



Hilmi and his wife, Sutati, stand with two of their four children, outside their new home in Tangerang, Indonesia. Photo by Laura Pohl/CRS

Building Safe, Dignified Homes and Communities



Overview

We are at an unprecedented moment in time. Across the world, more people are displaced than any time in recent memory, due to circumstances beyond their control: Climate change, conflict, natural disasters. Many of us experience first-hand some of the same issues that have forced people from their homes: rising waters or deadly drought; conflict in one part of the world that affects refugee flows, supply chains and food security in others. But, for those who have no safety net, a temporary crisis can change the trajectory of their lives.

To be uprooted from home is to be pulled from the roots of a community, the infrastructure around which life is built. Today, more than 100 million people are displaced due to emergencies. Given the unprecedented scale of this crisis, we are called to take an unprecedented response.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has re-designed our emergency shelter programming to focus on safe homes and communities, that will offer an entry-point for comprehensive support to help people rebuild their lives. We recognize that losing a home can precipitate other life-altering challenges: separating people from their loved ones and support network, and limiting access to food, water, health and social services, education and livelihood options. We believe a safe home and community are the starting point for recovery.

The CRS Homes and Communities Strategic Change Platform, launched in 2020, aims to contribute to the creation of safe, dignified homes and communities for 10 million people by 2030 through a two-pronged approach:

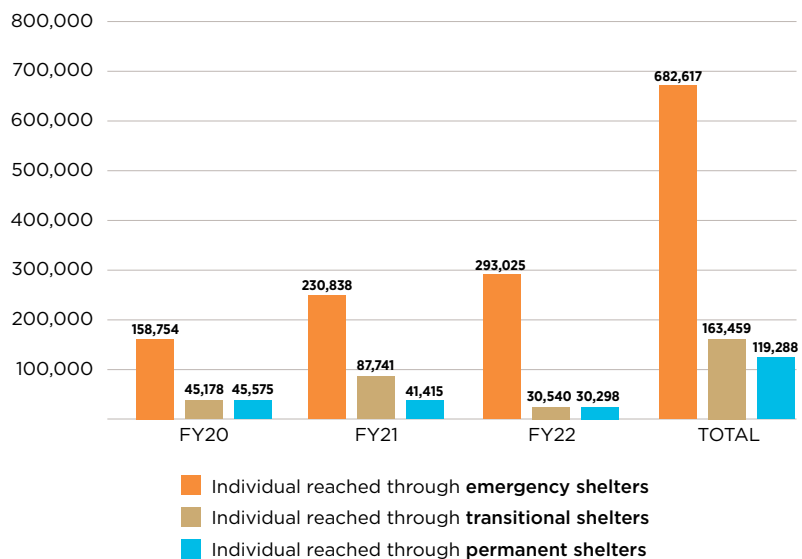
1. Expanding programming to ensure 1.5 million people affected by crisis have safe and dignified homes.
2. Working with and strengthening government, markets, humanitarian and development systems to increase efficiency and inclusiveness, and ensure 8.5 million more people affected by crisis gain access to safe and dignified homes and communities.

With collective effort, we are determined to meet the moment. This update highlights the progress of CRS and partners since 2020 across diverse countries and contexts, to meet one of our most vital human needs.

Global Impact To Date

From October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022, CRS provided direct and scaled shelter support to 1,902,134 people (Table 1). **These results exceed the FY22 target by 27 percent.**

