



Integrating Peacebuilding, Governance and Gender for Influence and Impact

EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM RECENT CASES

Cover photo: A Christian and a member of one of the indigenous peoples' ethnic groups shake hands to culminate resolution of their land conflict. Traditional and religious leaders, along with village officials, witness the ceremony. *OMF-IPM Project Staff*

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Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Introduction	1
Land Tenure and Peacebuilding in Madagascar	5
Government reform	7
Project activities	8
Project results	10
Lessons	13
Gender Dynamics in Food Production and Marketing in Southern Malawi	17
CRS and the Wellness and Agriculture for Life Advancement Project (WALA)	18
Household-level challenges	19
Project goals and activities	20
Project results	22
Observations	24
Local Solutions to Land Conflict in Mindanao, Philippines	25
The CRS 3B approach	27
Project results	30
MIWGS: A critical structure	32
Policy lessons	33
Lessons from the Three Cases	35
Lessons from other CRS programs	39
Research findings on governance	42
Towards integral human development	46



Foreword

This short volume on CRS programs on peacebuilding, governance and gender is a product of the 2015 Summer Institute of Peacebuilding, which was held in Quito, Ecuador, in February 2015. The case studies' authors and editors, a group that included CRS and partner staff as well as other CRS colleagues, selflessly took on the challenges of this complex effort, adding to their already considerable workloads. What has emerged is an important contribution to evidence-based learning, rooted firmly in the experience of CRS, which spans two continents.

The case studies in this volume, shorter versions of which were originally used in the workshop sessions, have been selected to promote more systematic integration of peacebuilding, governance and gender into development and humanitarian programming for greater influence and impact. The accompanying essay, written by the University of Notre Dame Keough School of Global Affairs' Dr. David Cortright, draws out the promising practices and lessons learned from the case studies and grounds them in the latest academic research.

The result is a strong validation of the decision by CRS to elevate the integration of peacebuilding, governance and gender to a core competency in its global strategy. It also underscores the importance of focusing on the achievement of social change as the main purpose for all CRS programming. Promoting social change has been a pillar of the CRS Justice and Peacebuilding strategy, as it is well known that sustainable peace requires a foundation of justice. Working on social issues associated with violent conflict, poor governance and gender inequity is critical and growing ever more complex. Furthermore, such complexities increasingly present themselves in more "mainstream" development and humanitarian program areas such as agriculture, health and emergency response.

We are proud of how CRS and its partners have faced these challenges head on. This volume is not, however, an exercise in self-congratulation or a presentation of astounding accomplishments. Instead, it is a tribute to the people who are concerned with, and committed to, justice for the poor and the marginalized. It is also an examination of the difficulties of influencing structures and systems to achieve greater impact *and* more integral human development, which recognizes the essential unity of the social, political, economic and spiritual dimensions of life for individuals and their communities. Finally, it is an opportunity to garner lessons from challenges and successes so we can improve the quality of our programming. We hope that donors and colleagues from other organizations will also find the text helpful.

Thanks are in order. First, we thank those who "wrote"—with their lives—the cases included here, and other individuals like them, especially the current and past CRS staff in Malawi, Madagascar and the Philippines who carefully reviewed and critiqued drafts of the case studies, including Dorothy Ngwira, Chimwemwe Limani, Hilda Rakotondraibe, Joshua Poole, Myla Leguro and Nell Bolton. We also thank Scott LeFevre, whose essay

on CRS governance work in West Africa informed David Cortright's efforts to craft the concluding essay.

Alexandra Towns was responsible for expanding the case studies from workshop aids into their current form, and she not only edited but also co-authored two of them. In addition, Aaron Chassy served as final editor for both the case studies and the concluding essay. Finally, a special expression of gratitude is due to Rebeka Martensen for her help with coordinating the assembling and packaging of the volume, including the copy editing and oversight of layout, design and printing.

It was great working with you all.

—The editors (David Cortright, Alexandra Towns and Aaron Chassy)

Introduction

During its more than 70 years as an international humanitarian relief and development organization, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has learned that to achieve sustainable development with human dignity requires strengthening the institutions of good governance. It is not enough to merely respond to people's needs. It is also necessary to address the underlying causes and dynamics of poverty and injustice, which often go hand in hand with poor governance and social exclusion. For these reasons, CRS seeks to integrate peacebuilding, governance and gender programming into its humanitarian and development assistance programs.

Increasing communities' resilience to overcome such conditions requires strengthening the capacity of governments to effectively and equitably deliver public goods to all communities, and making institutions more inclusive, participatory and accountable. Experience shows that programs that strengthen governance capacity and quality can both improve economic and social well-being and reduce the risk of repression or marginalization that often leads to violent conflict.

Social science research validates this approach. Scholarly studies indicate that inclusive, accountable and participatory governance systems enhance the prospects for economic growth and reduce the risk of armed conflict. They also show that gender equality is an essential condition for sustainable development and peace. By working to create conditions of good governance and greater gender equality, CRS helps local communities overcome the conditions that perpetuate poverty and build the foundations for economic development and peace.

These case studies explore these themes by drawing lessons from recent CRS experiences in programming that integrates peacebuilding, governance and gender. They focus on three multi-year CRS programs concluded in 2015 that integrated these issues. The first project improved food security and reduced disputes over the control of land in Southeastern Madagascar. The second program increased food production by providing farming and marketing opportunities for women in Southern Malawi. The third built peace by protecting the property rights of the indigenous and Moro peoples in rural areas in the Mindanao region of the Philippines. The three case studies offer useful insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with integrated programming. The case studies are followed by an interpretive essay that distills lessons from these cases, links them to observations from other CRS projects in West Africa, and validates case study lessons with the latest findings of social science research and the moral principles of Integral Human Development.

This synthesis of empirical evidence and practical experience from multiple cases reveals important patterns and conclusions. It confirms that efforts to integrate peacebuilding, governance and gender can generate measurable improvements in the lives of beneficiary communities. One of the common factors in achieving positive results in these programs

Scholarly studies indicate that inclusive, accountable and participatory governance systems enhance the prospects for economic growth and reduce the risk of armed conflict.

is the commitment to devolution of authority and local ownership of project activities and services. This approach increases the likelihood that local needs will be addressed and helps people have more control over the decisions that affect their lives.

It is also essential to increase the rights of marginalized populations in gaining equitable access to land and resources. In fact, disputes over the control of territory are the number one cause of armed conflict in the world, accounting for 60 per cent of all civil conflicts in recent history.¹ Violence and armed rebellion often result from struggles for the control of land and contested claims to territory.² These conflicts are particularly acute when they involve distinct ethno-national groups seeking to assert their identity and gain greater access to land and sources of wealth and power. When specific communities are marginalized and denied land rights, the risk of violence increases.

Research shows that competing territorial claims lead to armed violence when governance is weak and excludes important social groups from decision-making systems and access to resources.³³ In the absence of effective local institutions for settling disputes over access to and the control of land, communities are at greater risk of descending into armed violence.

Land disputes in local villages or towns can cascade across communities to destabilize an entire region. Armed rebellions are often rooted in the demands of these communities for equitable access to land and resources, especially when political elite instrumentalize current grievances and historical narratives to manipulate conflict groups and exacerbate the conflict. Programs that provide equitable and sustainable solutions to the access, use, management and transfer of land and other scarce natural resources can reduce the risk of conflict and provide a foundation for economic development and improved livelihoods.

The case studies also illustrate the value of working with governmental agencies and supporting public reform efforts so that governments can better deliver public goods and function in an inclusive, equitable and accountable manner. Programs help to improve social cohesion so that diverse social groups become more willing to work together to solve common problems and utilize public services for mutual benefit. An important dimension of strengthening inclusion and social cohesion is working for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The case studies and concluding essay examine all of these approaches.

The work of advancing development and governance capacity in underserved communities is difficult and often painstakingly slow. Improvements usually emerge in incremental steps rather than great leaps. Governments and elite interests often resist change. Local communities face many obstacles and setbacks as they seek to overcome conditions of poverty and armed conflict.

Progress is possible, however, as the CRS cases illustrate. Working for more effective, equitable, accountable and inclusive governance institutions can enhance economic and

1 Niles Petter Gleditsch, "Environmental Change, Security and Conflict," in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2007); John A. Vasquez and Marie T. Henehan, *Territory, War, and Peace: An Empirical and Theoretical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2010).

2 Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, 2nd edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004).

3 Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

social well-being and reduce the risk of armed conflict. It is especially important that local and national authorities are able to provide social services and deliver public goods equitably to all communities. The results confirm the value of capacity-strengthening programs at all levels, and the need for advocacy and public participation by beneficiary communities to encourage and support sustainable development. These case studies offer important empirical evidence that confirms the importance of building more inclusive and accountable governance to advance human dignity and serve the common good.



Land Tenure and Peacebuilding in Madagascar

The majority of Madagascar's 23.8 million people live in rural areas and work in the agricultural sector, focusing on livestock and producing food crops such as rice, maize, cassava and groundnuts. Agriculture provides almost 80 percent of Madagascar's total exports and constitutes nearly one-third of its GDP.⁴ With such a strong dependency on the use of land for agricultural activities—both crop cultivation and grazing of livestock—conflicts surrounding land tenure are commonplace and can result in social, political and economic instability.

Rural populations generally have been barred from formally owning the land that they depend on for their survival. In traditional land systems throughout the country, rural populations have historically inherited land directly from their family. Although the Government of Madagascar started to introduce measures to improve land tenure security and provide opportunities to formalize land ownership starting in 2005, the new measures are often in conflict with customary land tenure systems, and many land rights issues remain unresolved. Madagascar urgently needs a land tenure system that is sensitive to the realities of the most vulnerable populations to help bring stability and justice to rural areas.

CRS has been working in Madagascar since 1962, focusing on agriculture, conservation, education, health, microfinance, and water and sanitation. It promotes good governance, transparency and social accountability in all of its programming. CRS projects are implemented by a variety of local partners, including Catholic dioceses; other Catholic Church structures (such as national and local Justice and Peace Commissions); national and local non-sectarian, non-profit organizations; and government structures. Nationwide, 45 percent of the Malagasy population identifies as Catholic, with 80 percent in the Fianarantsoa diocese, which has the highest proportion of Catholics in the country.

In southeastern Madagascar, as part of CRS Madagascar's Justice and Peace Initiative, the dioceses of Fianarantsoa and Farafangana implemented the Lamina Land Tenure and Peacebuilding project (*lamina* means "tranquility" or "in peace" in Malagasy). Between January 2013 and December 2014, the Lamina project centered on five communes: four rural communes (Andrainjanto East, Andranovorivato, Alakamisy Ambohimaha, and Isorana) and one urban commune (Fianarantsoa). CRS extended the project for an additional three months and concluded it in March 2015.

The Lamina project aimed to strategically increase local populations' access to land services in the intervention zone. Lamina focused on (1) building the capacity of land service agents by applying principles of good governance, (2) increasing the population's use of government land services, and (3) improving the quality of the services through participatory community evaluations of services provided by key institutions in the region. The project also

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⁴ CIA World Factbook. Madagascar. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ma.html>, accessed September 17, 2015.



