systems, and a sound currency. Also necessary are critical elements of infrastructure, including effective roads, railways, airports and broadband Internet access.⁹³ Prosperity and wealth are necessary to supply the fifth category of political goods, human development. This includes educational opportunity, access to adequate health services and physical infrastructure.⁹⁴ These in turn provide essential inputs for sustaining and expanding economic opportunity.

SEN ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Amartya Sen has pioneered the concept of development as freedom, as a process of social and political empowerment. He defines development as the process of enabling individuals and communities to gain the assets and capabilities they need to improve their well-being. Development means removing obstacles to freedom and overcoming deprivations related to joblessness, lack of education, ill health and social exclusion. In this sense freedom is both the desired end of development and the means of achieving it. Governance systems promote development when they guarantee economic and political rights and provide opportunities for affected communities to participate in their own development.

Education is an essential dimension of development. Sen contends that the economic successes of South Korea, China and other Asian countries are partly attributable to government decisions to improve social opportunity and access to basic education. China was able to achieve rapid economic growth after 1979 not only because of market reforms but because government policies produced high rates of education and literacy. India also made economic advances after turning to marketization in 1991, but its rate of growth has been slower. Sen attributes this difference in part to higher rates of illiteracy.⁹⁵ To this day China has much higher levels of education and literacy than India, especially among women. This helps to explain China’s comparative economic advantages over India.⁹⁶

Sen redefines poverty as capacity deprivation and shifts the focus of attention from the delivery of aid to the expansion of freedom. People are poor, Sen argues, because they lack the capacities needed to achieve development and improve their well-being. “Poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes.”⁹⁷ Policy debates “have overemphasized income poverty and income inequality, to the neglect of deprivations that relate to other variables, such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education, and social exclusion.”⁹⁸ With adequate social access and opportunity, Sen argues, people will

92 Robert Rotberg, “Governance Trumps Democracy,” Africa and Asia: The Key Issues, blog, <http://robertrotberg.wordpress.com/2013/02/01/governance-trumps-democracy/>, accessed June 3, 2013.

93 Rotberg, “The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States,” 87.

94 Rotberg, “Governance Trumps Democracy.”

95 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 40-41

96 Amartya Sen, “Why India Trails China,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 2013, A25.

97 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 87.

98 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 108.

be able to shape their own destiny and develop their economic potential. In Sen's conception, freedom is fundamentally important not only as the desired goal of life, but also as the means of obtaining the capabilities and opportunities needed to achieve that freedom.⁹⁹ Freedom has a critical political dimension. It “enhances the ability of people to help themselves.” It includes the right to participate in public life and actively shape and influence the policies that determine development opportunities.¹⁰⁰ Poor people should be seen not as passive and docile recipients of dispensed assistance but as active participants in social change.¹⁰¹ Assuring inclusive development depends on “free and sustainable agency—and even constructive impatience” by poor people themselves.¹⁰² This can only happen when people are able to act as agents of social and political change.

“Individual freedom is quintessentially a social product,” Sen writes.¹⁰³ This means that freedom of opportunity, while partially a product of individual initiative, is also linked to the structures of governance and public policy. The capabilities of a person “depend on the nature of social arrangements” and the degree to which governments provide the public goods that are necessary for freedom and development.¹⁰⁴ “With adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other,” Sen writes.¹⁰⁵ Public investments in education and healthcare are especially important in raising productivity and enabling people to achieve economic development. Quality education for all, affordable and decent health care, adequate housing, water and sanitation, credit and financial services, access to appropriate technology—all are necessary to facilitate balanced economic development.¹⁰⁶

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99 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 36.

100 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 18.

101 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 281.

102 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 11.

103 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 31.

104 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 288.

105 Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 11.

106 Jane Nelson, “Operating in Insecure Environments,” in *Too Poor for Peace? Global Poverty, Conflict, and Security in the 21st Century*, ed. Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet, 128-152 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 143.

ANNEX 2: QUICK REFERENCE: THE RELATIONSHIP OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND IHD TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

This table summarizes points of connection between Catholic social teaching and the rational and potential of engaging government work. The topics are thoroughly discussed in the essay “Governance and Integral Human Development: Lessons from Scholarship, the Teachings of Pope Francis, and the Practical Experience of Catholic Relief Services.” The essay by David Cortright and Scott LeFevre is included in the Engaging Government Case Study Series, created during the CRS Engaging Government Writeshop that developed the EGG.

Catholic social teaching	Governance Relevance
Life and Dignity of the Human Person	Human life is sacred, and human dignity is the foundational vision for society, with implication of rights, citizen protection, conflict management, and collective striving for peaceful and just societies.
Call to Family, Community, and Participation	How society is organized, the market and politics, in law and policy directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow and develop their communities. People have a right and a duty to participate, and together seek the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
Rights and Responsibilities	These include human, civil and political rights, human decency, and responsibilities to each another, our families, and society.
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable	Whichever divisions exist in society, the needs of the poor and vulnerable must come first.
The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers	Markets, politics and other institutions must serve the people, not the other way around. This principle must apply to all public decision-making in all aspects of governance—whether its access to property rights, protection against gender-based violence, or responses to natural or manmade disasters.
Solidarity	We are one human family, and this must be reflected in the functioning of our structures: do they promote justice, peace and development?
Subsidiarity	Social problems should be addressed at the lowest possible level, with decision-making authority decentralized so that those making the decision are more accountable to those most affected by the decisions.
Care for God’s Creation	We are called to the stewardship of all that God has created, especially human beings and the life of the planet.