Impact by Shelter Type FY20–FY22



STRATEGIC CHANGE PLATFORM

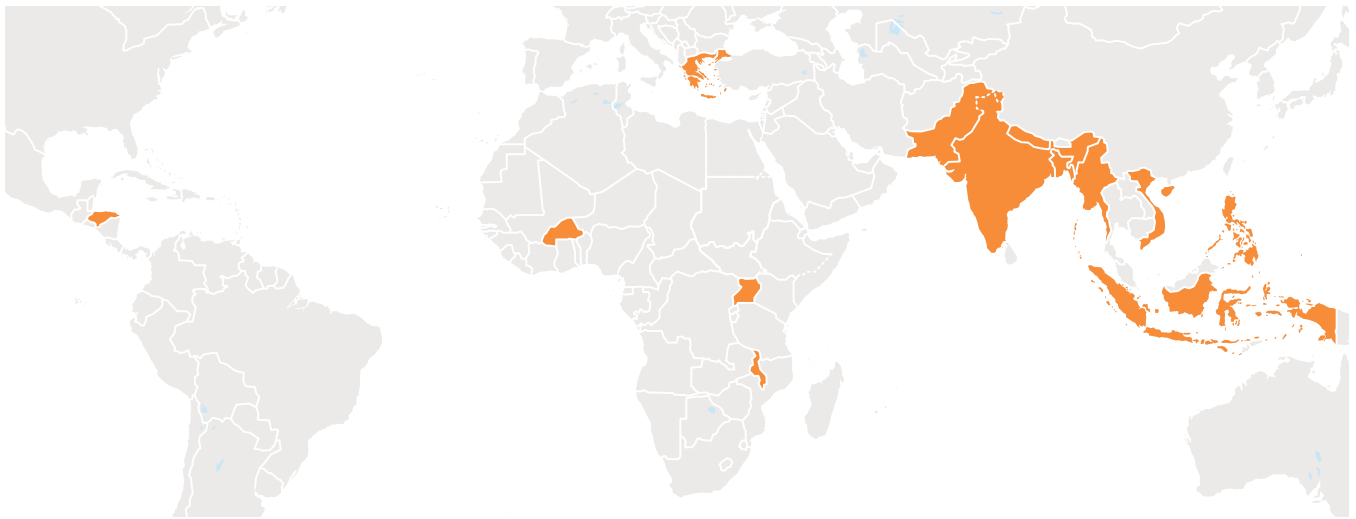
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To be bolder and more focused in our ambition to be catalysts for transformational change at scale, we are investing in six strategic change platforms as part of our Vision 2030 agency strategy.

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

Recognizing that the concept of home extends beyond physical structures, this platform expands our approach and global influence from shelter and settlement to creating homes and communities as foundations for long-term health and prosperity.

Year	Total individuals reached	Individuals reached through direct support	Individuals reached through influence/scale	No. of countries reporting
FY20	343,230	251,507	91,723	22
FY21	918,143	359,994	558,149	27
FY22	640,761	353,863	286,898	25
Total	1,902,134	965,364	936,779	



Geographic expansion of Homes & Communities programs:

- FY20 - 4 countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Uganda)
- FY21 - 5 countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Uganda)
- FY22 - 9 countries (Bangladesh, Greece, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Nepal, Philippines, Uganda, Vietnam)
- FY23 - 13 countries (Bangladesh, Greece, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Uganda, Vietnam, Burkina Faso)

Country Highlights: Direct Programming

In 2022, CRS carried out direct programming activities in 25 countries. Highlights include the following:

Mexico

In Mexico, a humanitarian crisis is on the rise as people seek safe refuge from countries reeling from insecurity, failed harvests and chronic poverty. Escalating violence across Central America has caused tens of thousands of families to flee north. People are arriving in Mexico seeking humanitarian visas, shelter, asylum or transit permits to reach the U.S. border. Many have limited food, water, safe shelter, or accurate information. In Mexico, networks of shelters are responding to the massive influx, yet they are overcrowded and have limited resources. CRS and its partners have been supporting migrant centers with assistance to strengthen their capacity for operations, human resources, finance, administration, logistics, WASH infrastructure, governance and technical programming. This includes providing training and field visits and materials that enable partners to share technical guidance and best practices, and to develop policies and procedures. **In FY21, 136,175 project participants benefited from this emergency shelter in Mexico.**

Bangladesh

Four years into the Rohingya response in Bangladesh, approximately 600,000 refugees continued to live in precarious shelters in 34 informal camps located on difficult terrain prone to landslides, flooding, fire and typhoons. CRS and Caritas Bangladesh offered shelter upgrades through transitional shelter assistance—this included packages of materials, and construction of transitional shelters. All project



With local partners in Southern Leyte and Butuan, Philippines, CRS supported families to rebuild their after Typhoon Rai devastated homes and infrastructure.

Photo by Jomari Guillermo/CRS

participants were engaged throughout the program, receiving information, technical orientation, technical monitoring support and the option to choose their preferred shelter model and materials. Community laborers helped to construct the shelters for those with special needs. **In FY21, 64,503 individuals benefited from transitional shelter assistances in the camps and host communities in the Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh.**

Iraq

The occupation of the Islamic States (IS) in large territories of Iraq in 2014 and the subsequent 2017 war to liberate IS-occupied lands led to the displacement of approximately 6 million Iraqis, and the destruction of infrastructure and housing. By December 2021, 4.9 million Iraqis had returned to their homes while 1.1 million remain displaced.¹ Since 2015, CRS and Caritas Iraq have been providing shelter and WASH assistance to internally displaced, as well as those returning home, through critical shelter upgrades,² repairs to war-damaged shelters and core housing construction. This program targeted non-structurally damaged homes and was implemented through owner-led repairs. These activities were complemented by distributions of household supplies, education support, livelihood assistance, transitional solutions, and peace building. **In FY20 and FY21, CRS and Caritas Iraq supported 2,373 and 4,420 Iraqis respectively with cash and technical assistance to repair their damaged homes.**