Vice President of the Court
in Fianarantsoa during the
distribution of the land title.
OMF-IPM Project Staff/CRS

worked directly with responsible parties in government to improve local communities' access to land registry and title services, and service delivery by those in charge.

This case study analyzes the programmatic and operational factors of the Lamina project that contributed to the integration of peacebuilding practices into land registry services in rural Madagascar. It also seeks to identify key lessons from the project. During the course of the Lamina project, CRS local partners collected the data presented here through two rounds of surveys (June 2013 and November 2014). The surveys were carried out in each of the five communes. The June 2013 survey included 756 participants (586 men and 170 women), and the November 2014 survey involved 752 participants (600 men and 152 women). CRS hopes that this study fosters greater understanding of how the Lamina project brought about social change by integrating peacebuilding into the land ownership process in Madagascar.

GOVERNMENT REFORM

In 2005, in an effort to formalize land holdings and locate land services closer to rural communities, the Government of Madagascar introduced measures to improve land tenure security and provide opportunities to formalize land ownership. The new measures formed a new system for certification and land title acquisition process, the steps of which are presented in the table below. The government set up new land tenure offices at the commune level, designing this service to be decentralized and managed by the commune. The government's goal was to assist individuals in certifying their access to land. This certification could then be used to obtain the land title, which was delivered by the Government Land Services Department (LSD), known locally as the *Service du Domaine*.

GOVERNMENT'S NEW SYSTEM FOR CERTIFICATION AND LAND TITLE ACQUISITION PROCESS
1 The individual seeking formal land ownership writes a letter to the local mayor to express the desire to have his/her land evaluated.
2 The mayor sets a time frame to gather all of the submitted letters.
3 The mayor puts together a committee (including the village chief, neighbors, traditional leaders and Church leaders) to evaluate land claims.
4 Through the process of land recognition, the committee travels to the field to verify that the land belongs to the individual and confirms the findings with the local community.
5 After land recognition, the mayor compiles all land claims that were recognized by the local committee and posts this information at his office for 10 days to notify the public and seek community verification or feedback.
6 After 10 days, the land tenure office produces a land certificate for the individual.
7 The individual can then apply to LSD for a land title.

This system encountered problems because the LSD was hesitant to embrace the new process. In the previous land tenure system, the LSD was the sole entity responsible for managing services related to land, an arrangement reportedly rife with corruption.

The shift introduced by the new tenure system devolved management authority for land certification to the communal level, resulting in a conflict of interest and tension between the local authorities and the LSD. This shift created complications and obstacles for effective collaboration. Another problem the new system faced was the lack of sufficient financing for communal-level land services. Each commune had to recruit staff and mobilize resources, a large challenge for many communes that resulted in few functioning offices. The government had planned to strengthen the institutional capacity of the communes by applying tax revenues to maintain their operations, but most communes lacked the capacity to raise taxes and manage finances.

At the local level, responsibility for evaluating land claims rested with a land tenure committee composed of the mayor, the technical deputy of the mayor, the representative from the traditional leaders, and neighbors. The process resulted in discrepancies over overlapping land parcels that led to extensive conflict and tension between families, neighbors and community groups. Disputed land claims could take up to five years to be resolved. Land tenure documents in rural areas needed the signature of the mayor at several times throughout the process. This process created opportunities for further corruption as well as strained relations between the LSD, the land tenure committee, and the rural communities. The situation left rural households with no options or resources for validating their land ownership.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Lamina project focused on improving the capacity of local Malagasy populations to respond to these challenges by increasing access to quality land registry and management services. The two-year project aimed to improve service provision at all levels, integrate good governance, and increase awareness and use of the services by the local population. Within the peacebuilding framework of CRS, the following theory of change guided the Lamina project:

If local communities strengthen their capacity to support and evaluate government performance, then the quality of service will improve and the local population's trust in land services will increase, leading to more land certificates and titles being granted and decreased tension and conflict between neighbors, families and communities.

CRS and its partners hoped that the project would enable members of the public to gain greater access to land registry services and that employees of the registry, guided by the principles of good governance, would provide a higher quality service.

The Lamina project utilized two main strategies during implementation. The first promoted the application of the principles of good governance—in particular transparency and citizen participation—in the land registry process and the management of local public affairs. The second strategy reinforced the engagement of citizens and registry staff in monitoring the use of decentralized technical services related to land tenure. The key activities related to the two strategies included the following:

- **Improving communication:** Rural community leaders and local priests recruited and trained key persons at each commune to act as liaisons between central offices and the local population. This greatly improved (1) the transmission of information to the local level as well as feedback to the diocesan level, (2) the mobilization of the local population to participate in awareness-raising activities, and (3) the submission of grievances to the judicial system.
- **Conducting participatory evaluations:** Lamina organized and conducted community evaluations at the local level on land-related services using the Community Score Card (CSC), a tool developed to gauge community perceptions of land services and communicate these views and specific recommendations to service agencies.

The Lamina team organized workshops on advocacy, transparency, good governance and citizen participation to improve the technical capacity of over 250 key leaders, including civil society leaders, government agents, priests, and field representatives. The trainings also reached village chiefs, mayors, Church leaders, traditional leaders and teachers. The curriculum focused on good governance and social accountability. These sessions generated an attitude shift and a new vision for key staff members, contributing to an increase in communication with the public.

After the training sessions, the Lamina team helped the partners link the principles of governance to land tenure issues. The project also introduced the CSC tool. Responsible parties within LSD were trained on the CSC and were encouraged to use it for measuring the quality of services they provided to local communities. The CSC was an integral part of the Lamina project. It created a mechanism that did not previously exist for people in rural communities to have a voice in the land tenure process.

A critical part of the CSC's impact was its development and use in collaboration with the local population. The project team asked local populations which criteria should be used to assess land services. Commune by commune, the Lamina team and local diocesan representatives organized community gatherings in which they provided opportunities for local populations to assess what they wanted from land services. This led to the identification of the following criteria:

- Adherence to the time appointed by the service
- Information on land rights
- Information on land titling procedures and costs
- Application and adherence to the amount to be paid
- Duration of the procedure
- Respect for local structures in the process
- Local population's trust in the structure
- Equal treatment of all individuals
- Motivation of the population to use the service
- Monitoring of corruption

The results of the CSC were shared with the responsible parties in LSD. CRS then organized a second round of community gatherings at the commune level to share CSC results with the local population. Initially, local partners and government staff were reluctant to use the CSC, but after additional training they came to understand its value as a means of increasing accountability and helping to identify priorities for improvement. The LSD's acceptance of the CSC proved to be the key element that enabled the project's implementation.

The LSD's establishment of an action plan to improve the quality of services also proved to be important. The plan included a set of workshops, broadcasts and meetings to enhance public understanding and improve government services on land rights and land title acquisition. LSD also collaborated directly with Lamina on training activities.

In March 2013, LSD created a center for services and legal advice. Supported by diocesan staff, the center enabled the local population to access information on land issues and judicial procedures, and provided advice and information on citizen participation. It supported 649 people in 2013 and 2014. The center proved to be another crucial element in the project's success.

SUPPORTING PROJECT ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURED THE SUCCESS OF THESE EFFORTS
Collaborating with responsible parties for each of the public services concerned, including members of civil society and community representatives, to identify bottlenecks or obstacles that prevented the provision of quality services
Involving key public figures and grassroots authorities, including religious figures, to support the project's implementation and increase its credibility
Including stakeholders who were not necessarily directly involved in land issues but who were broadly engaged in the community (e.g., anti-corruption agencies)
Conducting advocacy and awareness raising among LSD officials to encourage acceptance of the CSC as a tool for improving land services
Integrating local civil society organizations in the reflection on and realization of project activities
Incorporating journalists in the implementation and advocacy elements of the project, including the reinforcement and transmission of key messages

PROJECT RESULTS

The project helped raise public awareness of land rights at all levels. At the individual level, members of the public became better informed of their rights and the availability of land



Public gathering for the distribution of land titles in the commune of Isorana, Madagascar..
OMF-IPM Project Staff/CRS

registry services. Individuals also learned about the need to pursue proper documentation for land holdings. At the community level, the program improved the accountability of land registry agents as well as the lines of communication between officials and members of the public.

The increased transparency resulting from the project also positively affected gender relations, as more women made use of the improved services following training and awareness-raising activities. The communities gained increased confidence in the systems and a greater willingness to use the facilities.

Community evaluation sessions brought together 756 users of land services from five different communes. Through the CSC process, local communities observed that they were able to comment openly and freely on government services, often for the first time in their lives. The CSC showed that the local population's level of satisfaction with the quality of land registry services increased during the project.

Through public awareness-raising activities and training for members of the Church, local governments, courts and civil society groups, the project generated the following outcomes:

- 876 title deeds delivered
- 400 percent increase in land certificates issued

- 5,296 people trained on land rights issues, procedures to acquire title deeds, and securing title deeds
- 649 people provided with support and legal counsel (157 in 2013, and 492 in 2014)
- Increased levels of satisfaction with the quality of land registry by local populations
- 48 instances of conflict addressed

Most importantly, the mobilized civil society organizations coordinated their efforts to address land rights issues and in the process contributed to the restoration of peace in the region.

The Lamina project achieved success due to its consistent engagement with all stakeholders with a single, well-articulated message: “You are the bearer of change.” This coordination ensured that all partners were equally engaged and focused on the major issues even if pursuing disparate tasks. Capacity building also contributed to the success of the program. The Lamina project not only trained individuals in the operational aspects of the CSC, but also provided insight into the usefulness of the tool and the overall goals of the project.

Another significant factor in the program’s success was the inclusion of authorities at the grassroots level in the training process.

The creation of the center for support and legal counsel was an integral part of the project, as it created an open, free, accessible local space for individuals to seek resolution for their grievances. Local communities made extensive use of this space. The center enabled people to raise and resolve grievances in a safe, structured manner without resorting to violence.

Another significant factor in the program’s success was the inclusion of authorities at the grassroots level in the training process. Lamina took a holistic approach to this integration, incorporating leaders at every level of local government. The project also reached out to and engaged traditional leaders.

CRS applied the following principles at every stage of the project, which proved to be critical to its success:

- **Openness:** Lamina project’s focus on increasing transparency and good governance in land agencies led to more open lines of communication between all stakeholders.
- **Multi-sectoral engagement:** The project engaged all parties with direct and indirect involvement in the land sector. The involvement of local leaders was a key factor in the success of the project. It ensured the participation of the local population in the evaluations. In addition, the use of both radio and television, as well as the integration of journalists in the development of advocacy messages, significantly increased engagement and acceptance of the program.
- **Coordination and organization:** The project team brought together various agencies and individuals and helped participants provide timely responses to foreseen and unforeseen challenges.
- **Intensive training for local actors:** A thorough selection of key staff and training on sustainability, advocacy and implementation significantly contributed to Lamina project’s success.

