



Impact in 2024 and Urgent Priorities for 2025

Catholic Relief Services is pleased to share highlights of our emergency response and recovery activities of 2024. We also look ahead, anticipating the most urgent humanitarian needs—and opportunities for global impact—in 2025. Our work is possible thanks to the generous support of private and public donors, the dedication of our local partners, and the unwavering presence of Caritas and the Catholic Church.



CRS project participant Sabitri Pariyar received a fully constructed earthquake-resilient house in Tanahun District in Nepal's Gandaki Province. She and her family were still living in a house that had been damaged during the 2015 earthquake. Read more on [Page 7](#).

Photo by Benny Manser/CRS

LIFESAVING NUTRITION AND STRENGTHENED RESILIENCE

Global Food Crisis

The world has faced numerous food crises in recent years—including severe food insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. Globally, about 735 million people endure continuing chronic hunger and malnutrition. CRS recognizes the importance of immediately implementing a holistic and comprehensive approach to save lives and also invest in solutions that help break the cycle of hunger and build resilience.

In the past year, CRS and our partners have supported programs in 30 countries to respond to both emergency needs and the underlying causes of food insecurity. CRS and our partners provided nearly 11 million people with food assistance, more than 90% of which took place in humanitarian contexts.

This involved working in very isolated or unsafe areas where people faced significant obstacles to accessing food. We helped families and communities in urgent need by providing them with food, nutrition, cash assistance, agricultural support and water, as well as by strengthening their capacity to cope with current and future food insecurity.

Across East Africa, CRS managed dozens of projects to help communities facing acute and chronic food insecurity caused by drought and conflict. CRS has also invested in agriculture and resilience-building systems around the world. CRS implemented 37 food-related projects in Latin America, and 29 in West Africa's Sahel region. We continue to focus on sustainable systems-level change that can lead to scalable impact.

11 million

PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM CRS AND OUR PARTNERS IN THE PAST YEAR

30 countries

CRS AND OUR PARTNERS HAVE SUPPORTED PROGRAMS IN 30 COUNTRIES TO RESPOND TO BOTH EMERGENCY NEEDS AND THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF FOOD INSECURITY

Faith knows no bounds



“My children are healthier now and have no fever or diarrhea.”

Daralsalam Yahya
CRS project participant,
Sudan

CRS and our partners provide emergency health and nutrition services that focus on nutrition screening for children under age 5, and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Photo by CRS staff

Spotlight: Sudan

A humanitarian crisis is worsening across Sudan as conflict disrupts life, deepens hunger levels and displaces millions of people. The conflict that erupted in the country in April 2023 has led to large-scale displacement of people over the past year—making Sudan home to the world’s largest internally displaced population. By December 2024, more than 10.9 million people had been displaced and 8.5 million people continued to face extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition and high disease levels.



Access by humanitarian organizations to people in urgent need has been severely limited due to violence, travel delays and significant logistical and communications challenges.

Despite these operational hurdles, CRS is providing ongoing emergency and resilience programming across 32 areas of Sudan. Since September 2023, CRS has supported nearly 2 million people with food, health care and nutrition, child protection, education, social cohesion activities, livelihoods support, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Given the regional impacts of this crisis, CRS is also working with partners to provide relief to Sudanese refugees in Egypt, Chad and South Sudan. Priorities include food, cash assistance, agriculture and livelihoods support, shelter and living supplies, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition support, peacebuilding activities and counseling support.

“We wanted to make sure that people would be able to return to their places of origin, where they would be able to restore their lives and livelihoods.”

Mohammed Adam Hamid
CRS Country Manager
in Pakistan

RELIEF AND RECOVERY FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

Pakistan

In 2022, severe floods, primarily in Pakistan’s Sindh province, damaged 2.1 million homes and affected 12.3 million people. CRS supported the government to establish the Sindh Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform to coordinate and facilitate post-flood recovery efforts—including developing reconstruction guidelines and training masons in safe construction.

