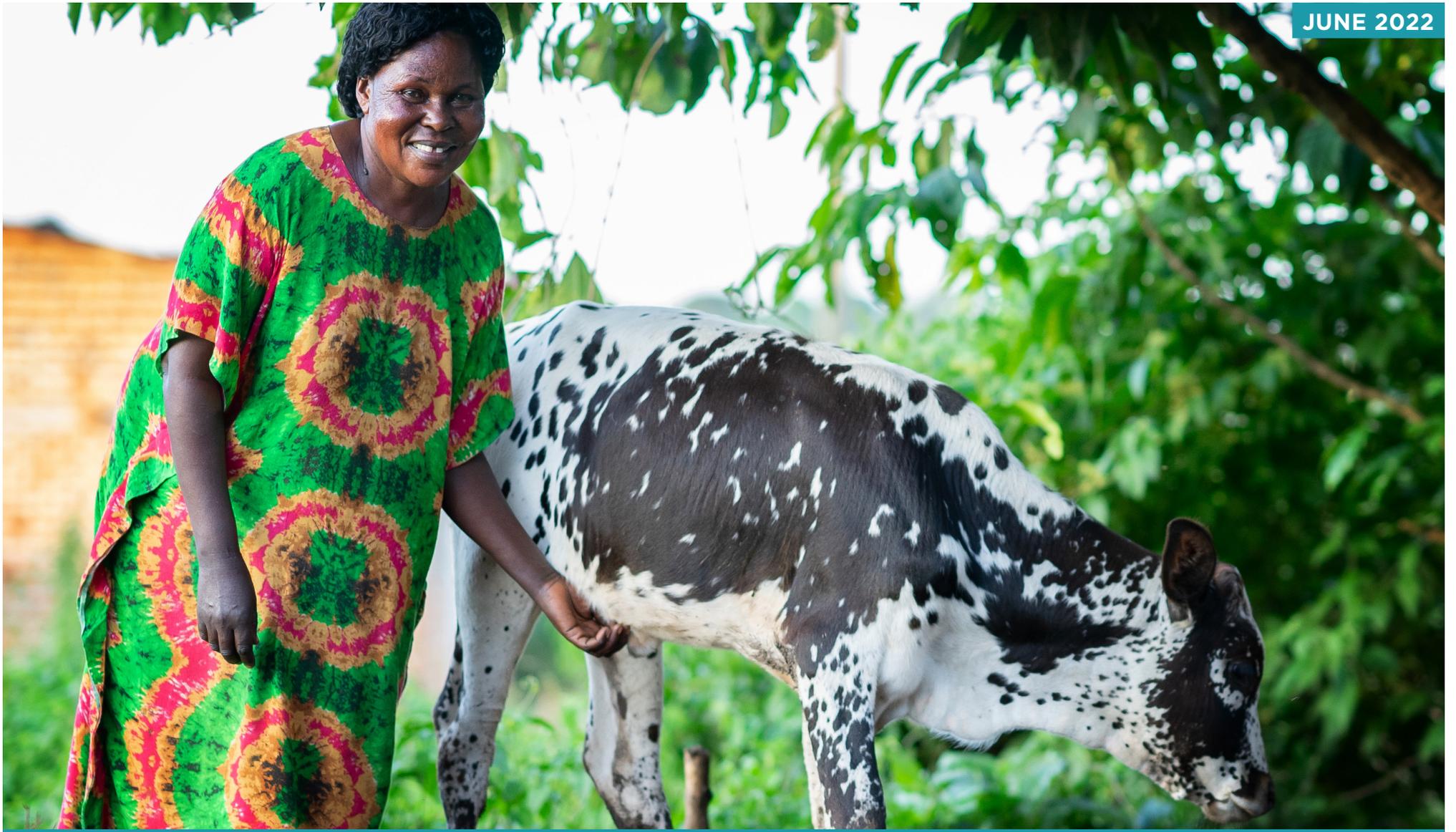


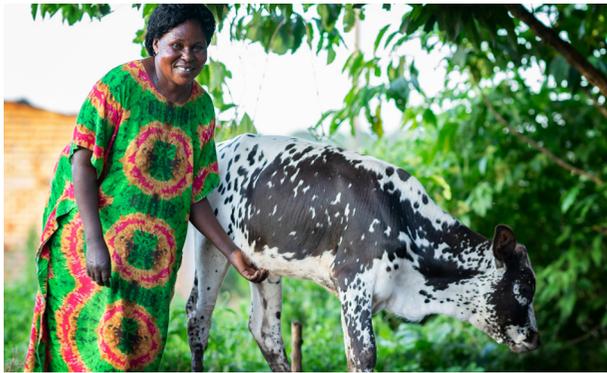
JUNE 2022



CRS Uganda Country Program Strategy



CRS | Uganda



Cover: Through support from CRS' Child-Optimized Financial Education program, Annet invested in rearing cows and poultry to earn an income for her family.