- **Confidentiality, privacy and trust:** Given the sensitivity around land issues in Madagascar, the project team ensured that information was managed in a way that protected informants' anonymity, particularly with the use of the CSC. The diocese fundamentally contributed to the success of the project because of the trusting relationships Church leaders had fostered with parishioners in the local population.
- **Intimate knowledge of the local community:** The project team gained an intimate knowledge of the community so they could understand local dynamics of land ownership and transmission, and respond adequately to challenges.
- **Flexibility:** The Lamina project team slightly altered the final implementation of the CSC from the original methodology, due to timing issues and low levels of literacy within the affected populations. This flexibility allowed the project team to capture necessary information without undue inconvenience or extensive resources.
- **Follow-up:** The project team remained in constant contact with advocacy groups and key community figures, offering them support in managing relationships.

LESSONS

The Lamina project produced measurable impacts in addressing conflicts around land tenure in Madagascar. It led to improved delivery of public land services, stronger relationships and engagement between government and communities, and the strengthening of institutional capacities at the LSD. Stakeholders at all levels of the land tenure system gained important knowledge and insight.

Four key factors significantly contributed to the success of the Lamina project and could be applied to land tenure conflicts in other regions of the country or in similar contexts beyond Madagascar:

ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

CRS and partners embraced the principle of mutual respect in their interactions with the government. They worked to support the government's system of improved land registry with regular communication and participation at all stages of project implementation. They also encouraged shared learning, including technical input from government personnel on land tenure, legal frameworks, and the training of land service agents by local Church representatives and partner agency staff.

This commitment to incorporating governmental experts increased the willingness of public officials to participate in and support the process. This model highlighted the importance of good governance principles in stakeholder and partner relationships and proved integral to the success of the project. It also avoided political and bureaucratic resistance, which could have impeded implementation. The Lamina project demonstrated that engaging directly with governments can be an effective approach to promoting good governance.

The Church played a key role as the link between CRS and the government. The Archbishop joined CRS during key consultations with the government, and Church

representatives maintained a strong accompaniment role for community and government stakeholders for all project activities. The Church's deep understanding of local land dynamics was critical to the success of Lamina. Church officials also played a major role in community outreach and awareness raising related to the rights and responsibilities of registering land.

COMMUNITY SCORE CARD

The success of the CSC confirmed the value of good evaluation techniques. This tool served as an effective community evaluation mechanism that directly improved the provision of land services. It ensured that the project team and the communes held themselves accountable to the local population, the ultimate beneficiaries. By including LSD in the development of the CSC, the project increased the likelihood that public officials would embrace and use it as a learning tool. Given the sensitive nature of land tenure disputes, CRS and its partners also emphasized the importance of respect for confidentiality and privacy in CSC implementation.

Prior to using the tool, the project ran a simulation that allowed target communities to grow accustomed to it. In the future, projects could improve results by making accommodations for respondents who lack literacy and numeracy skills, which may be the majority of the population in some communities. CRS also advises using no more than 10 indicators in the tool, so that the survey is easier to use and understand.

In the future, projects could improve results by making accommodations for respondents who lack literacy and numeracy skills.

CIVIC EDUCATION AND GENDER

Civic education, especially the holistic emphasis on the importance of land tenure and citizen participation, was a major part of the success of the project. CRS had to organize information sessions to educate target communities, particularly young people and women, who traditionally had been excluded from consideration of these matters. The project helped women become more active in using government land tenure services.

The project could have done more to address gender disparities within the land tenure system, by implementing advocacy efforts to generate citizen demands for changing Malagasy laws and customs. Genuine gender equality in this context would require ending traditional laws and customs that have kept levels of female land ownership historically low.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Lamina project reinforced the importance of supporting institutions that can carry on initiatives after the project is completed. CRS and its partners recognize that governments may sometimes lack the full capacity to address the complexity of land tenure issues, and that it is necessary to help officials develop and sustain that responsibility after a project has ended. By bringing the Church and the government together in partnership, CRS strengthened the capacity, transparency and accountability of the LSD, improving its ability to uphold its long-term responsibility for land

management. The creation of the support and legal counsel center was an additional measure that retained community advocacy and education initiatives beyond the conclusion of the project. The most important factors for sustaining the gains of the project were the quality of the relationships forged during the project and the continued ability of people across social and communal divides to work together in addressing land tenure challenges.



Primary school girl and her sister—both members of a USAID WALA beneficiary household.
Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

Gender Dynamics in Food Production and Marketing in Southern Malawi

The economy of Malawi is based primarily on agriculture, with 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. Fifty-five percent of smallholder farmers have less than one hectare of land to cultivate, making it difficult for them to meet their basic food needs.⁵ Rural southern Malawians face further challenges due to their weak household asset base and uneven representation in community decision-making structures. Access to land varies by location and cultural tradition, with women facing additional barriers to productive use of land. Rural women play a significant role in the sustenance of family livelihoods and in communal life, yet decision-making powers are inequitably distributed between men and women within and across households.

Gender inequality in Malawi is driven by cultural beliefs and customs and is one of the main drivers of extreme poverty in the country. According to Malawi's Third Integrated Household Survey, produced by the government's National Statistical Office, 50.7 percent of the population nationally is poor (i.e., living on less than \$1.25 a day), and, of that population, 25 percent live below the food poverty line (i.e., less than \$0.41 per person per day, categorized by the government as ultra-poor).⁶ In 2013, Malawi ranked 174 out of 187 countries assessed by the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The HDI also measures progress towards gender equality in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Malawi ranked 129 out of 149 countries in the 2013 Gender Inequality Index (GII). Some of the key drivers behind this ranking of inequality include: high maternal mortality rates (for every 100,000 live births, 574 women die from pregnancy-related causes), high birth rates among adolescent girls aged 15–19 years (144.8 births per 1000 live births), and low political representation of women.

The pervasiveness of gender inequality in Malawian society is evidenced by the inferior status of women and girls in every sphere of life. At the household level, women and girls have little or no decision-making power even about matters that directly concern them, such as when and whom to marry: 10.3 percent of girls are likely to be married off before the age of 15, compared to 1.5 percent of boys; 28.4 percent of girls (compared to 2.6

5 "Gender and Land Rights Database" [Malawi], Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights/en>, accessed December 6, 2013.

6 National Statistical Office, Malawi Third Integrated Household Survey (IHS3) 2010–2011, Basic Information Document, Zomba, Malawi, March 2012, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLSMS/Resources/3358986-1233781970982/5800988-1271185595871/IHS3.BID.FINAL.pdf>.

percent of boys) between the ages of 15 and 19 are married or in union according to the Malawi MDG Endline Survey Key Findings Report released in 2014. The low percentage of boys marrying early indicates that girls are married or in union with much older men.

In education, 24 percent of female Malawians aged 15 years and above have never attended school, compared to 14 percent of their male counterparts. Data from the government's 2014 Education Management Information System report (EMIS 2014) shows a persistent trend in gender difference on most key indicators despite considerable progress toward the achievement of gender parity in primary school net enrollment. Only 28 percent of girls make it to standard primary grade eight compared to 35 percent of boys. Between standard grades four and eight, the dropout rates among girls are consistently higher than for boys. Family responsibility (31 percent) and marriage (9 percent) were among the reasons cited by girls for dropping out.

Gender inequality also manifests in the pervasiveness and acceptability of violence against women and girls: 19 percent of women aged 15 to 49 years reported having sex by the age of 15, with 15 percent stating that their first sexual encounter was forced on them against their will.⁷

The Government of Malawi has attempted to address gender inequality through the passage of laws, including the Gender Equality Act (2013) and the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015). It has also subscribed to various international conventions and frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which recognize women and girls' empowerment and gender equality as critical to the success of efforts to eradicate poverty. Despite these commitments, the status of women remains inferior in nearly every aspect of Malawian life.

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CRS AND THE WELLNESS AND AGRICULTURE FOR LIFE ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (WALA)

Since 1997, CRS has been responding to the needs of Malawian households with projects related to food security, emergency response, nutrition, Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), and capacity building activities. In June 2009, CRS initiated the Wellness and Agriculture for Life Advancement (WALA) project, a five-year integrated initiative aiming to reduce food insecurity for over 210,000 chronically food-insecure households within eight districts in southern Malawi. WALA was implemented by a consortium of eight nongovernmental organizations led by CRS as the grant holder. The participating groups included Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA), Africare, Chikwawa Catholic Diocese, Emmanuel International, Project Concern International (PCI), Save the Children, Total LandCare, and World Vision Malawi. As part of this project, CRS sought to address problems of gender inequality by improving the economic and social status and perceptions of self-worth of female participants.

This case study examines the gender dynamics in cash and food crop marketing clubs in Southern Malawi. It is based on a study by ACDI/VOCA that examined women's participation in marketing clubs within WALA as the groups shifted from the selling of

⁴ National Statistical Office/ICR Macro. 2011. Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2010.

pigeon peas, a subsistence crop, to bird's eye chilies, a more profitable cash crop. ACDI/VOCA conducted qualitative and quantitative research in three districts where WALA marketing clubs grew both pigeon peas and chilies: Thyolo (activities implemented by World Vision), Zomba (activities implemented by Emmanuel International), and Balaka (activities implemented by PCI). The study aimed to answer the following key questions:

- How did the introduction of a cash crop (bird's eye chilies) into WALA marketing club production affect women's and men's participation and roles in these groups?
- What role did women and men play in the control and utilization of income from sales of WALA-targeted crops?
- How did women's perceived self-efficacy change through their participation in marketing clubs?

Researchers conducted single-gender focus group discussions with 182 individuals. Each participant also completed a quantitative questionnaire on production and sales information, and provided information for the USAID gender self-efficacy indicator. This indicator examined not only women's self-efficacy, but also men's perceptions of self-worth and how those perceptions changed as women became more empowered. In addition, the research team collected data on marketing club membership and sales at the cluster and district levels. It also facilitated the creation of a matrix on successes, challenges, opportunities and risks by measuring levels of social participation and control over income.

HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL CHALLENGES

A livelihood assessment conducted by WALA partners in the southern region in 2008 revealed very limited rural household assets, which meant little resilience to shocks and stresses. The study found that livestock holdings were small and threatened annually by disease. Access to land varied by location and cultural tradition, with women facing particular barriers to productive use of land. The assessment determined that families had virtually no savings and relied on informal lending from relatives, neighbors and high-interest local lenders when they needed cash. Many rural southern households sell crops immediately post-harvest (due to liquidity and storage constraints) when supply is high and prices are low, but later, during pre-harvest months, they buy when supplies are scarce and prices are high. Over time, households cope by selling assets.

The assessment also identified categories of families that were at high risk of chronic and acute food insecurity: households dependent on casual labor as their primary income source, female- and child-headed households, families with numerous dependents, and families affected by chronic illness such as HIV. Finally, respondents discussed the lack of transparency, accountability and representation in community decision-making structures as a cause of strife over resource distribution.

Rural women play a significant role in the sustenance of family livelihoods and in communal life. According to the 2010 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, 39 percent of women in the southern region indicated that they had decision-making power over their own cash earnings, while 35 percent indicated that husbands had primary decision-making



WALA Farmer and a child unpeeling fresh pigeon pods to prepare a peas meal. *Sara A. Fajardo/CRS*

power over wives' earnings. Many southern districts, including WALA project districts of Thyolo, Balaka and Machinga, are matrilineal societies in which women are guaranteed land inheritance rights—a factor that may influence women's increased decision-making power within the region. Nonetheless, three-quarters of Malawian women have lower cash earnings than their husbands.⁸ Only about one-fifth of men in the southern region believe that their wives should participate in household decision making.⁹ Women generally have a greater overall workload, which includes a heavy burden of unpaid activities such as taking care of children and the home.