As of July 2024, the first tranche of cash assistance to support the rebuilding efforts had reached 558,734 households; 375,298 families had received received support from the second tranche; 277,430 from the third; and 136,509 from the fourth—and 136,509 houses have now been completed. The rebuilding effort emphasizes hazard planning, improved sanitation, access to necessities such as water, and enhanced social cohesion and community capacity.

Brazil

In April and May 2024, torrential rains caused floods and landslides in much of Brazil’s state of Rio Grande do Sul. About 2.4 million people were affected and 183 people died. The state is still grappling with the aftermath. It is estimated that 206,000 rural properties suffered losses due to flooding, most of which belong to small-scale farmers. Many families have returned to their homes but face numerous obstacles to rebuilding their lives and homes.

CRS supported Caritas Brazil, a long-time and experienced partner, to provide urgent, lifesaving assistance and meet the needs for long-term recovery. Emergency support included vouchers for families to buy key supplies; clean water and restored water systems; seeds and seedlings for affected small-scale farmers; technical assistance for farmers; safe shelter for families; essential living and household supplies; and tree-planting initiatives in collaboration with diocesan networks. CRS will continue to support Caritas Brazil to prepare for a long-term response that will assist families and communities through their full recovery.

136,509

HOUSES HAVE NOW BEEN COMPLETED AS PART OF CRS’ POST-FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS IN PAKISTAN’S SINDH PROVINCE

Mexico, Jamaica, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada

In July, Hurricane Beryl wrought destruction across Mexico, Jamaica, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada, which suffered the heaviest impacts. In Grenada, 95% of buildings were damaged or destroyed.



In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 98% of homes and infrastructure were damaged or destroyed on Union Island, and all homes were destroyed on the island of Canouan.

Clergy on the affected islands have played a key role, offering parish halls as emergency operations hubs. Since the disaster, CRS has been working with our partners to provide assistance and support for rebuilding and long-term recovery. Ahead of hurricane season, CRS had worked with partners in Grenada, Jamaica and the Antilles to pre-position items such as tarps, blankets, hygiene supplies, solar lamps and children's activity kits, helping make distributions possible within a week of the disaster.

CRS supported local partners to respond in Grenada. Photo courtesy of Caritas Grenada

Zambia

In February 2024, the president of Zambia declared the 2023-2024 farming season a national disaster after a prolonged dry spell led to 7 out of 10 provinces being severely affected by drought. Western and Southern provinces were the worst affected, and agricultural production fell by 53% from the 2023 season. Most of the affected people live in poverty, with low and seasonal incomes, and are unable to afford crop insurance, which further exacerbates their vulnerability during droughts.

CRS worked with the government of Zambia to support corn distribution in four districts of Eastern Province, benefiting 190,206 people.

CRS and Caritas Mongu are responding in Western Province to reach an additional 242,720 people with food, cash and voucher assistance. CRS also distributed irrigation equipment, corn, vegetable seeds and sweet potato vines to 1,800 families in Western Province.

242,720

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HELPED IN WESTERN PROVINCE WITH FOOD, CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

Spotlight: EMPOWER

Governments, religious organizations and civil society groups are often the first to respond to a crisis, with an ongoing presence in affected communities.

Given the rising frequency and complexity of crises, CRS is enhancing our vital support to local partners to help communities in times of need. Introduced in July 2018, the CRS EMPOWER initiative—Empowering Partner Organizations Working on Emergency Responses—aims to bolster the humanitarian response capabilities of local organizations. This is achieved by providing guidance and support for sustainable, community-driven development through three key strategic areas: coordination, institutional strengthening and funding. To date, EMPOWER has benefited people and organizations in 54 countries, engaging 87 local humanitarian organizations—primarily Caritas—and directly benefiting more than 2 million people in their emergency efforts.