Ethiopia

From 2020-2022, armed conflict in Tigray region in Ethiopia led to extreme humanitarian needs, with an estimated 60,000 refugees fleeing to Sudan and more than 2.5 million people displaced internally throughout northern Ethiopia. Many displaced families live in overcrowded settlements and collective centers, with virtually no living or hygiene supplies. The protection risks for women and girls are significant given the lack of privacy and space, and heightened gender-based violence. At the same time, local communities hosting the displaced populations were affected not only by the insecurity

1 <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/>

2 Critical shelters are unfinished buildings, mud houses and informally built structures

and crisis in the region, but by the stretched resources. CRS and its Catholic partners provided shelter repair kits, emergency shelter kits, larger (double unit) emergency shelters, as well as essential household and hygiene supplies to live with dignity and prevent illness. In FY22, CRS supported 57,579 people with emergency shelter, repairs and/or materials, and 3,052 people with transitional shelters.

Gaza, West Bank And Jerusalem

Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with 2.11 million Palestinians living in a 140 square mile area. The housing crisis in Gaza is impacted by a combination of factors including recurring spikes in conflict, a 15-year blockade and the high cost of construction. In the last 2 years, more than 63,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed. People are living in homes with damaged roofs, unsecured windows, unfinished walls, poor plumbing, no access to sewage networks and insufficient space. CRS supports families to make permanent upgrades to improve their living conditions. Simple, durable upgrades also lead to better hygiene, a safer environment and enhanced dignity— especially for women and girls, who spend most of their time in the home. CRS has also incorporated ecologically friendly shelter solutions into its response to reduce gas emissions and promote environmentally friendly interventions such as the installation of solar power systems, safe removal to asbestos and maximizing the use of grey water. **In FY22, 700 families (4,314 individuals) received household supplies and shelter cash assistance to rehabilitate their homes through a self-help approach.**

Transformational Change At Scale

CRS recognizes that our direct programming implementation is still a drop in the ocean. Leveraging our past experiences and strategic partnerships, we aim to grow partnerships and collaboration with government, market, humanitarian and development systems so that good practices and innovations can be scaled-up collectively and by others so that more people can benefit.

CRS invests and opportunities for scale through:

- **Expansion** – Scaling solutions that are expanded, replicated, and disseminated through other stakeholders (such as peer organizations or the local population) to impact the lives of more people.
- **Institutionalization** – Institutions (such as government, private sector, civil society, global actors, and any combination thereof) implement laws, policies, rules, technologies or strategies that positively impact the lives of the target population;
- **Influencing norms** – Scaling initiatives that positively impact cultural norms. This is based on the recognition that cultural and societal norms play a powerful role in the wide-spread adoption of new practices, products or services and/or giving up harmful practices.

A majority (72%) of CRS' scaled outcomes to date have been through institutionalization. Notably, two out of 10 CRS country programs have accounted for 92% of the results:

- In Nepal, CRS and partners reached 603,274 people affected by the 2015 earthquake through governmental scale.
- In Bangladesh, CRS and partners supported 244,234 Rohingya refugees by working with peer agencies in the cluster system.



Improvements in refugee settlements are supported by CRS/Caritas Bangladesh in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh with engagement of Rohingya families and local community members. Photo by Amit Rudro for CRS

Highlights Of Scaled Outcomes

Nepal

The April 2015 Gorkha earthquake, measuring a 7.8 magnitude, struck near Kathmandu and damaged more than 800,000 homes across 32 districts.³ A reported 60% of the housing damage was in rural areas. CRS' early emergency relief programming soon morphed into long-standing partnerships, with CRS eventually becoming the lead agency in the National Housing Reconstruction and Recovery Platform (HRRP). Through the HRRP, CRS has contributed technical support to the government's National Reconstruction Authority. In its role with this coordinative body, CRS helped to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, supported the development of national technical guidelines and standards for reconstruction, and provided technical assistance and capacity building for housing recovery and reconstruction programs. **Through this facilitation of strengthened policies and strategies, CRS has helped 126,676 families (603,274 people) reconstruct their homes through the government support system in FY21 and FY22.**

Bangladesh

The Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh is home to the world's largest refugee camp.⁴ After massive armed attacks in 2017, over 700,000 Rohingya were forced into Bangladesh from their homes and communities of Rakhine state, Myanmar.⁵ In response, CRS and partner Caritas Bangladesh collaborated to build evidence around and advocate for strengthened community-based approaches for those residing in the camps.⁶ Working with the United Nations Development Program and the International Federation of Red Cross

