



At Catholic Relief Services, we work to prevent conflict by building cohesion that enables all people to live in just and peaceful societies.



STRATEGIC CHANGE PLATFORM

Fostering Just and Cohesive Societies

To be bolder and more focused in our ambition to be catalysts for transformational change *at scale*, we are investing in six strategic change platforms as part of our Vision 2030 agency strategy.

Each of the six platforms share a common objective: to achieve results at scale.

This platform focuses on systemic solutions for positive social relations—overcoming divisions, addressing tensions, creating conditions for equitable and inclusive development—that are necessary for the success and sustainability of relief, development, justice and peace.

Social cohesion and justice. Where thriving societies begin.

Violence is often rooted in inequality. Societies that deprive people of dignity—that exclude some groups from opportunity—develop fault lines of violent pressure. After decades of relative decline, conflict has increased around the world. And the cost is enormous. 80% of displaced people are driven from their homes by conflict. Terrorism and military spending are rising. In 2019 alone, the global economic impact of violence passed \$14 trillion. To build peaceful societies, Catholic Relief Services focuses first on addressing injustice and building social cohesion between individuals, groups and influential leaders and institutions.

The Challenge

Inequality, poverty and violence are inextricably linked. In the face of pronounced need, communities struggle to prosper. Stereotypes and mistrust foster chronic tensions. Addressing underlying injustice and divisions in a society is the foundation to improving health, livelihoods and education. In fact, peacebuilding dramatically increases the effectiveness of development work. But defusing underlying, complex social tensions requires resources and commitment. Ironically, far more money is spent responding to violence than preventing it.



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The Opportunity

Social cohesion is the glue to bind struggling societies and communities. People living in harmonious communities, supported by just institutions, can lead healthy, economically secure, spiritual and educated lives. Without peace and justice, however, the ability to prevent and recover from crisis is tentative. CRS empowers people to talk about what divides them, uphold what unites them, and act together for stronger, healthier and more just social ties. Leveraging relationships and expertise, CRS is leading the charge to integrate social cohesion into traditional foreign assistance. For 75 years, we have forged respected relationships with local groups and faith leaders in 114 countries around the world. Our global reach and breadth of comprehensive programming make us a natural leader among international NGOs to integrate social cohesion with justice worldwide.

Our Approach

Whether addressing long-term development or emergency response, CRS lays the groundwork for trust between individuals and diverse groups, working with local leaders to mobilize participants, especially young people and women. We strengthen our partners' capacity to channel citizens' voices to resolve disputes, hold the powerful accountable, and ensure equity. CRS is committed to gathering and sharing evidence to demonstrate the transformational effectiveness of this work and influence donors, policymakers, partners and peer agencies.

Core Practices and Tenets

The 3Bs guide our continual process of transformation.

- **Binding:** Personal healing, resilience and agency.
- **Bonding:** Intra-group strengthening and preparation.
- **Bridging:** Inter-group engagement and collaboration.

Through our programs, participants and membership groups launch their journey of personal and collective transformation, culminating in active cooperation across social, economic, political and institutional divides for peace, development and prosperity.

Where We Work

In 2018 and 2019, CRS implemented peace and justice work in over 60 projects in 33 countries, serving over seven million people. Some of our first initiatives took root in the **Southern Philippines** region of Mindanao and in **Central Africa**. Today this portfolio touches lives around the world.

For example, an integrated project along the border of **Rwanda, Burundi** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** improved social cohesion and enhanced livelihoods by helping women from different communities who trade across the border to overcome fear and mistrust of each other. In **Latin America**, we equip young people with the livelihoods and peacebuilding skills they need to thrive in dangerous environments. In **West Africa**, we help communities manage natural resources equitably so diverse groups can meet their needs in a peaceful, stable environment.

**We believe in transformation on a global scale.
Faith knows no bounds.**

Learn more at crs.org.