PROJECT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The mission of the WALA project was to promote more equitable relationships among all people by ensuring that men and women gained increased opportunity, capacity, voice and support to participate on an equal basis and realize their full potential. The project aimed to reduce the imbalances of power between men and women. In Malawi, traditional social and community norms define men's and women's roles. While women are often responsible for the health, education and overall well-being of their households, they often lack access to adequate education, income or household decision-making authority that would enable them to carry out these responsibilities. Their productive roles in the fields

⁵ National Statistical Office and ICF Macro, Malawi DHS, 2010.

⁶ Ibid.

and reproductive roles in the family place great demands on their time and energy. Their marginalization within the community and the household offers them little power to control the decisions that affect them and their families.

CRS designed WALA activities to be implemented in a manner that increased women's participation in decision making at the household and community level. The project strived to ensure greater representation of women in leadership roles within producer groups, marketing groups and other community groups. Traditionally, women have been sidelined in making decisions about what crops to produce or how to use income from the sale of those crops. They have had little say about the use of household resources and how to invest income. WALA consortium members sought to promote women's participation in deciding these matters.

One of the primary objectives of the WALA project was to improve the livelihoods of over 20,000 smallholder farming households. The project achieved this goal by modernizing crop production practices, increasing the use of financial services, and assisting farmers to engage in commercial marketing. By assisting smallholders to organize themselves into marketing clubs, WALA helped farmers sell their produce at premium prices and collectively buy needed goods at a discount. Through marketing clubs, farmers were also able to access business development services such as marketing information, village banking, transportation and warehousing. ACDI/VOCA provided Farming as a Business (FaaB) training to assist growers in production and financial planning.

WALA supported marketing clubs in producing and marketing a variety of commodities, including pigeon peas for subsistence and bird's eye chilies as a cash crop. Marketing clubs worked with pigeon peas from the beginning of the project, and most clubs introduced chili production through an out-grower program, which is a contractual partnership between growers or landholders and a company that produces goods or commodities. The WALA program used a company called Exagris-Africa, which operated an out-grower program for bird's eye chili through project-supported marketing clubs. Exagris-Africa provided the desired type of chili seeds, trained the WALA project and government agriculture extension staff on chili production and harvesting, and provided agriculture extension support to the farmer clubs, which sold their chili collectively to the company. This program grew gradually, thanks to a reliable market and relatively high prices.

In the first season that chilies were introduced, more women joined the marketing clubs as early adopters of the crop. After seeing the income earned by their neighbors from the first season, significant numbers of both women and men joined the clubs for the second chili-growing season. Men in Balaka noted that chilies were previously considered a man's crop. The only buyer was the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi, which required that farmers travel long distances to sell the chilies. By bringing the buyers closer to farmers' homes, WALA enabled women to become more involved.

Although women held roughly 70 percent of leadership positions in the marketing clubs, in most cases a man acted as chairperson and a woman as vice-chairperson. Focus group participants noted that decision-making processes within the clubs

remained the same even after the introduction of the chili out-grower program. Men and women offered similar explanations for this pattern: Women are shy or lack self-confidence; women will listen to a male leader but men will not listen to a female leader; and men are experienced in problem-solving, while women look to men to help them solve problems. Both men and women felt that men were dishonest and likely to take the group's money to buy alcohol, while women were perceived as more trustworthy and afraid to misuse money. Some noted that, prior to chili introduction, the group had few or no male members, so all leaders were originally women, while now some leaders were men. Men indicated that they were primarily responsible because they provided funds, while women felt themselves to be primarily responsible because they performed many of the marketing and production tasks.

PROJECT RESULTS

Respondents who used the WALA marketing clubs noted that their household income significantly improved after joining the program. Women who grew pigeon peas through WALA groups but marketed them individually also noted increased income levels. While the prices they received from pigeon pea vendors had not changed, these women were able to produce (and sell) more as a result of improved planting methods taught in the clubs. Both of these groups also noted that their access to income increased due to Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in their communities. The WALA project started the VSLAs and acted as a complementary initiative to the marketing clubs.

Some women noted that they gained a greater say in household income use after joining WALA marketing clubs simply because their household income was now so much greater and money was less of a sensitive issue in their households. Others noted that they now played a greater role in decision making about income because they brought in significant income, in some cases even more than their husbands.

Women noted that they now played a greater role in decision making about income because they brought in significant income, in some cases even more than their husbands.

Men and women both noted that husbands and wives now sat together to decide how their household income should be used, although in general the husband had the final say as the head of the household. When large amounts of money were involved, respondents reported, couples tended to use the training for budget planning provided by WALA groups. The couples prioritized farming inputs for the next growing season, made household improvements, and started small businesses or deposited their money in VSLA accounts. Households used chili income predominantly for large purchases. Pigeon pea income was used for daily needs. Women were more likely to have full control over pigeon pea income than chili income, both because the quantity of money was much smaller and because it was used for day-to-day household needs, about which women tended to be more informed.

When study participants discussed increased control over income, both men and women mentioned the importance of ACDI/VOCA's Farming as a Business (FaaB) training. Participants noted that in the past they would spend money as needs arose and in the end would not be able to account for how their money had been used. Now they could plan to meet their needs and ensure that their farm income carried them through to the next

harvest. While greater production and collective marketing increased access to income, the financial competency gained through FaaB training gave farmers a greater sense of control over that income.

All participants mentioned the VSLAs established by WALA, in conjunction with financial planning tools, as having the biggest impact on their control over household income. The presence of a village-level savings mechanism, which did not previously exist, allowed households to build cash savings and gain more confidence in financial decision making. In most cases, the names on VSLA accounts corresponded to WALA group members, most of whom were women. Any unallocated income from the sale of WALA crops was put in the VSLA account. Men could also deposit money from their other income-generating activities. Women often used the money in their VSLA accounts to start small businesses, and they had full control over the use of income from those businesses.

The changing household dynamics resulting from WALA significantly affected relationships between men and women. These changes could indicate a positive step towards more equitable domestic relationships and increased independence and self-confidence among women. They could also have unintended negative consequences if men feel that women have usurped their traditional roles. Many women indicated that they were now able to make financial decisions and simply inform their husbands about them. Most male focus group participants agreed that WALA women had gained a greater role in decision making regarding household expenditures, but they insisted that men were still in charge. Husbands described the process as participating in a conversation: If they agreed with their wife's needs or proposed spending plan, they would give her the money to spend as she saw fit. Men said that they were still the heads of the household and were simply allocating more money to their wives to spend on their needs—and if the wives did not use the funds responsibly, they could withhold the money.

Results from the USAID self-efficacy indicator demonstrated an increase in women's perceived abilities to control positive outcomes in their lives. They also showed that an increase in female empowerment did not result in men feeling disempowered; male respondents also demonstrated higher perceived self-efficacy. These findings have important implications for the “do-no-harm” principle of gender programming: As women become more empowered, there is a risk that their domestic relationships may suffer, and that they may face an increased threat of domestic violence as their spouses deal with a new power dynamic. The data from this study shows that WALA marketing club activities empowered both men and women to the detriment of neither, making unintended negative consequences within the household less likely.

Women's increased perceived self-efficacy extended beyond their control of income. Women also indicated feeling more secure in their positions within their households due to their greater role in providing household income. Women from all three districts noted that in the past their husbands had been unfaithful, but the women now felt that their husbands would not stray due to their wives' increased income—either because the men would feel embarrassed about using their wives' income to be with

Women also indicated feeling more secure in their positions within their households due to their greater role in providing household income.

other women, or because they worried that wives would no longer share income with unfaithful husbands.

OBSERVATIONS

This study of WALA marketing clubs within three districts of Malawi's southern region provides several lessons learned, as well as recommendations to facilitate women's participation in agricultural marketing clubs and ensure that participation results in increased access to and control over income.

- 1. Encourage women's participation in marketing groups from project inception.** By involving women at the earliest stages of the marketing clubs, the project built women's capacity, self-confidence and status within their households. When a new, more profitable crop was introduced, women benefitted—as did men.
- 2. Include leadership training for women and men in marketing clubs.** For groups to succeed beyond the end of the WALA project, they need strong, honorable, transparent leaders. Women cannot lead if they lack self-confidence, and men cannot lead if they are stereotyped as dishonest. Depending on the local context of a project, men and women could be trained together or separately, but both should receive targeted, relevant training to address specific weaknesses and build on unique strengths.
- 3. Complement activities to increase income by increasing availability of village savings structures to facilitate greater control and decision-making power over earned income.** VSLAs and other local savings models provide financial services at a local level in a nonthreatening setting that prioritizes women's participation. When combined with audience-appropriate training on financial planning, VSLAs ensure that the increased household income is kept safe. This training makes it easier for households to create long-term plans for their income.
- 4. Train male and female marketing club participants in financial planning and budgeting that includes a focus on the needs of women and children.** Increased ability to plan for productive consumption expenditures helps households budget to meet their needs throughout the year, and will encourage a greater sense of control over income. By ensuring that both men and women participate, training programs help women make good decisions that help them gain respect in their households, and empower men to understand and meet the needs of the family rather than dismissing household duties as “women's work.”

Perhaps the most important lesson of the WALA project is that it is possible to enhance the economic and social status of women without usurping or undermining the role of men in traditional societies. Women's ability to earn greater income through the project affected household dynamics and relationships between husbands and wives. Men and women both acknowledged the increased role of women in household decision making, although they had differing perceptions about women's degree of autonomy in making these decisions. Men emphatically asserted their role as the head of the household. Both men and women nonetheless experienced a greater sense of self-worth and reported changes in perceived gender relationships that could lead to greater equality for women.

Local Solutions to Land Conflict in Mindanao, Philippines

In the Philippines, competition over land is a root cause of persistent conflict on the island of Mindanao, with historic origins and ongoing dynamics that reinforce ethno-religious divisions and perpetuate social tensions. Policies established during the colonial period, such as those promoting the resettlement of residents—predominantly Christians—from other parts of the Philippines to Mindanao, and those favoring commercial interests, led to the increasing marginalization of Mindanao's existing Muslim population (Moros) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs). In 1903, Moros constituted 76 percent of the population in Mindanao, but by 1939 this figure had dwindled to 34 percent.¹⁰ The post-colonial government perpetuated and expanded similar resettlement programs with land policies that disproportionately benefitted settlers and elite interests rather than non-elite Moros and IPs. The adoption of a Western model of land ownership favoring individual property rights and legal land titles clashed with customary systems in which land was inherited and held by communities and managed under the leadership of chieftains, or *datus*. A small number of these *datus* learned to use the new system to their personal benefit, unfairly titling their own lands and those of their clan to establish large holdings. These changes gradually dispossessed Moro and IP populations of their lands. Many land transactions were not properly documented, exacerbating boundary disputes as well as competing claims for land.