Photo by Julius Kasujja for CRS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To support the goals of [Vision 2030](#), the CRS Agency Strategy, and the strategic directions and programming areas of the East Africa Regional Office, CRS Uganda developed a country program strategy based on an in-depth internal and external analysis of key issues expected to impact the country in the next decade. The strategy will run through 2030 and be assessed midway. CRS Uganda's vision statement is supported by five strategic priority areas, or SPAs, and cross-cutting priorities that will help it achieve Vision 2030's goals and enhance implementation of the Agency's guiding principles.

Vision statement: Empowered families reach their full potential and are resilient to external shocks in safe, just and inclusive communities, supported by effective local systems.*

* Following the **Integral Human Development** framework, CRS defines systems as legal, economic, political, social and cultural systems.



Strategic Priority Area 1 | Health and Social Services System Strengthening

Leverage government and civil society partnerships to influence and strengthen the health and social services leadership, governance and workforce at the sub-national level for the planning, delivery and monitoring of quality, inclusive, equitable and accountable health and child protection services.



Strategic Priority Area 2 | Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Support government structures and systems to strengthen national and community-level efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.



Strategic Priority Area 3 | Emergency Preparedness and Management

Strengthen communities in refugee-hosting and non-hosting districts to survive and thrive in the face of disasters, through the influence of, support for and collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, local government and other key partners.



Strategic Priority Area 4 | Resilient Food Systems

Facilitate investment and innovation in building resilient food systems that unlock constraints to productivity, sustainability, quality and market access.



Strategic Priority Area 5 | Local Leadership

Promote local leadership in CRS Uganda, communities and institutions to effectively lead and create positive, sustainable change.

Cross-cutting Priorities

In line with its commitment to Integral Human Development and to implementing the CRS Program Quality Standards, CRS Uganda's SPAs are supported by four cross-cutting priority areas that will be mainstreamed throughout its programming and operations:



Gender



Youth



Social cohesion



Safe and dignified programming

External Analysis

Key Issues and Trends in Uganda

Uganda's population of 42 million is expected to reach 100 million by 2050. Its annual urban growth rate of 5.2% is among the highest in the world, and the urban population is expected to grow from 6.4 million (2014) to 22 million by 2040. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics National Household Survey 2019/2020, the absolute number of people living in poverty is 8.3 million, with 7 million of the most vulnerable living in rural communities. Poverty, along with inadequate and inaccessible community support systems and integrated health and protection services, prevents families and communities from thriving. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty, with increased threats to child and family well-being, and strained essential health and social services.

Uganda's Human Capital Index is low, which means that a child born in Uganda today is likely to be 38% as productive when she grows up, as she could be if she had enjoyed complete education and full health.¹ Uganda's population is the second-youngest in the world, with 78% below the age of 30. Young adults make up about 64% of the unemployed, with limited opportunities for employment, especially for young women. Gender inequality limits the ability of women and girls to fully thrive.² Discriminatory gender expectations and power relations within the family and wider society—such as son preference, unequal gendered division of labor, the double burden on women of taking on responsibilities both inside and outside the household, and women's restricted autonomy and decision-making authority within the household and wider society—have been highly resistant to change and impede progress for women and girls.³

1. World Bank. February 2021. [The World Bank in Uganda](#).

2. Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development. 2019. Gender Issues Report.

3. ALIGN. 2019. [Narratives of change and resistance in confronting discriminatory gender norms in Uganda](#).

8.3 million

PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN POVERTY IN UGANDA,
WITH 7 MILLION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE
LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Pandemic-related lockdowns have worsened stress on families and communities, resulting in increased gender-based violence and negative coping mechanisms that affect women, men, girls and boys.

Agriculture contributes about 40% of gross domestic product (GDP). A heavy reliance on low-productivity agriculture contributes to income volatility and stagnation,⁴ which is intensified by widespread natural resource degradation, as well as the growing impacts of climate change. An estimated 41% of Uganda's land is degraded, contributing to economic vulnerabilities and poverty. The rate of degradation and soil erosion is unsustainable, and costs about 17% of GDP.⁵ A modernized, diversified and sustainable agricultural sector that consistently meets increasingly stringent market standards is needed to transform household livelihoods and the economy. To keep up with the growing labor force, the economy needs to create at least 700,000 new jobs per year, far exceeding the 75,000 jobs currently being created.⁶

Historically, Uganda has had a high refugee influx, internal displacement, flash flooding and protracted flooding over large areas, drought, pests, and public health crises.

4. Ibid.

5. World Bank. June 2021. [Uganda economic update](#).

6. World Bank. 2021. [Macro Poverty Outlook](#).

Many communities in disaster-prone areas resort to negative coping strategies, such as deforestation, which increase the human-induced likelihood of disasters.⁷ Uganda hosts the world's third-highest number of refugees, with about 1.6 million as of March 2022.⁸ That number may rise with continued influxes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Burundi. Uganda has a progressive refugee policy, and displaced populations are fully integrated into the host community, living in settlements instead of camps. This allows refugees to live with more freedom, but can also result in conflict as refugee and host community members compete for resources. While the response to the protracted refugee crisis is comparatively well-funded by the international community, smaller crises are often insufficiently supported, leaving local communities to meet their own immediate and long-term needs.