Technical advisors Taynara Dettman of Caritas Brazil and Mayara Freitas of CRS travel up the Canaçari river in Brazil's Amazonas State. CRS' EMPOWER initiative assists Caritas in a humanitarian response to vulnerable communities. Photo by Felipe Thomaz/CRS

URGENT AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT IN COMPLEX CRISES

South Sudan

South Sudan is now ranked the third most fragile state in the world, as compounded crises put millions of lives at risk. Since the country's independence in 2011, its people have endured continuous conflict, climate-driven crises and large-scale displacement. Consecutive years of extreme flooding have led to extensive displacement and a loss of land and assets. At least 9 million people—75% of the population—need some form of humanitarian assistance. Families are resorting to selling their assets to cope, and

are facing starvation, critical levels of acute malnutrition, destitution and death.

CRS and our partners are providing cash assistance to thousands of flood-affected and displaced families in Akobo County of Jonglei State, and Rumbek East and Cueibet counties of Lakes State, ensuring families can access food and meet their critical needs during this emergency, while supporting local markets. CRS is participating in coordination efforts at the county, state and national levels. With local partners, we are prioritizing emergency response in the counties of Greater Jonglei that are most vulnerable to flooding and conflict. The response by CRS and our partners extends our ongoing programming across the country, including food assistance, livelihoods recovery, comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene efforts, health and nutrition services, and support for market-based responses.

CRS staff hand over borehole equipment to a community in Greater Jonglei, South Sudan.

Photo by Achuoth Deng/CRS



“After one of her children was killed, a woman approached our team, who connected her to medical and psychological services. Her son joined our recreational activities, and began to integrate with his peers.”

Angie Kaneva
CRS Program Manager,
Gaza response

The Holy Land, Lebanon and Syria

Since the crisis in the Holy Land escalated in October 2023, families and communities have been devastated, and tens of thousands of lives have been lost. On October 7, 2023, an attack by Hamas in Israel resulted in 1,205 deaths and the taking of 251 hostages.

Israel's immediate bombardment of Gaza has continued by air, land and sea, killing more than 44,780 people. An estimated 1.9 million people in Gaza—90% of the population—have been uprooted from their homes and towns, often many times. Today, most Gazans have no safe access to food or clean water, and have no haven from the almost-daily airstrikes.

Since October 2023, CRS and our local partners have supported 1.1 million people with food, shelter, hygiene supplies, cash assistance and counseling support. While our current efforts focus on lifesaving assistance to meet people's physical and emotional needs, we hope to transition to sustainable solutions for recovery once the situation has stabilized. In the past year, we have adjusted our operations in Gaza in response to ongoing challenges, including evacuation orders, border closures, and significant impact on staff and their families.

Our response to the Gaza humanitarian crisis is regional in scope, with coordination, partnerships and activities across Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, Egypt and Jordan. Despite extreme operational challenges, our emphasis on efficient systems, locally led approaches, high-quality programming and accountability ensures our ability to provide assistance to people in need—and to do so at scale. In late 2024, our efforts expanded to the crises in Lebanon and Syria, where we are working with partners to support families displaced and affected by conflict, as well as those returning home.



CRS provides child-friendly spaces in Gaza.
Photo by CRS staff

43,000

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY CRS PARTNER CARITAS VENEZUELA WITH VITAL SERVICES SUCH AS HEALTH CARE, WATER AND SHELTER

Venezuelan Crisis

For nearly two decades, Venezuela has experienced severe political instability, economic decline and widespread social unrest, deeply impacting millions of people both within the country and beyond its borders. In response, CRS has partnered with Caritas Venezuela to provide vital services such as health care, water, shelter and other forms of assistance to more than 43,000 people. This includes medical care for 11,322 people, and nutrition screening for 5,100 children under age 5—half of whom received food supplements and additional support.

Also, 1,200 pregnant and new mothers were screened for nutritional needs, with more than a third qualifying for nutrition assistance. CRS has also facilitated cash assistance for 3,800 families and is collaborating with Caritas Venezuela

to help families rebuild their livelihoods, thus contributing to the recovery of local economies in both urban and rural areas.