³ Limbu, Bina, Rawal, Nabin, Suji, Manoj, Subedi, Prakash, & Baniya, Jeevan. Reconstructing Nepal: Post-Earthquake Experiences from Bhaktapur Dhading and Sindhupalchowk. (Kathmandu: Social Science Baha, 2019), page 1. <https://soscbaha.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/reconstructing-nepal.pdf>

⁴ [Refugee Camps | Definition, facts and statistics \(unrefugees.org\)](https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis)

⁵ <https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis>

⁶ The community-based approach provides communities and their leaders with tested and translated guidance and tools used to identify and prioritize community needs through the development of a Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP), as well as to estimate the resources needed to meet them. RRAPs can then be used to advocate for resources from the relevant local department such as the Department of Public Health, Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC), or Upazila Nirbahi Officer.



“Karla” finds safe refuge, care and holistic services with her children at a CRS-supported shelter in Tijuana, Mexico while waiting for an asylum application hearing in the United States.
Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

and Red Crescent Societies, CRS/Caritas advocated for the integration of community- based approach, cash assistance and rental assistance into the revised Bangladesh Shelter Cluster Guidelines in 2022. CRS/Caritas shelter support has benefited 244,234 people since efforts began. The guidance has been referred to repeatedly, including in support of helping people to rebuild after fires in the settlement in 2022. CRS/Caritas trained local carpenters and masons on Build Back Safer techniques, with an orientation that can be replicated, to increase the community’s capacity to adapt approaches to protect their families and homes from future disasters.

Greece

In response to the unprecedented arrival of 1 million asylum seekers and refugees into Europe starting in 2015, CRS began operations in Greece, partnering with Caritas Athens and Caritas Hellas. Although Greek laws included some protection and provisions of basic needs for asylum seekers, CRS and peer organizations were able to advocacy to the government of Greece to issue a directive that guaranteed the combined provision of shelter and, for the first time, cash assistance, to all asylum seekers. The government of Greece began to incorporate cash assistance into its asylum seeker response strategy that continues presently, with CRS as lead provider of cash assistance for all eligible asylum seekers. Complementing these cash activities, **CRS Greece and partners have reached 63,107 refugees working closely with multi-lateral and government line ministries to increase the quality and availability of refugee housing options.** As part of these projects, CRS and other housing actors were able to successfully negotiate with the Ministry of Migration to increase the unit cost for temporary accommodation, thereby increasing the quality of housing services offered to asylum seekers. In addition, CRS developed and maintains a website of affordable apartments for refugees to rent apartments directly, thereby increasing their access safe and dignified shelter.

Vietnam

In 2020, a series of floods affected central Vietnam, resulting in a reported \$1 billion of home and property damage, and affecting 1.5 million people, with hundreds dead or missing. CRS is supporting the Vietnam Disaster Management Authority to develop community-led housing preparedness, recovery and reconstruction guidelines covering disaster readiness, shelter emergency assistance and post-disaster recovery. The guidelines will help to minimize deaths and property loss, limit destruction of natural resources and environment related to disaster-resilient homes and communities that fulfil community awareness raising on disaster-resilient housing and the role disaster resilient housing plays in preventing and reducing disaster risks caused by typhoons and floods and community-based disaster risk management. CRS will support the local government to roll-out and apply the guidelines, and create a feedback loop to learn and strengthen the process for each geographic area. CRS also worked closely with an 11-member consortium to develop shelter technical operational guidelines. **The effort led to 5,325 families, (561 families supported directly, and 4,825 families reached through influencing peer agencies) to access cash assistance (averaging \$300/family) and information on how to repair and rebuild safer homes.**

Looking Ahead

CRS has committed \$45 million of its internal funds through 2030 to test and explore where and how organizations like ours can facilitate systems-level change within government, humanitarian and market systems. We invite collaboration with other organizations so we can collectively contribute our skills and experience. We hope that, together, we are part of systems change that results in millions of the most vulnerable, marginalized populations benefiting from effective and inclusive access to safe, dignified homes and communities. If the humanitarian and development community can build off our collective and diverse strengths, we can have a greater, lasting impact together.

Stories From The Field:

TAKE A VISUAL TOUR AND HEAR THE VOICES FROM DIVERSE CONTEXTS WHERE SAFE, DIGNIFIED HOMES AND COMMUNITIES ARE TAKING PLACE:



[Indonesia: A Place to Call Home](#)



[Nepal: Recover Project](#)



[Ukraine Crisis and Regional Response](#)



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

Learn more at crs.org/safehomes.