Government Priorities

The goal of the [Third National Development Plan \(NDP III\) 2020/21- 2024/25](#) is "Increased household incomes and improved quality of life of Ugandans." At its center is the building of a modern, people-centered, independent, integrated, resilient and self-sustaining economy. To achieve its goals, the Government of Uganda (GoU) will focus on strengthening the private sector to create jobs; increasing the stock and quality of infrastructure; enhancing the productivity and social well-being of the population; and strengthening the role of the state in facilitating development. The government emphasizes a multi-sectoral and decentralized approach through the implementation of the [Parish Development Model](#), which aims to increase service delivery to underserved communities.

7. Ibid.

8. UNHCR. February 2022. [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#). Accessed April 8, 2022.

SECTION 1: ANALYSIS

With limited government funding, there is heavy reliance on development partners to augment investment in key sectors. For the most part, policy frameworks are in place; however, implementation remains significantly low at the sub-national level partly due to insufficient resources and capacity, and poor rollout strategies. Also, the government is committed to the protection and management of refugees. The Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA II) 2022-2025 and the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) support both refugees and host communities by bridging the gap between humanitarian and development interventions. The four pillars of the STA II are land management, sustainable livelihoods, environmental protection and community infrastructure.

Donor Priorities

Uganda enjoys a dynamic funding environment, with many donors, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), development finance institutions, the UN System, the European Union, private foundations, and various European country bilateral development agencies. Key priorities include climate change and its impacts on food security; natural resource governance and resilience to repeated shocks; health systems strengthening; refugee response; agricultural business and job creation with sustainable financing for small- and medium-sized enterprises, localization, and anti-corruption; the impacts of COVID-19 on nutrition; and social services. Donors now frequently request that programs integrate gender-transformative and socially inclusive approaches.

Donors also encourage CRS to continue strengthening relationships with government ministries, support emerging civil society organizations, and expand

Church engagement across sectors.⁹ The country program portfolio has diversified to include finance mechanisms and donors new to CRS for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Despite reduced funding levels overall, non-traditional donors, especially in the agriculture and climate change sectors, are still very interested in working with NGOs in Uganda. Across all priority areas, viable funding opportunities from a diverse and comprehensive set of donors, and co-investment with the private sector drove strategic thinking. To unlock these funds, some priority areas will need initial CRS discretionary investment to support strategic positioning where no external donor funding is available.

Peer, Competitor and Collaborator Analysis

Uganda hosts a high number of local and international NGOs, and the livelihoods sector is especially saturated. CRS is known for agriculture programming in the Karamoja sub-region, where there are fewer actors. However, USAID's focus on agro-ecological zones as defined by Feed the Future, including Karamoja, is drawing interest from large INGOs and contractors. To stay competitive, CRS should adjust its livelihoods focus to leverage its strengths in agricultural value chains, and soil and land restoration, and be positioned to scale operations with target private sector partners and innovative financing strategies to incentivize and scale sustainable, transformative and inclusive production models.

The health and social services sectors are also saturated by international and local NGOs as well as clinical partners. The recent donor focus on localization limits opportunities for INGOs to "prime" projects. However, this opens opportunities for local NGOs to take on leadership positions as CRS leverages its recognized successes in

⁹ Feedback received during key informant interviews and a perception survey conducted in December 2021.

partnership capacity strengthening with local primes and government, a role CDC Uganda says it will continue funding. CRS Uganda is already exerting influence for strategic planning with government and donors, resource mobilization and project compliance through its seat on the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) and CCM Executive Board.

In the disaster preparedness and management sector, CRS has strong relationships with Caritas partners with whom it has collaborated to increase capacity. CRS is also a recognized leader in the rapid response sector with USAID and the EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). CRS' strategic partnerships, especially with diocesan Caritas partners, position it to quickly engage, assess and respond to emergencies in a way that many other INGOs cannot. CRS is seen as a technical leader in refugee response, as the Co-Chair for the Shelter, Settlements and Nonfood Item working groups, and has influenced the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Office of the Prime Minister and other partners to embrace cash transfers and an owner-led shelter construction approach that empowers community members.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation is an emerging sector for CRS Uganda. There are several emerging donors, private companies, investment funds and agencies that offer carbon financing and research, as well as opportunities for CRS to play a convening and scaling role. CRS has committed to a 10-year global landscapes platform that is addressing responses to climate change. CRS Uganda is building a portfolio of project interventions independently and with the Global Evergreening Alliance, which is positioned to work with global and regional funding opportunities that support national investment in sustainable landscape interventions. CRS is a founding member and holds a lead position for Ugandan operations.

SECTION 1: ANALYSIS

These types of alliances with skilled national partners, enable CRS Uganda to manage large programs and deliver nature-based solutions at scale, tapping non-traditional donors in what is poised to be a sizeable new funding area. CRS Uganda is investing private funds to increase its competitiveness in this growing sector.