In Peru, CRS is working with Caritas Peru to provide health care, protection services and shelter for Venezuelan refugees. This support includes strengthening our partner’s operational capacity, including programs for rent subsidies, migrant protection and safe, comprehensive care for the most vulnerable.

In Brazil, CRS is enhancing the operational capacity of Caritas Brazil to assist thousands of Venezuelan refugees in shelters and social service centers. Our technical assistance includes improving risk assessment protocols, establishing feedback and response mechanisms, providing cash assistance, and safeguarding the most vulnerable people.

“The benefits of gardening are very important. I sell vegetables to buy millet and feed my children.

Safietou Kabore
CRS project participant and farmer, Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

Sharply worsening conflict in West Africa’s central Sahel region over the past few years has led to mass displacement, and a food crisis and humanitarian catastrophe across Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. The compounded events have resulted in heightened insecurity and volatility. At the center of the crisis are millions of people struggling to find a safe place for their families, access enough food to avoid hunger and malnutrition, and cope in the long term with the devastation of their livelihoods.

Putting these families and communities at even greater risk is a lack of global attention and funding to help people meet their urgent, lifesaving needs, as well as to rebuild their livelihoods and resilience.

Across Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, CRS and our partners are providing rapid lifesaving assistance while supporting dignified recovery so families can build a foundation for their future. We take a holistic approach that prioritizes the urgency to save lives, reduce suffering, build resilience, and support social cohesion and peacebuilding. Our response builds on our development and peacebuilding programs that support communities to break the cycle of poverty, instability, violence and exclusion, so they can live peacefully and resiliently, either by returning to their place of origin or integrating into a new community. CRS is able to build on our work with local partners in emergency, agriculture, nutrition, peacebuilding, livelihoods and resilience programming.

Our response to the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel complements the work of the CRS Sahel Peace Initiative, which supports local leadership of the Catholic Church to promote peace and social cohesion.



Program quality manager Finda Keita in Mali, where CRS assists internally displaced people.

Photo by Harandane Dicko/CRS

Despite the volatile situation in Haiti, CRS' current programs continue.

Haiti

Security in the capital of Port-au-Prince remains unpredictable, amid political protests, and attacks, kidnappings and hijackings by armed gangs. Families across the country are in the midst of a growing humanitarian crisis, with at least 5 million people facing food insecurity. Shortages of essential items, fuel and electricity persist in many areas. The announcement of a new prime minister on May 1, 2024, was followed by increased violence by gangs seeking to consolidate their control of the capital. At least 1.4 million Haitians are on the verge of famine, as the political crisis devastates the economy and access to food.

Despite the volatile situation, our current programs continue, including cash

assistance for displaced families, as well as their relocation to safer sites; improved water, sanitation and hygiene services; agricultural activities for essential crop production; vouchers for fresh food and commodities; support for caregivers and children; youth entrepreneur trainings; support for learning communities and savings groups, and small business development.

This emergency assistance is taking place alongside the continuing U.S. Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program, and ongoing recovery efforts following the 2021 earthquake.

“ I wasn't going to leave our home and our animals. We'll keep living, keep moving forward.

Tetiana Pikalo
CRS project participant,
Ukraine

CRS and Caritas Spes are helping families like the Pikalos repair and rebuild after shelling damaged their homes. *Photo courtesy of Caritas Spes*

Spotlight: Ukraine Displacement and Return

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to massive displacement and upheaval. The war continues to intensify humanitarian needs in the country, particularly in communities close to the front line. Fighting remains concentrated in eastern and southern Ukraine. Today, nearly 20 million people need assistance to meet their basic needs, repair and heat their homes, cope with trauma and restart their livelihoods. As Ukraine reclaims occupied territory, displaced families return home to find their houses and community infrastructure damaged. Although Ukraine's government has made efforts to support families, the impact has been limited by military defense priorities and coordination challenges.

For nearly three years, our Caritas partners have collectively assisted millions of people across their centers, parishes and shelters. This has included food; cash assistance; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter, including home repair; winter supplies; livelihoods support; and psychological first aid and counseling.