The moral teaching of the Church finds confirmation in the findings of recent social science research on development and peace. The concept of Integral Human Development, for example, emphasizes the need to attend to each dimension of human need to enhance well-being. This approach finds validation in the scholarship demonstrating the need for multi-sectoral, comprehensive approaches that combine support for democracy, development and peacebuilding.¹⁰⁷ The option for the poor, meanwhile, corresponds with the good governance principles of inclusion, and the emphasis that Amartya Sen and other scholars place on the importance of providing to the poor more equitable access to diverse categories of assets.

¹⁰⁷ See Pippa Norris’ ‘unified theory’ of governance. Pippa Norris, *Making Democratic Governance Work: How Regimes Shape Prosperity, Welfare, and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175-182.

ANNEX 3. WOMEN AND GENDER: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGAGING GOVERNMENT FROM CRS PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Note: This program context was developed by CRS senior technical advisor for gender Michelle Kendall. Similar guidance is available from senior technical advisors Maureen Herman (youth) and Lucy Steinitz (protection) as part of their contribution to the CRS Engaging Government Writeshop that developed the EGG and other resources.

Critical lessons about women, gender and engaging government come from complex programs. Insights are drawn from **South Sudan, Burundi, Guatemala** and **Ethiopia** to illustrate ways in which CRS projects have supported civic participation of women in peacebuilding and around issues of food security, nutrition, community planning and disaster preparedness. As well, there is much to learn from how the projects worked to optimize the institutional performance of local government to provide these basic services more equitably.

In 2011, soon after the referendum that led to South Sudan's independence CRS and its partner, Pax Christi, implemented the **Constitutional Engagement Project** to support women's political leadership and participation in the South Sudan peace and reconciliation process. The Constitutional Engagement project supported women's participation in national election and referendum processes, worked with female parliamentarians in Eastern Equatoria to develop their leadership and networking capacities, and supported experience sharing and the building of the female parliamentarians' knowledge around community outreach and human rights laws and regulations. The project built on several earlier CRS efforts to engage government in South Sudan, including a UNDP-funded initiative, the *Local Government Recovery Program (LGRP)* that had strengthened state-level government institutional performance by supporting internal control and administrative management systems as well as the renovation of physical government facilities. Prior to the LGRP CRS and local partners' earlier support to South Sudanese government institutional performance included participation in a Working Group to review the government's 2009-12 budget.

The case of CRS' work in **Burundi** has been presented in the main text of the Engaging Government Guide however given its significant focus on gender considerations in governance it would be important to mention it here in some more detail.

In Muhinga province, an area with the highest level of under-five mortality in Burundi, CRS is implementing the AMASIGHA - building women's civic participation in local governance in order to advocate for improved food and nutrition services. The project's civic participation activities include supporting women's in local structures such as SILC groups, development committees and others; training local partners and key actors on gender and its impact on nutrition/food security; prioritizing gender-responsive actions at the commune and *colline* level; gender-responsive data collection and analysis; and conducting gender responsive social audits and community scoreboards. Local project partner, the Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix (CDJP), is also training civil society community structures (SILC groups, religious institutions, producer organizations, youth groups) on conflict mitigation to promote land rights for women and minority groups, and to minimize the possibility of land conflict.

The project is supporting government institutional performance in supplying responsive services to their citizens, for example working with these structures to ensure alignment with national level plans and systems, and to integrate commune-level DRR plans into existing Annual Communal Investment Plans (ACIP) so that they are prioritized and resourced. CRS and partners are also contributing to transparency by supporting the local councils to share and validate DRR plans and Early Warning Systems through town hall meetings and annual progress reviews.

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In **Guatemala**, CRS is implementing SEGAMIL, a six-year DFAP project focused on child nutrition (the first 1,000 days of life) in the Western Highlands, one of the poorest and most food insecure parts of the country. CRS is promoting civic participation among communities to demand more of their government in terms of nutrition services, particularly focusing on increasing the participation of women and young people. This is being done by raising awareness of the rights of both men and women to participate equally, as well as training male members of community organizations and communities to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation and leadership, as well as women's unique perspective and contribution to food security. SEGAMIL is also facilitating women's participation by encouraging community based organizations—COCOSANs (food security and nutrition) and COLREDs (emergency and disaster response)—to hold meetings and activities at times convenient for the majority of women, to take into account the special time and energy constraints of pregnant and lactating women, and to train young people in leadership and other skills that will improve their participation in these community structures.