Church and Other Strategic Partner Priorities

Church leaders and Caritas partners in Uganda gravitate toward similar themes: landscape restoration and climate change adaptation and mitigation, livelihoods, social services and youth support. Natural landscapes degradation is attributed largely to industry and smallholder farming. Industries, such as mining, lumber and sugar plantations, engage in non-sustainable practices and pollute productive land, surface water bodies and groundwater aquifers. Smallholder farmers collect firewood, clear land and encroach on wetlands, often as a result of population growth caused by new refugees. Between land degradation, climate change and reduced access to water, the Church recognizes an increase in natural disasters, such as landslides, floods and drought, that impact livelihoods. In response, Church leadership will focus on social services, especially for youth, to help minimize negative behaviors.

Private sector Growth in food systems can only scale and become more competitive through the private sector. Farmers need to find ways to link with established and emerging private companies engaged in adding value to primary goods and linking them to modern markets. Uganda is well placed to become a major production hub to supply its growing urban population, add value, and sell into regional and international markets. CRS is developing project and investment models that engage the private sector in specific value chains. CRS is also targeting specific territories to introduce more sustainable farming methods and to accelerate commercialization.

Internal Analysis Programmatic Strengths

CRS Uganda is a highly respected and relevant player in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, backed by global best practices. CRS is recognized for working through local partners, and has built partner capacity in the use of international systems and standards to improve their operations, risk management and safeguarding as they transition to prime roles. Strategic relationships with local and Church partners give CRS a competitive edge, and donors value its ability to articulate a local perspective in its designs.

CRS is a strong competitor in the health, social services and agricultural livelihoods sectors, but these are saturated with other organizations. CRS is respected for its systems strengthening work with government and private actors in these sectors. The Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development says CRS was key in strengthening institutional child protection systems in relation to its globally tested models, and



CRS is developing innovative approaches for scaling landscape restoration to improve livelihoods and build climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities. Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

this is complemented by its ability to support local organizations to improve. In the health sector, CRS is perceived as forward thinking and solutions oriented.

CRS is seen as a leader in the unsaturated sector of disaster preparedness, and works with USAID and EU-ECHO to identify funding mechanisms to address underfunded emergencies across the country. Both ECHO and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance recognize CRS for its work in mainstreaming protection into disaster response and management. Also, CRS is building its portfolio in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and has aligned itself with strategic partners through the GEA to access global expertise, leverage learning, and promote nature-based solutions and best practices. CRS is also developing innovative approaches for scaling landscape restoration to improve livelihoods and build climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities. There is a lot of latitude for CRS to innovate and explore new financing, including collaboration with the private sector.

CRS Uganda is a highly respected and relevant player in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, backed by global best practices. Strategic relationships with local and Church partners give CRS a competitive edge, and donors value its ability to articulate a local perspective in its designs.

SECTION 1: ANALYSIS

Operational Strengths

CRS has invested significantly in both operating systems and modern operational models to raise its performance while enabling the CP to create a workplace environment and culture that aligns with the agency's mission, and identity, including its commitments to justice and equity. Its strengths include: 1) a strong organizational culture; 2) investment in the professional development of its staff; 3) reliable and transparent systems for risk mitigation and response; and 4) a focus on reducing environmental impact.

CRS Uganda's **organizational culture** is built around agency principles, such as upholding human dignity, subsidiarity, equity and transparency. Staff engage equally with CP leadership, understand expected behaviors, and trust leadership to manage and respond to situations. A strong organizational culture increases engagement and supports effectiveness and efficiency. To support this, CRS invested in a gender equity review of human resources and is implementing an action plan to bring it closer to gender equity within the CP.

CRS also invests in **professional development** through education assistance benefits.

CRS is effective at **risk management**. To better enforce the [CRS Policy on Safeguarding](#), the CP established an Ethics Unit that brings together robust anti-fraud, safeguarding and accountability operations to help detect, prevent and mitigate risk. This investment reduces operational costs by negating disallowed transactions and increasing regulatory compliance. The Ethics Unit protects vulnerable people through risk analysis, development of programmatic risk mitigation plans, and implementation of the CP's Accountability

Framework, including management of a toll-free line for safe disclosure of fraud and safeguarding allegations. This service is extended to partners and creates an environment for effective local systems.

CRS Uganda is **reducing its environmental impact** and climate footprint by implementing Laudato Si, the [second encyclical](#) of Pope Francis, that calls for humanity to understand the destruction that humans are rendering on the environment. This includes investment in green infrastructure, such as solar paneling and rainwater catchment systems, recycling and solar chargeable electric vehicles.

Key Areas for Improvement

The funding environment is becoming more competitive and, in some cases, project financial allocations are rising, and donors are looking to localize project leadership. CRS is often seen by peers as unfocused in its programming areas, which is a barrier to becoming a go-to partner in sectors in which it has successful models. To become more competitive, CRS must consolidate its successes and market them to a broader audience of donors and potential partners, while leveraging its reputation of technical expertise to the larger humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

CRS also needs to strengthen its approach to, and marketing of, partnership and capacity strengthening. In the past, CRS succeeded in building capacity; now, it needs to invest more time and resources in institutional strengthening and accompaniment to fully support strategic partners, including the Church. A detailed Partnership and Capacity Strengthening Strategy outlines key actions to strengthen CRS' work in this area.