History of land disputes set the stage for wider conflict among members of Christian, Moro, and indigenous groups, and for conflict-related displacement.

This history of land disputes set the stage for wider conflict among identity groups—Christian, Moro, and IP and for conflict-related displacement to create further pressures on available land. A number of Moro communities remain displaced due to armed conflict that occurred in the 1970s, with their former lands occupied by Christian settlers. IPs, meanwhile, tend to remain marginalized from mainstream society, leaving them with weak land tenure security. Many settlers, while acknowledging their origins outside of Mindanao, are reluctant to vacate lands they have acquired, whether through legitimate or illegitimate means.

Mindanao's wealth of natural resources has also attracted investor attention. Logging, mining, and agricultural enterprises have contested with farmers, IP clans, and even local government units (LGUs) over control of land. Land grabs by powerful interests and encroachment by outsiders into protected areas and ancestral domains are common.

¹⁰ William LaRousse, *Walking Together Seeking Peace: The Local Church of Mindanao-Sulu Journeying in Dialogue With the Muslim Community (1965–2000)* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001), 96.



Traditional and religious leaders of Barangay Basak reflect on the results of their identity and perception exercise during the Understanding the Self Workshop for community leaders. A3B Project Team / CRS

Present-day institutional arrangements have created additional challenges. The existence of contradictory property laws, legal pluralism, inconsistent legal interpretations, and poor documentation of land titles have created confusion and uncertainty. Multiple government agencies are charged with land tenure administration. These include the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Land Registration Authority (LRA), and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Different agency regulatory systems have created conflicting and overlapping land tenure frameworks. There has been little consistent coordination among these agencies or with local governments. This confusion results in numerous land-related disputes that are extremely difficult to resolve, especially as land users may produce various competing permits, licenses and other legal documents to validate their claims. Especially in communities in which different identity groups co-exist, these competing claims may become triggers for violent conflict with the potential for wider escalation.

Many local residents, especially in IP communities, remain unaware of their rights and responsibilities regarding land ownership and are vulnerable to predatory practices. Among these communities, selling or mortgaging land to meet financial pressures has become increasingly common. Socio-economic differences create unequal access to justice, with poor households financially unable to defend their rights in court and suffering loss of income while land claims are being contested.

Disputes over ancestral domains and land tenure are important not only for individual claimants, but also for the success of the Bangsamoro peace process.

Disputes over ancestral domains and land tenure are important not only for individual claimants, but also for the success of the Bangsamoro peace process. After decades of fighting between the government and Moro rebels over proposed territorial autonomy, a Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed in 2012, but the peace process is at a critical juncture. Implementation of the accord remains contentious, with local land disputes still a major source of local conflict. IPs living in Bangsamoro areas are particularly concerned about jurisdiction over ancestral domain claims. Even as these political issues and the larger peace process are debated at national levels, locally addressing the sources and symptoms of land disputes and tensions can help clear the path to sustainable peace for all people in Mindanao. Meaningful steps can be taken at the local barangay (village) and municipal level to generate viable alternative solutions to land conflicts and a basis for wider social dialogue and peace.

THE CRS 3B APPROACH

In this context, CRS/Philippines employed a new approach to address the challenge of land conflict in central Mindanao. In the project *Applying the 3Bs to Land Conflict in Mindanao* (A3B), CRS used a three-step process—binding, bonding, and bridging—to reconcile conflicts related to land access, use, and ownership within and among identity groups. See figure 1 on page 30. The three-year project was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (USAID/CMM). In the A3B model, binding activities create space for individual self-transformation and trauma healing; bonding activities strengthen

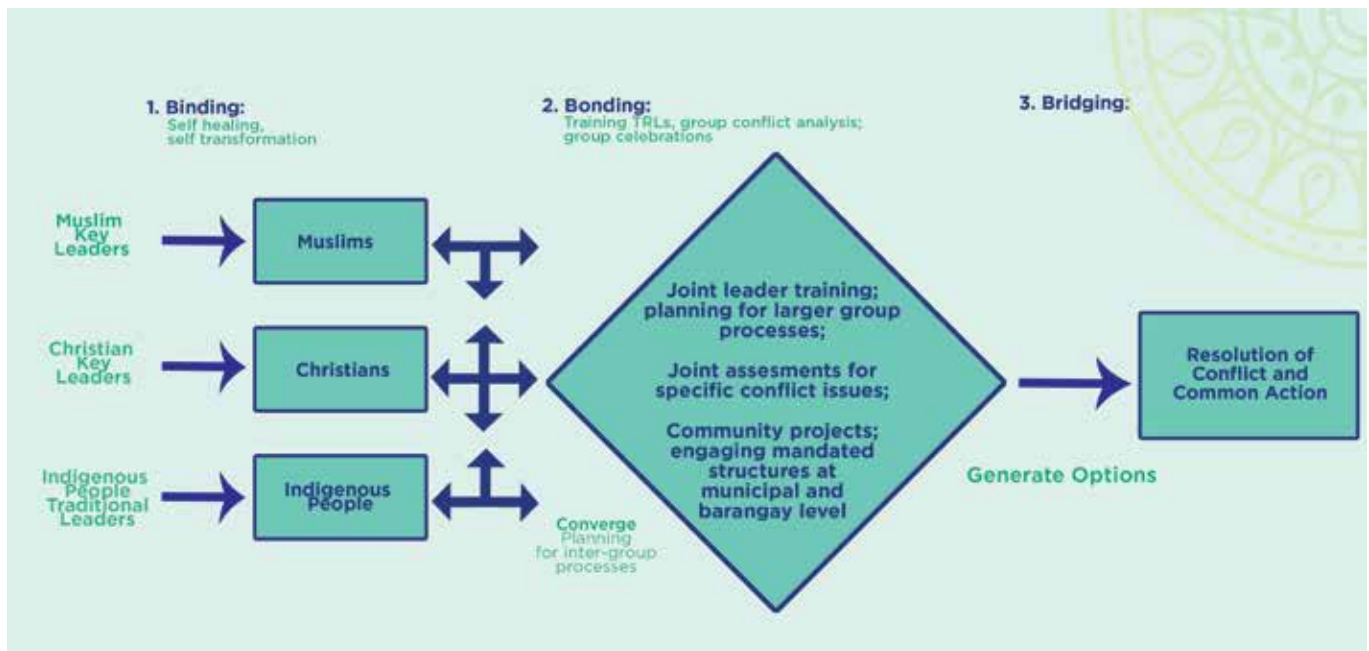


Figure 1: Binding, Bonding and Bridging Framework

relationships and mutual understanding within the respective identity groups; and bridging activities develop trust between identity groups and foster dialogue to assist in land conflict resolution. With the objective of helping diverse groups in central Mindanao collaborate to resolve land-related conflict, A3B worked in 20 barangays spread across four municipalities in central Mindanao: Magpet, North Cotabato, Polomolok, and Senator Ninoy Aquino.

Key elements of the A3B approach included engaging and equipping traditional and religious leaders (TRLs) to act as community peace facilitators, and strengthening local conflict resolution mechanisms such as the government-mandated *Lupong Tagapamayapa* (LTs or village pacification committees). The A3B project mobilized 143 TRLs, formed four municipal interfaith networks, and provided trainings for 293 LT members from 20 barangays. During the project, 5,991 individuals participated in a total of 379 binding and bonding activities, including trainings and workshops, peace and conflict mapping exercises, community consultations, dialogue sessions, intra- and inter-group celebrations, and land policy review sessions and meetings. The project linked to stakeholders at barangay and municipal levels to ensure institutional support for community-identified solutions to land conflicts, and establish durable mechanisms for inter-agency field coordination and joint policy review.

The project aimed to build the capacity of diverse identity groups to work collaboratively in reducing land-related conflict by creating people-to-people mechanisms for reconciliation and conflict resolution. The project also worked to provide technical support for governmental institutions and enhance local institutional capacity to address local needs and redress conflicts.

The variety and complexity of land conflict issues in Mindanao present challenges to the search for solutions. There is no blanket resolution applicable to the many sources of competing or overlapping land claims; boundary disputes; encroachment on ancestral lands; questionable sales and financing; forced eviction; and land grabbing. In this case,

it is important to differentiate between symmetrical and asymmetrical conflicts. In some disputes, the parties are relatively equal in power, resources and capacities, but, in others, sharp asymmetries exist between individuals and corporations or political entities. The challenge of resolving asymmetrical disputes is especially relevant in addressing the needs of indigenous populations.

The A3B model was flexible enough to address a wide range of land conflict cases involving multiple configurations of conflicting parties. The project developed the relationships, structures and processes necessary for conflicting parties to reach their own solutions as well as to identify policy recommendations for recurrent types of conflict. Fundamental keys to A3B's success included:

- **Relationship-building as a critical first step towards land conflict resolution.** CRS dedicated time and effort to ensuring comprehensive consultation at every stage of the process, not only in resolving specific land conflict cases, but also in the formative stages of mapping peace and conflict issues in target communities. CRS and local NGO partners also built relationships with key champions within government structures, relying on their support to engage peer officials and build momentum towards collaboration. The project also sought to engage and empower marginalized groups, particularly IPs.
- **Recognizing the valuable role of traditional and religious leaders in official land conflict resolution efforts.** A key element of the A3B model was engaging respected and influential TRLs to serve as community peacebuilders. In order to ensure that these TRLs served as credible connectors for dialogue and conflict resolution, local partners dedicated time to analyzing each TRL's relational power, position and credibility, including their own land interests, connections to conflicting parties, and political affiliations. At the same time, the project linked these TRLs to state-sanctioned bodies such as village pacification committees and local officials to ensure their mutual involvement in the resolution effort. In many target locations, TRLs and their roles in conflict resolution gained formal recognition through resolutions from barangay local governments.
- **Combining a grassroots, bottom-up approach to policy reform with strategic use of existing reform platforms.** By empowering community members to engage with the government, A3B generated citizen demand for accountability and performance from local governments and from central government agencies. The project did this by seizing the opportunity presented by the national government's Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 1 of 2012, which mandated coordination and cooperation among government agencies with local mayors to organize coordinating bodies at the municipal level.
- **Demonstrating success of novel solutions at the community level before asking municipal leaders to consider new structures, policies and procedures.** Once local NGO partners established a track record for the effectiveness of the A3B model, mayors and other official leaders were more open to the project's proposals.

PROJECT RESULTS

Through the project, 35 land conflict cases were successfully resolved through dialogue and mediation. As a result, fewer cases were brought to court in some municipalities, reducing reliance on a costly and contentious process that can worsen social relationships. In addition, community members gained a better understanding of rights and responsibilities related to land and developed greater confidence to act on these rights and engage in community matters.

Across all municipalities, stakeholders cited improvements to the conflict resolution process as the most significant change resulting from A3B. Indeed, improvements to the conflict resolution process emerged as the most frequently cited domain of change during an end-of-project story collection process, and it was also a prominent theme in focus group discussions during the evaluation. These outcomes increased access to justice and land tenure security, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

In addition, the project contributed to improved relationships among parties in conflict and opposing identity groups, as well as between community members and government agencies. In an evaluation of the project, participants reported higher levels of mutual trust and respect and improved cooperation.

