

GLOBAL EMERGENCY UPDATE

Read the latest report on Catholic Relief Services' ongoing emergency response and recovery activities around the world. Our work is possible thanks to the generous support of private and public donors, the dedication of local partners, and the unwavering presence of Caritas and the local Catholic Church.



EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

The Syrian conflict has uprooted more than half the country's population and forced millions to flee to neighboring countries. CRS and our partners in Lebanon and Jordan provide comprehensive support for communities, including education, counseling, shelter, food, medical assistance, sanitation and hygiene.

IRAQ Iraqi forces have retaken most ISIS-held areas, but about 8.7 million people are still in need. As of January 2019, 4 million Iraqis had returned home, while 1.9 million remained displaced. CRS and Caritas Iraq have served over 300,000 conflict-affected people since 2014 with education and psychosocial support, shelter, water and sanitation, living supplies and cash grants, and livelihoods support.



Syrian refugee Mohamad El Saho takes his daughter down from their makeshift home on a factory rooftop in Lebanon. CRS focuses on improving the physical and psychosocial well-being of children with disabilities. *Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS*

EUROPE More than 1 million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in 2015, and another 700,000 between 2016 and 2019. CRS and our partners help people begin new lives in communities where they have been granted asylum.

YEMEN War and a supply blockade have triggered a humanitarian disaster, leaving 70 percent of the population urgently in need of aid. With a deadly cholera outbreak escalating, CRS is supporting our partner to help families with safe water and critical sanitation.

AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Refugees have returned to the greater Kasai region where resources are already strained as communities rebuild after a devastating regional conflict. CRS is providing food, water and sanitation.

KENYA AND SOMALIA Drought, followed by heavy rains, has diminished food production, while political unrest in Ethiopia has led to an influx of more than 10,000 refugees to Kenya. CRS is responding with water and sanitation activities, and helping communities recover.

UGANDA Refugees from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are entering Uganda to escape fighting in their countries. CRS is assisting vulnerable families in refugee and host communities.

LAKE CHAD BASIN The Lake Chad Basin crisis has affected about 10.9 million people. Boko Haram has killed thousands of people, and 2.4 million have fled their homes. CRS is supporting people in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria with food, agriculture and livelihoods support, as well as water and sanitation.

LATIN AMERICA

VENEZUELA Amid an economic and social crisis, millions of Venezuelans have migrated, many to other Latin American countries. CRS and our partners are providing support in Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Peru and Ecuador.

ASIA

BANGLADESH CRS and Caritas Bangladesh are supporting more than 263,000 Rohingya refugees.

INDONESIA CRS is helping families recover after a devastating earthquake.

PHILIPPINES CRS and Caritas are supporting vulnerable families after violent storms.

Innovation spotlight

Helping families construct earthquake-resilient homes

NEPAL

This April marks four years since Nepal's devastating 7.6-magnitude earthquake, which claimed 8,669 lives and destroyed more than 500,000 homes. Nearly one-third of the country's population—about 8 million people—were affected. CRS and our partner, Caritas Nepal, have been supporting some of the most-affected communities in Gorkha District, with a focus on technical assistance to rebuild safe homes, protect the environment during reconstruction and ensure resilient livelihoods.

In the northern zone of Gorkha, 93 percent of homes were damaged or destroyed. Houses in the remote communities were largely stone with slate roofs constructed without the use of earthquake-resilient techniques. With little awareness of the government's reconstruction support program, families rapidly unified after the earthquake to begin salvaging material and rebuilding each other's homes. But their failure to use earthquake-resilient techniques will pose risks in the event of another disaster. Also, because they started rebuilding on their own, they were disqualified from government grants, due to non-compliance with building codes and resilience techniques.

In south and central Gorkha, many families were unable to rebuild, and lived in temporary shelters. They lacked the cash to pay for labor and materials, and moneylenders charged exorbitant rates. Also, a lack of skilled masons familiar with earthquake-resilient construction—exacerbated by the migration of many young men to other countries for work—required a gender-inclusive masonry training approach.



Dal Bahadur Rana Magar constructs an earthquake-resilient home in Gorkha after taking part in a CRS training. *Photo by Jen Hardy/CRS*

CRS and Caritas Nepal sought to enhance local knowledge and skills on earthquake-resilient construction, and increase income opportunities for affected families.

CRS promoted design options that used local materials so that replication is ensured. CRS also encouraged people to incorporate earthquake-resilient construction elements into traditional designs. CRS provided information and trainings, constructed demonstration buildings, and offered direct technical support.