A woman waits to be registered at Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in northwestern Uganda. Uganda hosts the world's third-highest number of refugees. CRS works with refugees, hosting communities and non-hosting communities.

Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

SECTION 2: VISION AND PRIORITY AREAS

Uganda has considerable potential, yet faces tremendous challenges in achieving NDPIII goals. CRS, with its strong reputation and track record of success, can play a significant role in the future development of the country.



Residents of Moroto District in northern Uganda receive COVID-19 vaccinations following CRS' project to ensure vaccinations could be administered close to where people live.

Photo by Kato Chrysestom/CRS

CRS Uganda's Vision Statement

Empowered families reach their full potential and are resilient to external shocks in safe, just and inclusive communities, supported by effective local systems.

Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs)



Strategic Priority Area 1: Health and Social Services Systems Strengthening (H4S)

Strategic Priority Statement

Leverage government and civil society partnerships to influence and strengthen the health and social services leadership, governance and workforce at the sub-national level for the planning, delivery and monitoring of quality, inclusive, equitable and accountable health and child protection services.

Priority Outcomes

1. A skilled, competent and motivated workforce at the sub-national level for effective planning and delivery of quality health and child protection services.
2. Strengthened coordination, planning and accountability of state and non-state actors at the sub-national level for functional, efficient and resilient health and child protection systems.

The overall well-being of the population hinges on sustained high-performing health and child protection systems. CRS will leverage partnerships with government and civil society to strengthen coordination, planning and accountability, as well as the capacity of the health and social services workforce at the sub-national level. This priority action area aligns with CRS agency *Goal Area 4: All children reach their full health and development potential in safe and nurturing families*. Specifically, CRS will build on its long-standing relationship with government and nongovernmental organizations including faith-based and community-based structures to:

- Strengthen the capacity of the health and social services workforce at the sub-national level through the rollout of policies and guidelines, training and accompaniment to enhance quality service delivery.
- Provide technical support and accompaniment to strengthen leadership and governance of sub-national health and social services actors in data management and use, planning and multi-sectoral coordination, resource mobilization and service delivery oversight.
- Strengthen community health and social services structures (mother care groups, youth groups, male role models, religious groups) for increased awareness and demand for quality services.

SECTION 2: VISION AND PRIORITY AREAS



Strategic Priority Area 2: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Strategic Priority Statement

Support government structures and systems to strengthen national and community-level efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Priority Outcomes

1. Climate-smart practices adopted and implemented by communities and institutions.
2. Strengthened capacity, policy and finance mechanisms that scale nature-based solutions to support adaptation and mitigation actions.

CRS Uganda will build on expertise gained through its climate-smart agriculture programming and align with the Agency's Strategic Change Platform 3 *Livelihood and Landscapes* and the CRS Water Security Strategy, Priority Area 1 to support government structures and systems to strengthen national and community-level efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. CRS will support government institutions and collaborate with emerging donors to develop strategies to scale nature-based solutions that support adaptation and mitigation so communities can co-invest and realize the benefits of nature-based sustainable production systems and diversify income to support resilient development. To achieve the SPA outcomes, CRS will:

- Implement sustainable and scalable business initiatives that support landscape restoration and biodiversity.
- Support the adoption of climate-smart technologies at scale.
- Support data-driven decision-making for adaptation actions by farmers, companies and government institutions.
- Strengthen the capacity of farmers, the private sector and government on climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Support projects that contribute to emission reduction and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Support the development of policies that scale nature-based solutions.
- Strengthen the capacity of government to implement policies that scale nature-based solutions, backed by financing mechanisms that support the poor to adapt and mitigate climate change impacts.
- Explore and develop novel financing modalities that can catalyze private sector investment into climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Strategic Priority Area 3: Emergency Preparedness and Management

Strategic Priority Statement

Strengthen communities in refugee-hosting and non-hosting districts to survive and thrive in the face of disasters, through the influence of, support for and collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, local government and other key partners.

Priority Outcomes

1. Communities are better prepared for, able to recover from, and more resilient to shocks and natural disasters, and, when they occur, community-level actors are empowered to provide timely and appropriate responses.
2. Families affected by conflict are empowered to rebuild their lives and livelihoods in a safe, just and inclusive community.

CRS Uganda has a decades-long history of responding to humanitarian crises, alone or with partners. Today the agency is recognized by the GoU, the donor community, and its peers and partners for its appropriate, timely and high-quality response. The main crises are a large and protracted refugee response; a variety of smaller, sudden-onset and underserved crises; and public health emergencies, such as Ebola Virus Disease or COVID-19. CRS intends to be an influencer and thought leader in working with partners to coordinate national emergency responses.

It also plans to continue its close partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and to put local communities and partners in leadership roles.

CRS Uganda will build on the principles of the [Grand Bargain](#) and subsidiarity. Priority Outcome 1 will seek synergies with SPA 2 (climate change adaptation and mitigation) for greater impact. Priority Outcome 2 acknowledges that direct service delivery is neither necessary nor desirable in the protracted refugee crisis, and builds on Strategic Change Platform 2 *Homes and Communities*.