The A3B project also strengthened the governance structures and systems necessary to support nonviolent resolution of land-related conflicts. The project helped to clarify when customary practices and mediation, rather than the courts, should be used. It also recognized and clarified the roles and contributions of TRLs in addressing land conflict. In some cases, these traditional dispute resolution mechanisms were included in formal village pacification committees and local government processes.

The project also clarified the roles and responsibilities of local government units and national government agencies, leading to improved working relationships among these agencies and the establishment of four municipal inter-agency working groups (MIWG). The MIWGs developed policies in support of land conflict resolution and involved a total of 34 municipal agencies and 14 provincial-level government offices.

A case of illegal corporate encroachment into IP lands in Ampatuan illustrates how the A3B model adapts to the complexity of asymmetrical conflicts. As a result of corporate practices, IP community members lost access to their traditional hunting grounds as well as the ability to gather rattan for building purposes. Some members were assaulted by company guards. The conflict was complex, transcending municipal and provincial boundaries, and encompassing four different local government units. Municipal leaders showed little regard for IP concerns. Through the binding and bonding activities undertaken by A3B, local residents decided to increase their land security, beginning with the process of bridging from the IP community to the local municipality. In Senator Ninoy Aquino municipality, closer engagement between IP and non-IP communities convinced the municipal government to partner with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to devise an IP development plan, with cooperatives to be managed by IPs themselves.

The project facilitated the creation of municipal inter-agency working groups, which developed policies in support of land conflict resolution and involved a total of 34 municipal agencies and 14 provincial-level government offices.



Former JP SAC Project Director, Sr. Nelda Balaba (right), Village Chief of Barangay Polo, Ariston Leoberas (middle) and Antonia Esparago, a church catechist (left) take a break during an A3B project training. *Justice and Peace- Social Action Center (JPSAC) Project Staff*

Certificates of Actual Occupancy provided protection against competing land claims. Signed by the barangay captain, tribal chief, and the IP Mandatory Representative to the MIWG, they provided a measure of land security where none previously existed. They were an important equalizing approach for marginalized groups who frequently lacked documentation for their land claims.

The pursuit of these Certificates brought IPs into closer dialogue with government agencies and led to a series of A3B-facilitated meetings among IP leaders from the four barangays. IP leaders then issued a resolution to compel the municipal government to act on the encroachment issue. The certificates were filed with national government agencies and the municipal assessor, and were accepted in the processing of claims in ancestral domains. In Polomolok, barangay governments now issue certificates of land ownership. This practice was complemented by an order from the mayor requiring inspection to confirm occupancy. In Senator Ninoy Aquino municipality, certification of land ownership must pass through local village and tribal leaders before receiving barangay confirmation.

In a barangay in Polomolok, IP communities also effectively engaged with government agencies in a dispute with a powerful individual to protect their land tenure. The communities lived in a region that had previously been designated a protected Integrated Social Forestry area. They decided to file a claim with the National

Commission on Indigenous People for status as an ancient domain. This would prevent future land claims from outsiders and provide greater land security to the whole community. The community filed a communal Certificate of Actual Occupancy with the National Commission as a means of establishing the area in question. By filing this claim, local IP leaders could prevent the issuance of additional forest use licenses in the area while the claim was under review.

MIWGS: A CRITICAL STRUCTURE

As noted above, Municipal Inter-Agency Working Groups (MIWGs) provided a way to operationalize the Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 1, Series of 2012. By creating a forum for coordination among the agencies and municipal officials whose decisions influence land tenure, use and transactions, the MIWG model offered an opportunity to reduce the prevalence of land conflict and develop solutions tailored to fit each local context. The model also contributed to the sustainability of land conflict solutions by providing an ongoing space for open communication and collaboration, as well as the sharing of technical and financial resources.

MIWGs were created in the four project municipalities through executive orders issued by the respective mayors. Forming a MIWG thus required support and buy-in from the local chief executive as well as representatives of the relevant government agencies. The A3B project achieved this by demonstrating to the mayor the importance of addressing land conflicts, as well as cultivating relationships with the principal agencies.

Although the four MIWGs differed in composition and mandate, they had common characteristics. Each included an appropriate mix of stakeholders, including – at minimum – officials of the government agencies, the municipal assessor, and representatives of identity groups as appropriate to the area. In Magpet, the MIWG convened an ad hoc group, which included a village official and traditional leaders, to resolve a specific land dispute. The executive orders creating the MIWGs spelled out the mandates and terms of work. These orders required MIWGs to regularly meet to perform such functions as assessing and conducting inventories of all land disputes in the municipality, coordinating among member agencies to intervene, and recommending appropriate action, including policy proposals, to resolve these disputes.

One of the valuable contributions of MIWGs was the convening of meetings and consultations in barangays to review the existing land conflict situation. In Polomolok, the mayor convened meetings in all barangays to make an inventory of land conflicts. On the basis of priorities identified in these meetings, the government's Department of Agrarian Reform conducted assessments of lands with conflicting claims. MIWG members in Senator Ninoy Aquino municipality led similar meetings to reach a decision on how to handle issues around the selling and mortgaging of IP lands.

In Magpet, MIWG members agreed that no participating entity would accept new land transactions in the municipality without barangay approval and without checking with one another to be sure the transaction was clear to proceed. The policy of requiring coordination in dealing with land transactions was proposed for endorsement and dissemination at higher levels and could become a significant step toward helping resolve land issues.

The project found that identifying a few key champions for each MIWG assisted in moving the group forward. Ultimately, however, it was the experience of MIWG members working together to address land cases that allowed them to establish meaningful relationships with one another and experience the benefits of cooperation. This led to stronger buy-in and improved communication in carrying out the work of the group.

POLICY LESSONS

The evaluation of the A3B project identified several policy options and practitioner guidelines for future efforts to resolve land-based conflict and improve governance in affected communities.

- The value and impact of the MIWG structures could be enhanced through a directive from the regional divisions of government agencies empowering provincial- and municipal-level representatives to utilize this structure as part of their official mandate. Governmental assistance would minimize the need for budget inputs from the municipal level.
- MIWGs could make an important contribution to addressing land conflict by developing an overlay of existing survey maps to identify areas where different tenurial instruments conflict or overlap. MIWGs could then provide overlaid or synchronized maps to barangay leadership, which would allow MIWGs to identify priorities for their joint work.
- In boundary cases where conflicting parties have relatively equal power, joint surveys could contribute to resolving boundary disputes. The act of physically examining the contested border together can open new perspectives and allow solutions to emerge. To be effective, the survey exercise should involve all conflicting parties and should include a local mediator and barangay officials as well as neighbors who can add to the understanding of the history and usage of the contested area.
- Local policies prohibiting or limiting the mortgaging, leasing, and/or sale of IP land have helped curb mortgage-related conflicts. In some instances, these policies also prohibit additional loans from being added to original mortgage amounts, in order to protect land occupants from foreclosure as well as manipulation by more powerful individuals and interest groups. To reduce the risk of under-the-table sales or unorthodox leases, municipalities enacted policies in at least one locality requiring prior notification of any land sale or lease to the tribal council and/or barangay and providing penalties for violations.
- Mortgage conflict can be minimized by requiring that owners present a certificate of claim prior to sale. Such a certificate of claim can serve as a proof of ownership in the absence of a title. This has been done in Polomolok, where a certificate of occupancy or ownership signed by the tribal leader and/or the barangay captain must be presented prior to any land transaction.
- Education of community members and leaders on land-related issues can help resolve local disputes. A3B legal literacy training sessions and community meetings brought

together local stakeholders with government agency representatives. Local residents and officials learned about the rights and responsibilities of land ownership, as well as the modalities and documentation required for land-related transactions. Individuals could better understand the pros and cons of filing land records at the barangay and municipal levels: Doing so can afford a measure of protection to land owners and occupants, but may also incur taxation and other relevant fees.

CRS identified the policies and procedures above as effective means of promoting social cohesion among conflicting groups, and mitigating and preventing land-related violence in Mindanao. These policies can significantly contribute to the resolution of many of the drivers of land-based conflict, but they do not provide an adequate solution to the frequent mortgaging of lands and other challenges faced by indigenous populations. Even if indigenous communities are successful in securing rights to their ancestral domains, and if other vulnerable farmers also secure their land claims, they will continue to face problems of poverty and insufficient means for their livelihoods. The A3B project created greater awareness of indigenous community needs and began to build bridges with municipal and government officials that could start to address these needs. This kind of focused attention on sustainable development needs in Mindanao, especially in Bangsamoro areas, can help address the deeper roots of conflict cycles in Mindanao.

Lessons from the three cases

The three cases examined above offer several important lessons for integrating governance, peacebuilding and gender perspectives into development assistance programs. They illustrate how addressing humanitarian needs and development challenges can be combined with longer-term efforts to enhance social equality and increase local communities' resilience and capacity for improving social and economic well-being. This essay examines several of the lessons learned and discusses their implications for development and peace. This analysis is followed by an assessment of related lessons learned in recent CRS cases in West Africa. The last section of the essay reviews findings from scholarly research that corroborate the core lessons of the CRS cases and offers observations about the relevance of these lessons in light of Catholic social teaching and the moral appeals of Pope Francis.

An initial lesson from the cases is the importance of working with state institutions to strengthen governmental reform efforts. USAID and other international development donors are wary of directly supporting state agencies and corrupt elites in poorly governed states. Civil society groups that experience governmental repression are also, understandably, reluctant to work with such governments. However, the challenge of improving governance ultimately depends on creating public institutions that have the capacity and political will to deliver public goods and which function with a degree of inclusion and accountability to public needs.

Opportunities for influencing governments may occur when governments adopt useful reforms. In these instances, it is possible to forge active partnerships with local officials to better respond to public needs. This approach is not appropriate in every setting, especially when dealing with oppressive or extremely corrupt governments, or with governments that adopt merely cosmetic reform efforts and make no effort to carry out the announced steps.

In other cases, however, governments may try to adopt reforms and new programs but lack the institutional capacity or political backing to implement the policies. In these settings, humanitarian agencies and civil society groups can play a constructive role by strengthening government capacity to implement the new policies. In the cases examined here, CRS programs have helped social groups utilize new government programs, and – through capacity strengthening, advocacy, monitoring and civic education efforts – helped to strengthen and sustain governmental reform.

In Madagascar, the Lamina project helped hundreds of local citizens and community leaders learn about recently reformed government land tenure systems and provided

The challenge of improving governance ultimately depends on creating public institutions that have the capacity and political will to deliver public goods



Ex-chief of region of
Haute Matsiatra during the
distribution of land titles.
OMF-IPM Project Staff/CRS

training on using these systems to gain legal access to land. The project created a nongovernmental center for services and legal advice to facilitate citizen participation, and it encouraged officials to be more responsive to public needs. Citizens utilized the new services in larger numbers and with greater sophistication than in the past, which made governmental land services more accountable and responsive to public needs.