In eastern Ukraine, CRS has worked closely with Caritas and other partners to help families return to and repair their homes. CRS is also supporting efforts to help families restart their livelihoods with cash assistance for agricultural and livestock production. CRS will continue to support Caritas programs that provide cash assistance to families to ensure they can meet their winter needs.

Across the region, CRS and our partners support Ukrainian refugees as they rebuild their lives, along with the communities hosting them—notably in Moldova, Bulgaria, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Georgia. These activities include safe accommodation, cash assistance, education support for students, help to secure jobs, links to available social services and medical care, language classes, cultural and social gatherings enabling people to adjust to their new surroundings, and information to enable them to make informed decisions about their futures.



2.7 million

FROM 2020 TO 2023, CRS PROVIDED DIRECT SHELTER SUPPORT AND WORKED WITH OUR PARTNERS TO PROVIDE SHELTER SOLUTIONS FOR 2.7 MILLION PEOPLE

BUILDING SAFE AND DIGNIFIED HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

When homes are destroyed in a crisis, or when families have to flee their communities, it is not just the walls that are damaged—it is their memories, sense of security and hope for the future. Helping families rebuild their homes is not just about restoring a structure, but about renewing their hope.

Today, local and international humanitarian and development organizations are meeting just 20% of housing needs of those displaced by natural disasters and conflict. The other 80% of families recover on their own, relying on government, market and local humanitarian systems in their countries. In many cases, there are opportunities to improve these systems, to make them more inclusive to vulnerable communities. As a Catholic organization, we want to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind.

As a part of our Vision 2030 agency strategy, CRS has promoted the building of safe, dignified homes and communities, with the commitment to provide more direct assistance to people who are uprooted or displaced from their homes, and to achieve transformational systems-level change. With the growing impact of climate change, CRS

recognizes the need to bridge the widening gap in unmet housing needs by working alongside governments and other entities to enhance the responsiveness of public and private systems to the plight of the most vulnerable communities. This includes comprehensive, locally tailored efforts in disaster preparedness, risk reduction and resilience. Our goal is to help 10 million people affected by crisis live in safe and dignified homes and communities.

From 2020 to 2023, CRS provided direct shelter support and worked with our partners to provide shelter solutions for 2.7 million people. Direct support surpassed our target of 1.5 million people, due in part to growing needs for support, including in the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh, the migrant crisis in Latin America, displacement in the Sahel, war in Ukraine and flooding in Pakistan.

The local presence of the global Catholic Church is helping us meet this heightened need. Thanks to our experienced staff and rich partnerships, we can be agile, flexible, innovative and efficient in providing safe, dignified homes and communities.

Spotlight: Nepal

Ambika Pudasaini and her family outside their newly built, earthquake-resilient house in Bagmati Province. Photo by Benny Manser



In April 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal, killing more than 8,000 people and damaging more than 800,000 homes. CRS quickly became responsible for relief efforts in Gorkha District of Gandaki Province, one of the hardest-hit areas. Working with Caritas Nepal and other local partners, we directly supported 30,000 families to rebuild their homes. We then built on the impact of this work through our leadership of the Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform, or

HRRP, which was created to coordinate housing recovery efforts across hundreds of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. As the lead agency, CRS supported the government's National Reconstruction Authority to develop technical guidelines and standards for reconstruction, facilitated coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, and provided technical assistance and capacity building to support the implementation of housing recovery and reconstruction programs.

Because of these strengthened policies and strategies, more than 133,200 homes for 629,196 people were reconstructed through the government tranche system from fiscal years 2021 to 2023—supporting families who had not yet been able to rebuild. Our work to support people affected by the earthquake continues, with its impacts deepened by the national policies and practices we have been able to promote.

“When we moved into this house, the feeling was priceless. If you live in your own house, you feel peace of mind.”

Ambika Pudasaini
CRS project participant,
Nepal