SECTION 2: VISION AND PRIORITY AREAS



Strategic Priority Area 4: Resilient Food Systems

Strategic Priority Statement

Facilitate investment and innovation in building resilient food systems that unlock constraints to productivity, sustainability, quality and market access.

Priority Outcomes

1. Households have diversified, sustainable and increased incomes, and enhanced food security.
2. Government and the private sector invest in establishing inclusive and sustainable smallholder-based supply chains, and establishing or growing businesses that create jobs and strengthen input and ecosystem services.

Resilient food systems are at the nexus of livelihoods, nutrition, climate change, and women and youth engagement. The EU, USAID and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office view private-sector-led interventions as a key driver of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) formation, job creation and landscape restoration. CRS Uganda will build on the learnings, partnerships and emerging expertise working in the vanilla sector to *build resilient food systems that unlock constraints to productivity, sustainability and quality while improving accessibility and affordability, safeguarding biodiversity, and ensuring reliable and profitable market access* (local, regional and global) for all food system participants in line with the agency's SCP 3 and the GoU's Parish Development Model. CRS will focus on partnerships with the local and international private sector and cooperatives, facilitating partnerships through innovative investment and challenge fund models that enable partners to:

- Establish inclusive business models linking smallholders into modern value chains (certified where appropriate) that connect them with critical services and markets that prioritize quality and create opportunities for local value addition.
- Promote diversification and future-proof food systems, by mitigating farmer climate risk, safeguarding biodiversity, and stabilizing household cash flow throughout the year.
- Leverage inclusive digital solutions and data to respond to market requirements, access carbon credit markets, enable certification and traceability, and inform efficient and adaptive program design and management.
- Create jobs by strengthening the input, service and business development support ecosystem to deliver sustainable value-added services to farmers, building the capacity of existing businesses and identifying opportunities for new business formation.
- CRS expects its food systems investments and programming to maximize farmer value capture, and drive significant and sustainable income increases, empower women in agricultural value chains, improve household food security and nutrition, create jobs, strengthen businesses, and increase Uganda's share in target markets.



Strategic Priority Area 5: Local Leadership

Strategic Priority Statement

Promote local leadership in CRS Uganda, communities and institutions to effectively lead and create positive, sustainable change.

Priority Outcomes

1. Sustainability through local ownership.
2. Accountable and transparent local systems to ensure improved program quality.

The CRS Vision 2030 strategy aspires to build local leadership. The Uganda CP has strengthened local leadership and supported localization for more than 10 years. It has built enduring partnerships with church and government counterparts, and supported Ugandan NGOs to take on significant prime roles. All activities are implemented with local partners, and the CP also aims to place more Ugandan staff in leadership positions.

Many donors acknowledge that CRS has systematic approaches to strengthening local partner capacity and connecting them to global networks, norms and knowledge. Yet CRS is not universally recognized by the Ugandan government or local partners for its commitment to local leadership or working with partners. Also, CRS' approaches are not yet consistently applied across partners, and there are significant sustainability risks in local leadership investment. Also, there is no immediate business case with expected financial return on investment, as there is no apparent funding available for organizations like CRS to lead processes of localization. Nonetheless, the CP will build on its proven capabilities and commitment to localization and subsidiarity.

PO 1 includes support to the government, where CRS' and the country's strategic interests converge. This includes support to church entities and partners, local NGOs, and civil society organizations. Finally, it also explicitly includes a progressive transition to local leadership within CRS Uganda. PO 2 focuses on ensuring accountable and transparent local systems to ensure improved impact through service delivery.

SECTION 2: VISION AND PRIORITY AREAS

Cross-cutting Priorities

Cross-cutting priorities transcend a strategic period and are foundational to who we are and how we work as an agency.

Gender



The goal of the [CRS Global Gender Strategy 2020-2030](#) is to contribute to gender equality for women, men, girls and boys of all ages and abilities, both within the agency and throughout its programming and advocacy. CRS Uganda is committed to achieving gender equality in its operations and programming. To do this, it is working toward the long-term outcomes of the strategy, including:

- CRS staff value and promote gender equality.
- CRS organizational culture supports gender equitable systems and structures.
- CRS organizational culture and staff enable gender-responsive and -transformative programs.
- CRS addresses the unique needs of women, men, boys and girls (gender responsive) and, where relevant, seeks to transform harmful gender norms (gender transformative) to enhance the impact of CRS' programming.

This includes ensuring that staff have the appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and tools to promote gender equality in all CRS does. To support the implementation of its gender action plan, learning and alignment with best practices, as well as its commitment to gender-responsive and -transformative programs, CRS Uganda will invest in CP-level gender staff.

Youth



CRS will incorporate [Positive Youth Development](#) approaches and frameworks, employing the social ecological model in the project design and implementation. Targeted interventions will engage “opportunity youth,”¹⁰ their families, communities and governments to reach their full potential. Integrated interventions will focus on building the skills, assets and competencies of opportunity youth to improve livelihood and leadership opportunities. The goal will be to foster healthy relationships, strengthen the environment, and transform systems to achieve transformational change at scale. CRS will design age-, stage- and ability-tailored interventions and track key performance indicators.