By engaging public officials in the process, the project helped to improve the relationship between civil servants and the local population. Cooperation with government officials helped prevent the bureaucratic resistance that could have blocked public participation. The project developed an innovative Community Score Card as a tool for rating government services and increasing program accountability. These efforts to enhance governmental capacity and strengthen civil society engagement led to significant improvements in local access to land. Hundreds of new titles were issued, and public satisfaction with government land services increased. Relationships between government and society improved, and many conflicts were avoided.

In Malawi, the WALA program worked with local farmers to reduce gender inequality while improving food security and enhancing agricultural incomes through the improved marketing of crops. The project worked with government agricultural extension services to provide support for the production, harvesting and marketing of crops. Mobilizing farmer groups and marketing clubs to achieve greater agricultural productivity breathed new life into government programs.

In the Mindanao region of the Philippines, the A3B project helped to improve the social cohesion of local communities and enabled them to use government reform programs to enhance the security of land tenure for indigenous and marginalized communities. The project empowered local citizens and community leaders to work with official land agencies and demand greater governmental performance and accountability. The project seized upon the opportunity created by a government mandate for greater coordination at the local level to create municipal inter-agency working groups that provided crucial support for land tenure reform.

Community leaders identified champions for reform within governmental structures and worked with these individuals and their agencies to settle local land disputes. The project utilized existing structures on the rights of indigenous people and their access to ancient domains to gain greater land security for these communities. The project improved the lives of marginalized citizens and prevented many land-based disputes in the region, providing support for the Bangsamoro peace process.

Governance is good when those whom it is intended to serve consider it legitimate, when people trust that officials act on their behalf and when people believe that political authority is properly constituted. Legitimacy is related to government procedure (when officials are perceived as acting in an even-handed manner and offering citizens an opportunity to voice their concerns) and government performance (when authorities can deliver necessary public goods to all major social groups).

Governance refers not only to the functioning of state institutions but also to the organizations and networks of society, and the ways in which social mobilization and

public perceptions of legitimacy influence state behavior. Governance is a function of vertical social cohesion (the relationship between state and society), and horizontal social cohesion (the quality of relationships within the society), and the level of civic engagement. Creating more unified and effective civic engagement can improve governance. CRS programs emphasize the importance of building bonds within social groups and creating bridges across social divides. This focus on strengthening horizontal social cohesion to enhance vertical social cohesion (i.e., peacebuilding and governance, respectively) is another key feature in the case studies under review.

In Madagascar, the Lamina project brought together diverse rural and urban communities to work together in securing access to land titles. In the past, conflicting claims to land and overlapping jurisdictions had generated tensions within and between social groups, and had hindered efforts to gain land security for all. The project recruited representatives from each community and social group for a common program of capacity building. It organized community gatherings to allow local groups to express their needs. This process helped diverse groups work together in engaging with and pressuring government officials to provide more transparent and impartial land registry services. In Malawi, efforts to enhance social cohesion and bonding focused on the inclusion of women. Traditionally barred from gaining access to social and educational opportunities, women took advantage of the WALA project to earn income, participate more actively in producer and marketing groups, and gain greater stature within the family.

Social bonding and bridge-building were a central focus of the A3B project in the Philippines. Finding solutions to land disputes in Mindanao required cooperation among distinctly different social identity groups – the Muslim Moro population, the Christian settler communities, and indigenous groups. Each community had separate traditions and procedures for land tenure, and the conflicting claims and competition for land generated many conflicts.

The project focused on developing understanding and social partnerships within and across these social divides. This included the creation of interfaith networks among Christian and Muslim communities, and a reliance on traditional religious leaders. The project engaged thousands of people from the three communities in common training and educational workshops, dialogue sessions, mapping exercises, and intragroup and intergroup celebrations. Through group activities and people-to-people exchanges, the project strengthened communities' capacity to work together in settling land disputes. In the process, it also strengthened the foundations of a sustainable peace in the region.

Another lesson from the cases is the importance of understanding local traditions, engaging local traditional and religious leaders, and using existing conflict resolution mechanisms to help settle local disputes. In Madagascar, the Lamina project focused on recruiting local leaders and religious figures, and built their capacity to engage with government land officials. In Malawi, the WALA project took advantage of matrilineal customs to overcome restrictions on women's social and economic rights. The project empowered women and enhanced their ability to earn incomes without disturbing traditional male-female roles. In Mindanao, the A3B project engaged traditional and

Another lesson from the cases is the importance of understanding local traditions, engaging local traditional and religious leaders, and using existing conflict resolution mechanisms to help settle local disputes.

religious leaders, and used local conflict resolution mechanisms such as village pacification committees to assist in settling land disputes. The project utilized customary practices for mediation in some cases, while employing governmental court systems in others. Traditional religious leaders played important roles in helping to settle local land claims. The combination of customary bottom-up approaches with statutory justice mechanisms proved effective at improving land security and settling local disputes.

Many CRS projects focus on efforts to enhance gender equality. In Madagascar, the Lamina project conducted surveys of women as well as men to ensure that women's perceptions were included in assessments of local government services. Women received training in land rights and joined with men in making greater use of land services. The project led to improved land security for both women and men.

The central purpose of the WALA project in Malawi was reducing gender inequality. The project focused on two objectives: helping women obtain greater opportunities to earn income, and enhancing the role of women in producer groups, marketing clubs and other community groups. The project introduced the cultivation of bird's eye chilies as a cash crop and encouraged women to participate. Women were quick to take advantage of the opportunity and as a result earned greater incomes. Women also gained leadership roles in the marketing clubs developed through the project.

The project also facilitated women's involvement in marketing by bringing buyers closer to farmers' homes. These developments allowed women to bring substantial income into their families and led to some changes in the relationships between wives and husbands. Women acquired greater say over the use of family income. Men and women began to decide together about household spending and utilized CRS' savings and internal lending community (SILC) groups to budget and accumulate assets. In surveys evaluating the project, men and women both described significant changes in family dynamics, although men insisted that they remained the heads of the households. The project provided a degree of empowerment to women without disturbing traditional gender roles within the family.

LESSONS FROM OTHER CRS PROGRAMS

Recent programming efforts in West Africa provide additional insights on how good governance programs can benefit the poor and vulnerable. The August 2014 CRS report, *Governance at the Grassroots*, evaluates programs in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali to identify two related priorities: the critical role of decentralization and local ownership, and the challenges of establishing land tenure and resource access for marginalized populations.

Decentralization processes involve the transfer of decision-making power and resources from the central to the local level. In each of the three countries studied, a government ministry of decentralization was established, along with local government authorities at lower levels. Such programs depend upon adequate capacity, coordination and technical assistance for local governments to manage their new authorities. Central governments are not always capable of or interested in providing such assistance. CRS programs address this need by strengthening governance capacity and increasing community access to such local programs.



Datu Mailan Andas, a tribal leader and TRL of the project, lead an indigenous ritual to symbolize unity, peace and reconciliation, after a community dialogue involving tribal leaders, village officials and the broader community..

Pasacaday Manobo Association (PAMAAS) Project Staff

Decentralization can help make decision making and program implementation more accountable and inclusive, and can facilitate the participation of all citizens, including women. Decentralization implies a transfer of power, which rarely occurs smoothly. The process requires a degree of mutual commitment among relevant stakeholders that does not always exist. Local ownership of decentralized programs may be impeded by corruption, poor communication, lack of clear lines of authority or communication, and differing expectations about intended outcomes. In the three countries studied, the decentralization process progressed more slowly than anticipated, which undermined confidence that officials were truly committed to and capable of carrying out the reforms.

A related factor complicating local ownership is the low level of public awareness and participation. In many countries, levels of citizen participation are low, especially among women and marginalized groups. CRS seeks to overcome these deficits through capacity building and increasing public participation and engagement in local governance programs. This is an imperative not only for justice but also for governmental effectiveness and accountability.

Decentralization processes are relevant to the challenge of resolving land tenure disputes. Securing the right of local populations to access and use land is central to improving livelihoods, especially for the poor and most marginalized. Achieving this purpose means strengthening the capacity of communities and local governments to establish standards and procedures for consolidating or gaining property rights. Significant obstacles stand in the way of securing such rights for marginalized groups and making land tenure systems more inclusive and equitable. Chief among these are the interests of powerful and wealthy elites, and an array of traditions and competing legal frameworks that limit access. As observed in the three case studies, government attempts to reform these frameworks provide an opportunity for local communities to access the new programs and work together in resolving local land disputes.

Communities in the drylands of West Africa encounter especially acute challenges in accessing land. Women suffer disproportionately because of long-standing practices that prevent them from owning and inheriting land. In the few cases where customary practice allows for women's access to land, increasing pressures on land are starting to erode this access.

Pastoralists face particular challenges and are often excluded from local decision-making processes. When pastoralists are of different ethnic or religious backgrounds than settler communities, ethnically based marginalization and grievances can result, often leading to violent conflict. Adverse environmental changes driven by climate change exacerbate these conditions. The result is often food insecurity for local populations and violence among competing social groups.

Experience shows that short-term reforms cannot resolve these challenges. CRS prioritizes longer-term initiatives that build local capacity and processes for sustained engagement. These include fostering local dialogue, exploring alternate conflict-resolution mechanisms, developing local land use charters through participatory approaches, and engaging women and men in discussions on the gender dimensions of land ownership and access. Interaction between religious leaders and government officials also proves useful in some

settings. Land-related dialogues can help change attitudes and make decision making more just and equitable. CRS also focuses on building the land registration capacity of local institutions and enhancing citizen participation in the process. Supporting local participation and accountability in this manner can strengthen governance structures and improve state-society cooperation.

Related approaches that have emerged in CRS efforts to engage governments and build their capacity to serve local people include the following:

- Extending agricultural extension services to diverse groups of farmers and supporting environmentally sound cultivation methods
- Accompanying communities to increase public awareness and monitoring activities
- Strengthening local government capacity through training, exchange visits, coaching and mentoring
- Engaging with elected bodies and local government officials responsible for planning, resource mobilization and citizen participation

Programs in support of decentralization and equitable land tenure significantly strengthen governance capacity and help the poor and marginalized meet basic needs and improve their livelihoods.

RESEARCH FINDINGS ON GOVERNANCE

The lessons gleaned from the three case studies and the CRS experience in West Africa are confirmed by social science research. Scholarly studies corroborate the value of integrating peacebuilding, good governance and gender approaches into development and humanitarian assistance programs. Research shows that governmental systems help to advance development and build peace when they have sufficient capacity and political will to provide the necessary public goods and when they are inclusive, participatory and accountable.

The World Development Report 2011 (WDR) finds that “states with weak institutions run the greatest risk of the onset and recurrence of civil war and of extreme levels of criminal violence.”¹¹ They are also more likely to suffer high levels of poverty. In contrast, when states have effective and accountable institutions, they tend to experience higher levels of economic development and fewer armed conflicts. Strong institutions are those with sufficient capacity to meet public needs and those with qualities of inclusion, participation and accountability. Measures of institutional capacity and quality show a direct relationship with development and peace.

Political scientist Pippa Norris confirms that peace and prosperity are most likely in governing systems that combine democratic participation and inclusion with the institutional capacity to deliver public goods and services.¹² Governance is “good,” she argues, when it provides quality institutions that guarantee the availability of public goods and services, and when it facilitates and encourages public participation in and use of those institutions.