At the same time the project is building the institutional capacity of the Guatemalan Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) to increase its outreach with communities on nutrition education and behavior; working with the MSPAS to build capacities of community health workers and traditional birth attendants (TBAs); promoting certification and integration of community health workers into the government health system, and facilitation of stronger linkages between MSPAS health workers and community health referral systems. SEGAMIL is also supporting municipalities in disaster preparedness and response, as well as building the skills of mayors' office staff, municipal city council members and personnel of the Municipal Planning Departments (MPD) in development and food security legislation, and other critical food security issues in their municipalities.

SEGAMIL's work with the local committees has included the creation and execution of community development and disaster preparedness plans, the building of capacity to carry out Rapid Rural Appraisals, and incorporating specific and targeted food security actions in the design of their community plans.

In **Ethiopia** CRS implemented the *Ethiopia Development Food Assistance Program (DFAP)* from 2011 to 2016, supporting over 22,000 poor households in six woredas (*districts*) in Oromia Region and one *woreda* in Dire Dawa Administrative Council. CRS supported the Ethiopian government's implementation of the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) for food security and the National Primary Health Care strategy. CRS and local partners, HSC and MCS, worked with local level government representatives to improve their engagement in hygiene and sanitation activities to the benefit of poor households, women and girls in particular. CRS and partners also coordinated with and supported service delivery line ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Disaster and Risk Management and Food Security Sector.

As reported in the [2014 CRS Youth Programming Outlook](#), peacebuilding comprises about 30 percent of all CRS youth programming. These projects pay close attention to meaningfully include youth voice and participation and provide opportunities for leadership development and community engagement ensuring youth are connected to communities. CRS youth peacebuilding programs also do an excellent job of integrating income generation using a variety of vehicles such as internships, vocational training and access to SILC groups. However, particularly given the size of youth populations in the countries where CRS works and the knowledge that youth are often excluded from decision-making processes that have significant impacts on their lives, more must be done to ensure that youth have the knowledge and ability to participate effectively in governance.

An outstanding example of engaging youth in governance is the Youth Activists Leaders in **Lebanon** project (YALLA) in March 2010, which sought to address the fear-based identity issues and political patronage that was largely driving the political agenda at the time. CRS partnered with the Nahwa al Muwatiniya, the Development for People and Nature Association and the Social Media Exchange to help youth develop a nationwide media campaign to shift the election dialogue away from identity politics and toward issues such as government transparency and accountability. The project organized 15 village youth teams which received valuable training in platform development research, social media activism, voter mobilization, election law implementation and conflict management. The teams met with municipal councils to discuss local issues and to urge councils to establish youth committees. At the national level, the project received responses from 1,400 young people about their involvement in the public sphere. Participants shared their research with the Union of Mayors and the Ministry of the Interior to forge strategic relationships and promote pragmatic solutions. Youth reported that they felt a new sense of empowerment and that they gained a greater respect for dialogue, tolerance and solidarity. The experience helped them realize their potential to bring about change through civic engagement.

While primarily a workforce development program CRS' YouthBuild, or *Jovenes Constructores*, program in **LACRO** builds a solid foundation for youth participation in governance by making leadership and community service core components around which other activities are structured. As youth learn life and employment skills, they continuously work to develop their leadership skills and make important contributions in their communities. YouthBuild also involves participants in program design and decision making, governance, proposal formulation and other processes. Since both government and private sector partnerships are essential for success, scaling and sustainability of the YouthBuild model, CRS LACRO has embarked on a process of training YouthBuild alumni in advocacy so that they can play a key role in influencing national governments and donors to invest in holistic models like YouthBuild, which have shown much more promising outcomes for youth than other programs.

In anticipation of **Ghana's** Presidential and Parliamentary elections in December 2016, the Northern Ghana Youth Peacebuilding project focused on the problem of youth engaging in politically motivated violence. Youth were highlighted as a key group of influence since they have been targets of manipulation by politicians and community leaders. Through a partnership between CRS, the Diocese of Tamale, Damongo, and Navrongo-Bolgatanga and YES Ghana, 600 youth were trained in peacebuilding and preventing electoral violence. Youth Peace Ambassadors were also trained to run their own meetings and organize events to sensitize other youth and community members regarding the importance of peaceful elections. The Tamale Youth Peace Ambassadors have appeared on over a dozen radio programs that reach virtually the entire city. They have also spread messages of peace and avoiding electoral violence at dozens of schools, community gatherings and by organizing a peace march with Tamale schools and youth organizations. Finally, youth were also trained to design messages promoting peaceful elections that are being pushed to youth using Human Network International's 3-2-1 SMS message system, and they will be serving as the first youth election monitors in the region.

Youth can play a powerful role in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation in countries affected by conflict. In 2015, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security to highlight the importance of engaging youth. SCR 2250 calls on Member States to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels for the prevention and resolution of conflict. It also points out that "a large youth population presents a unique demographics divided that can contribute to lasting peace if inclusive policies are in place." CRS can play an important role in furthering this agenda by including youth in governance work and providing young people with the training and support they need to exercise effective leadership and advocate for themselves.

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