Social Cohesion



As Uganda is diverse, so are the existing and potential conflict points. Tensions may arise between communities (agriculturalist/pastoralist, refugees/host communities, diverse identities), within a community, and even within a family. CRS believes that advancing human development—the conditions in which people and communities can thrive—requires attention to social cohesion and justice.¹¹ Therefore, CRS Uganda will design projects with an understanding of local conflict drivers and power dynamics, and ensure that projects do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions. CRS Uganda will be deliberate in strengthening social cohesion using tested approaches, such as the CRS Binding, Bonding and Bridging (3Bs) signature methodology.¹²

10. CRS uses the term “opportunity youth” to change the narrative on a segment of the population that is often, if not always, described in negative terms. This framing uses an asset-based lens in contrast to alternative terminology such as at-risk, marginalized or vulnerable, and focuses on young people not in education, employment or training.

11. CRS. 2021. [Fostering Just and Cohesive Societies: Where People Thrive](#).

12. CRS. 2017. [The Ties that Bind: Building Social Cohesion in Divided Communities](#).

Safe and Dignified Programming



Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and defined in its Program Quality Standards,¹³ CRS commits to enhancing the safety, dignity and meaningful access to services of all people and communities in its programs. In practice, this means understanding and addressing the differing needs of community members. To achieve this, CRS Uganda will:

- Prioritize safety and dignity in all design and management decisions.
- Ensure that protection risks and barriers to access are assessed during the design of programs, and monitored throughout program implementation to inform mitigation and adaptation of project activities.
- Train and support staff and partners to adhere to safeguarding principles and implement safe and dignified programming, as defined in the [Protection Mainstreaming Framework](#).

This will be supported by the application of the CP's Accountability Framework and strategic efforts to strengthen partner safeguarding capacity.

13. PQ Standard 2: Equity and Inclusion; and PQ Standard 10: Safeguarding.

Strategic Approach Priorities



Catalyze transformational change at scale

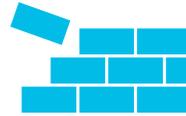
The Uganda strategy aligns with Vision 2030's Strategic Change Platforms of Building Homes and Communities, Livelihoods in Flourishing Landscapes, Reintegrating Children into Safe and Nurturing Families, Social Cohesion, and Scaling Integrated Ways Out of Poverty. CRS Uganda recognizes that its support to partners, collaboration with peers, and influence on technical and public platforms can help foster development outcomes even when those results may not be attributed to CRS.



Expand and diversify resource mobilization

CRS Uganda has broadened its donor horizon by securing funding from more diverse U.S. government departments as well as non-traditional donors. As part of this strategy, the CP will further seek to secure diverse funding sources, with a special emphasis on non-traditional funding for SPA 2 CCAM, such as ESG¹⁴ and impact investors. For other SPAs, including H4S and local leadership, initial investment will need to come from CRS discretionary sources to build and expand its track record and influence to secure external funding.

14. ESG is the acronym for Environmental, Social, and (Corporate) Governance, the three broad categories, or areas of interest, for what is termed "socially responsible investors," who consider it important to incorporate their values and concerns (such as environmental concerns) into their selection of investment opportunity, instead of simply considering the potential profitability and risks.



Build a more agile, innovative and impactful organization

CRS Uganda's best resource is its committed and diverse staff, and its mission-driven, values-led culture supports an agile and effective organization. CRS Uganda will invest in staff structures and expertise that will endure as funding levels fluctuate, while retaining the ability to scale staff and systems rapidly when necessary. CRS commits to REDI¹⁵ and local leadership to build staffing structures that are gender balanced, and to recruit expert staff who share its commitments and values.



Mobilize Catholic Church action to combat global poverty, violence and injustice

Uganda has a strong presence of other Caritas Internationalis member organizations, and CRS mobilizes CI members to foster collaboration and information sharing, and build a community in the country. Similarly, the country program will continue to host visitors and delegations from the United States, supporting headquarters in enabling constituents to learn about CRS' work, live their faith and engage with CRS.

15. Respect, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Partnership and Capacity Strengthening (PCS) Strategy

The CP will be more deliberate, structured and strategic in advancing local leadership, focusing on Church, Ugandan civil society, government and private sector entities, as well as local leadership in the CP. It will seek to operationalize agency PCS approaches. These will foster an enabling operating context and funding to support local partner organizations to increase institutional effectiveness, impact and influence aligned to its strategic partnership work and program sectors. The CP will work with the Ugandan Episcopal Conference to deepen formal partnership and relationships, and focus on other church entities including national and Diocesan Caritas and the Uganda Catholic Medical Board. The CP will seek to invest in long-term partnership and leadership roles that go beyond projects, with a shared understanding of expectations.