¹¹ The World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2011), 84.

¹² Pippa Norris, *Making Democratic Governance Work: How Regimes Shape Prosperity, Welfare, and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175–182.

The capacity of governing institutions is often understood as their ability to deliver public goods, a framework of analysis developed by governance scholar Robert Rotberg. The very purpose of governance, he contends, is to supply “political goods.”¹³ He bundles these into five categories: (1) safety and security, (2) rule of law and transparency, (3) participation and respect for human rights, (4) economic opportunity and (5) human development. The effectiveness of a governance system can be evaluated according to its ability to provide these goods.¹⁴ They are the deliverables of governance.

States that can provide security and the full range of public goods are better able to address destabilizing challenges. According to the WDR, “security, justice, and economic stresses are linked: approaches that try to solve them through military-only, justice-only, or development-only solutions will falter.”¹⁵ Development and peacebuilding depend upon comprehensive approaches that simultaneously address multiple factors. Most important are efforts to help local communities establish governance systems that provide voice and opportunity for all relevant stakeholders and have equitable institutional mechanisms for assuring accountability and the rule of law. As noted below, gender equality is an important element of such governance and is strongly associated with beneficial social and economic outcomes.¹⁶

To promote stability and peace, governance systems must create an enabling environment for economic growth and prosperity. This encompasses protections for the rights of property and access to land, guarantees of entrepreneurship and innovation, prudent financial and banking systems, and a sound currency. Also necessary are critical elements of infrastructure, including effective roads, railways, airports and broadband Internet access.¹⁷ Equally important is the presence of a healthy and skilled workforce, which in economics is called human capital. This requires the expansion of educational opportunities, leading to greater literacy and numeracy, and access to adequate health services, leading to reduced vulnerability to preventable disease and lower mortality rates.¹⁸ These findings validate CRS programs that seek to provide such benefits while enhancing the ability of government institutions to provide basic services for all communities.

Nobel economist and philosopher Amartya Sen has pioneered the concept of “development as freedom,” which he characterizes as a process of social and political empowerment. Development means enabling individuals and communities to gain the assets and capabilities they need to improve their well-being. “Poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities,” Sen argues.¹⁹ Development policy must address

According to the World Development Report, “security, justice, and economic stresses are linked: approaches that try to solve them through military-only, justice-only, or development-only solutions will falter.”

13 Robert I. Rotberg, “The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States,” in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, ed. Chester A. Crocker et al., (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 83.

14 Robert I. Rotberg, ed. *On Governance: What It Is, What It Measures and Its Policy Uses* (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2015).

15 The World Bank, *World Development Report* 2011, 22.

16 Mary Caprioli, “Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly* 49, No. 2 (June 2005).

17 Rotberg, “The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States,” 87.

18 Robert I. Rotberg, “Governance Trumps Democracy,” *Africa and Asia: The Key Issues*, blog, <http://robertrotberg.wordpress.com/2013/02/01/governance-trumps-democracy>, accessed June 3, 2013.

19 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 87.

deprivations such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education, and social exclusion.²⁰ With adequate social access and opportunity, Sen argues, people can shape their own destiny and develop their economic and social potential.

As noted earlier, institutions that can deliver public goods and services have high levels of legitimacy. Perceptions of legitimacy are strongly associated with relations of trust between state and society, and networks of political and social integration.²¹ When states effectively provide public goods and address social needs, they gain legitimacy, which in turn enhances stability.²²

Social cohesion is an important dimension of governance. Social capital, a concept made popular through the work of researcher Robert Putnam, consists of two related components: bridging social capital, which is inclusive and tends to connect disparate groups, and bonding social capital, which builds social bonds within communities but may reinforce exclusive and homogeneous identities.²³ Bridging social capital builds intergroup cohesion and linkages across ethnic or other identity divides and creates the foundation for peace, development and good governance.²⁴

In polarized and poorly governed communities, more homogenous communities bond mostly with their own kin and distrust the “other.” Where social linkages are limited or nonexistent, the willingness to cooperate with other communities is minimal. By contrast, efforts to promote bridging forms of social capital enhance cooperation, improve governance and facilitate economic development and peace. These findings form the basis for a number of CRS project to enhance social cohesion and mobilization, especially the A3B project in the Philippines.

Scholar Ashutosh Varshney’s study of urban riots in Indian cities showed that urban communities with well-established interethnic associations were relatively calm, while cities that lacked formal interethnic relationships experienced serious Hindu-Muslim violence. According to his analysis, “the preexisting local networks of civic engagement between the two [ethnic] communities stand out as the single most important proximate explanation for the difference between peace and violence.” Varshney concludes that “a multiethnic society with few connections across ethnic boundaries is very vulnerable to ethnic disorders and violence.”²⁵ Formal interethnic associations, on the other hand, give communities the capacity to withstand disruptive incidents and socio-economic shocks.

The qualities of governance most strongly associated with successful development and peacebuilding are inclusion and accountability. The more inclusive and representative the system of decision making and implementation, the greater the likelihood of prosperity and peace. Research shows that consensus-based or power-sharing systems

²⁰ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 108.

²¹ Bruce Gilley, “The Meaning and Measure of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries,” *European Journal of Political Research*, 45, No. 3 (2006), 518–19.

²² Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review*, 53, No. 1, (1959), 69–105.

²³ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, New York: 2000), 22, 78.

²⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace, *Pillars of Peace: Understanding the Key Attitudes and Institutions Underpinning Peaceful Societies* (2013), 29–33, available at <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Pillars-of-Peace-Report-IEP2.pdf>, accessed January 14, 2014.

²⁵ Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond,” *World Politics* 53, No. 3 (April 2001), 380.



USAID FFP WALA Project supporter farmer eating porridge in the morning as he prepares to work on his pigeon peas and birds eye chilies to be sold collectively with other members of marketing club. He is a member of Lufani. Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Committee which received support from the USAID PEPFER funded IMPACT Program. Sara Farjardo/CRS

of governance lower the risk of armed conflict in deeply divided multiethnic societies.²⁶ Polarized political systems are prone to armed conflict, while those characterized by inclusiveness and shared decision making have a lower likelihood of civil war onset.²⁷

As political scientist Arend Lijphart observes, consensus-based systems generate “kinder, gentler” policy outcomes. They are more likely to facilitate social cooperation and generative inclusive development.²⁸ Consensus-based systems are the antithesis of exclusion and marginalization. They have the best chance of enhancing development and preventing the onset and recurrence of armed conflict.

Social scientists have long recognized that social exclusion and marginalization increase the risk of instability and armed conflict. Governance structures that unfairly privilege certain groups at the expense of others generate grievances that cause conflict and undermine development. Inequality matters greatly. Frances Stewart and her colleagues at Oxford University focus especially on “horizontal inequality,” which they define as

26 Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Arend Lijphart, *Thinking About Democracy: Power Sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Andrew Reynolds, *Designing Democracy in a Dangerous World* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

27 Marta Reynal-Querol, “Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (2002): 35, 45, 48.

28 Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies,” *Journal of Democracy* 15, No. 2 (2004): 96–109.

differences of power and wealth among subgroups within a society that are based on ethnic, religious or linguistic identity, without regard for the group's needs or capacities. Research shows that horizontal inequalities can be conflict-inducing and that policies designed to ameliorate such inequalities can reduce the likelihood of conflict and improve prospects for development.²⁹ New studies on the comparative wealth and power of ethnic groups within a society confirm that the risk of conflict and instability is greatest when social identity groups are excluded from political power and when their relative wealth is far below that of other groups.³⁰ Inclusive institutions are more likely to be accountable and responsive to public needs. As Sen emphasizes, accountable systems have greater legitimacy and are more likely to facilitate equitable economic development. Inclusive and accountable governance systems can better create the conditions for prosperity and peace.

Research shows that the empowerment of women also enhances development outcomes and reduces the risk of armed violence. When women actively participate in public life, governmental systems are more accountable and likely to serve public needs.³¹ Mary Caprioli's studies show that when the percentage of women in government and the labor force is high, the risk of armed conflict is low.³² Increases in the enrollment of girls in schools at all levels reduce the risk of armed conflict. Educated women tend to have more educated children who are less likely to become involved in armed conflict.³³

Several studies show a direct relationship between female educational attainment and the prospects for economic development and growth.³⁴ Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank have demonstrated the economic and social dividends that result from providing educational opportunities for women. Economic growth rates and social development improve when women are educated and acquire the skills needed for productive employment. Increasing the educational levels and labor participation rates of women enhances social development and improves economic growth rates.

Research shows that horizontal inequalities can be conflict-inducing and that policies designed to ameliorate such inequalities can reduce the likelihood of conflict and improve prospects for development.

TOWARDS INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Taken as a whole, social science scholarship strongly indicates the relevance of integrating peacebuilding, governance and gender into development programming. These research findings also validate the moral teaching of the Catholic Church and its emphasis on the dignity of the human person, the moral obligation to first address the needs of the most

29 Frances Stewart, ed. *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

30 Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison," *American Political Science Review* 105, No. 3 (2011): 487–88.

31 Patrick M. Regan and Aida Paskeviciute, "Women's Access to Politics and Peaceful States," *Journal of Peace Research* 40, No. 3 (2003): 292.

32 Mary Caprioli, "Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, No. 2 (June 2005): 172; Mary Caprioli, "Gendered Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, No. 1, 2000, 63.

33 Margit Bussmann, "Political and Socio-Economic Aspects of Gender Equality and Civil War," *Sicherheit und Frieden. Security and Peace*, No. 1 (2010), 6–12.

34 David Dollar and Roberta Gatti. 1999. "Gender Inequality, Income and Growth: Are Good Times Good for Women?" Mimeograph, World Bank, Washington, DC, 3.

marginalized populations, and the importance of working for the common good. This holistic approach is the basis for the concept of Integral Human Development, which recognizes the essential unity of the social, political, economic and spiritual dimensions of life for individuals and their communities.

These principles resonate strongly in the transformational teachings of Pope Francis. In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*, Francis urges us to care for the *miserando*, the lowly who are “mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others ... [are] vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind so much waste that, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet.”³⁵ Francis calls for developing economic institutions and social initiatives that serve the poor and provide opportunities for the marginalized. These teachings correspond with good governance principles of inclusion and participation, and the emphasis of Sen and other scholars on ensuring access and assets for the poor. Concern for social justice and the needs of the marginalized are core values in all major faith traditions.

The challenges of economic development, humanitarian relief, conflict prevention and poverty reduction are interlinked. They depend for their solution on improving the quality and capacity of governance, overcoming the marginalization of oppressed communities, and achieving greater equality, especially between women and men, within society. These complex and interdependent missions are a call to enhance and protect human dignity, and address the needs of each person as well as the needs of families and communities.

CRS seeks to put these principles into action by enhancing social well-being in the context of justice, equality and peace. By combining humanitarian and development assistance to meet basic needs with efforts to improve governance, increase gender equality and build peace, CRS not only alleviates social hardships but also empowers communities to transform institutions, creating the conditions conducive to sustainable development and peace.

³⁵ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, Encyclical Letter (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2015), 62–63, ¶91.