CRS is open and committed to collaborating with, supporting and strengthening Ugandan NGOs to assume a greater role in the development of the country, including through influence and leadership of projects and programs. Similarly, CRS will deepen its collaboration with the private sector to see where convergence of interests can advance development outcomes, especially in agriculture value chains and CCAM strategic priority areas. With the government of Uganda, CRS will focus on SPA-specific ministries, departments and appropriate levels to strengthen policies and systems, improve workforce quality and skills, and to ensure delivery of timely, quality and appropriate services. In this CP strategy, a specific emphasis will be put on Vision 2030 Strategic Approach 3—*Mobilize Catholic Church action to combat global poverty, violence and injustice*, to expand and fortify the impact and influence of CRS and Catholic Church partners in advancing the vision for integral human development.

SECTION 4: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Management Strategy

CRS Uganda will maximize its efficiency and create an environment in which its staff can thrive. It will focus on the following management priorities through 2030:



Respect, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI)

- Achieve and maintain gender equity in operations, policies and practices, and organizational culture.
- Ensure Staff Engagement Scores remain at historical highs.
- Ensure the organization works with, attracts and retains a diverse group of staff and service providers, including those with disabilities.



Local talent recruitment and retention

- Ensure a competitive compensation package and benefits that enable CRS to attract and retain talented, committed staff.
- Ensure staff have opportunities to grow and challenge themselves professionally, while enjoying healthy work-life balance.
- Ensure local talent have a career path within CRS and are aware of future growth opportunities, while strategic positions are recruited and budgeted for timeously for future program and operations innovations.
- Ensure local leadership is achieved.



Partnership and capacity strengthening

- Refine systems and processes to develop and manage non-traditional partnerships, including private sector service providers, data and research institutions, etc.
- Strengthen the Church and reputable civil society organizations and private sector actors who can provide quality services while being recognized for their operational excellence and accountability.
- Institutionalize market systems capacity.



Operational agility and effectiveness

- Achieve agility and improved program quality and operations coordination in project design and start-up.
- Strengthen compliance and implementation of policies and procedures for effective and accountable organizational systems.
- Drive and maintain competitive in-country overheads rates through deliberate cost management at all levels.

Investment Priorities

CRS Uganda spent several years investing in programs through cost shares. As those investments have ended, the CP has lower cost-share obligations and a stable discretionary fund allocation as of FY22, and thus has the financial room to invest in the CP strategy for the medium term.

CRS Uganda recognizes the need to invest in best-in-class local leadership for its SPAs, to lead sub-strategy development, advocacy and influence agendas and business development, and to contribute to or oversee program implementation. CRS' human resources and their capabilities will enable the operationalization of its strategy. In practice, this means that, starting in FY22, the CP will invest in Technical Advisors or Directors in the Band 10 and 10+ ranges to carry this out. In FY22, CRS Uganda recruited a TA2 Climate Change and Livelihoods, and towards the end of FY22 and starting in FY23, the CP will hire an H4S Director, a TA2 Gender Advisor, a PCS and Local Leadership Director and, budget permitting, a TA1 for Emergency Preparedness and Management PQ and Learning. These positions will have a few years of financial security through discretionary funding investment and will be accompanied by modest investment funds for research, influence, small projects or pilots, and marketing.

CRS will continue to invest in human resources and operations. The CP will also continue to invest in the Laudato Si: Uganda Climate Action Working Group—through which staff will be sensitized to climate change—and invest in reducing the environmental impact of operations. This includes modest investments in a transition to low emission systems and technologies, such as solar energy and electric, solar-charged vehicles.

SECTION 4: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Resource Mobilization Plan

A key first step to supporting resource mobilization is the development of a detailed business development strategy to outline key funding streams for each SPA.

Short term (1-2 years): There is a need for strategic planning and use of discretionary funds to hire and maintain staffing and capacity within strategic sectors when the CP portfolio fluctuates. There is also a need for discretionary funding of landscape analyses and reflection sessions to strengthen CRS' niche role within sub-sector plans to market its proven models and pre-position the agency as a go-to partner.

Medium term (3-5 years): The CP needs to leverage discretionary funding and begin writing strategic investments into proposals. This requires an intentional investment in continued staff capacity building across priority areas, and documentation and dissemination of learning from implementation. The midterm also involves strategic discretionary investments to top up project funds for partner institutional and technical capacity strengthening. Through project proposals and while working closely with Program Impact and Quality Assurance (PIQA), the CP will also start including models and new approaches that were identified or developed during the first two years; monitoring and remote sensing platforms; and digital technologies for content dissemination and continued learning.

Long term (6-8 years): The CP will have documented its signature approaches and completed five years of strategy implementation. At this stage, the investments will mostly be funded through projects, and focus on continued dissemination of learning, diversification of donors, and increased private sector partnering to achieve the strategy benchmarks and impacts.

▪ Annex 1: Milestone plan



Esther Kyembabazi, a mother of six, buys household items from a market fair. Through market fairs, program participants are able to buy items they feel their families need most. CRS, with support from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), organized this market fair benefiting households affected by floods and landslides in Bundibugyo District in western Uganda.

Photo by Flavia Lanyero/CRS