All shelter-related activities were aimed at contributing to the reconstruction and well-being of affected communities, including:

- Advanced masonry training for 1,605 skilled masons, both men and women.
- Basic masonry training for 1,012 laborers, both men and women.
- Construction of 82 demonstration houses in 13 areas, to provide references for safe practices and construction techniques.
- Door-to-door technical assistance to families and on-site masonry training.
- Infrastructure rehabilitation through a cash-for-work system to improve access to local markets and restore community water supplies.

- Staff training on structural and earthquake analysis software, and community appraisal techniques.
- Instructor training on earthquake-resilient construction techniques and government compliance checklist.
- Training of local officials on QSAND, a tool for assessing the sustainability of reconstruction after natural disasters.

To prevent families from choosing cheaper, substandard materials, CRS and our partners monitored activities to maintain quality, and reinforced the importance of quality materials during household orientations and door-to-door technical assistance.

CRS used a comprehensive feedback mechanism to enable beneficiary families—especially marginalized groups—to share feedback on program activities. These supports and activities ultimately benefited 90,000 people.

- For more information, see the selection of short, compelling [Shelter, Settlement and Infrastructure Case Studies](#) on [crs.org](#), highlighting innovative efforts to provide safe, dignified homes and settlement solutions in the wake of an emergency.

VENEZUELA

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

OVERVIEW

On January 23, 2019, Juan Guaido, the president of Venezuela's legislature, declared himself interim president of the country, in an effort by the opposition to unseat Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro. Guaido's declaration received support from neighboring countries and the United States. Since 2015, Venezuela has been in an economic and social crisis. A drastic fall in the price of oil, its main export, led to a progressive decline in local production capacity, resulting in food shortages, hyperinflation, the collapse of the health system and social unrest. Food shortages have had a devastating impact. The average Venezuelan has lost 24 pounds since 2017. And, of 15,000 children under age 5 being monitored by Caritas Venezuela over the last year, 76 percent showed signs of a nutritional deficit, and another 13 percent are living with acute malnutrition.

87 percent

OF THE POPULATION HAS BEEN PUSHED BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

The Venezuelan government devalued its currency by 96 percent in August 2018. This pushed 87 percent of the population below the poverty line, and had a significant impact on small and medium-sized businesses, which cannot afford to pay salaries.

Amid scarcity, millions of Venezuelans were forced to flee to provide for their families. As of January 2019, at least 3.6 million Venezuelans had migrated to other Latin American countries, mainly Colombia and Peru. Among the more than 1 million Venezuelan migrants in Colombia alone, 55 percent have children. The number of people leaving Venezuela is projected to double in the coming year, according to the Brookings Institution.



Children receive nutritional checkups and support at Caritas Venezuela centers. Photo courtesy of Caritas Venezuela

CRS REGIONAL SUPPORT OF CARITAS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

Venezuela

Across 14 dioceses in 10 states, and in the capital of Caracas, Caritas Venezuela supports health and nutrition. As of early 2019:

- 20,625 children under age 5 and 1,192 pregnant women were screened for malnutrition.
- 12,120 malnourished children under age 5 and 369 pregnant women were receiving food and medicine.
- Specialized food supplements for the treatment of malnutrition in children had been imported.
- 382 clinics were organized, attended by 17,153 patients.
- 14 dioceses had a basic stock of medication.
- 1,379 community soup kitchens were operating and had served about 131,000 meals.

Through an in-kind donation from Edesia Nutrition to CRS, Caritas Venezuela received shipments of nutritious food for 1,800 children. Many volunteer doctors and nurses are donating their time to provide primary care.

Colombia

CRS provides technical support and training to Caritas Colombia as it assists 9,000 Venezuelan migrants. With CRS capacity support, Caritas Colombia was awarded a U.S. State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration grant for these activities.

Brazil

Caritas Brazil distributed prepaid cash cards to 600 Venezuelan families, or 2,500 people, to buy food, hygiene items and critical supplies. At Caritas Brazil's Center of Assistance, 100 Venezuelans per day receive legal aid and counseling support. A U.S. Department of State-supported project of Caritas Brazil will complement the government's relocation of Venezuelans, with reception support at Caritas sites across Brazil as well as rental assistance, legal protection, counseling and job opportunities.

Trinidad and Tobago

CRS partner Living Water Community in Trinidad helps 960 Venezuelan migrants with food and cash assistance for diverse needs, including housing, medical and living expenses. CRS is supporting LWC with shelter support, specifically the upgrade of rentals and other host family arrangements to improve the housing conditions for refugees in the country.

Peru

CRS supports Caritas Peru to provide shelters, legal protection, hot meals and cash assistance for living supplies across four dioceses, benefiting 14,140 Venezuelans.

Ecuador

CRS supports Caritas Ecuador to provide 1,909 Venezuelans with food and nutrition, shelter, cash assistance and livelihood support.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

FORCED RETURN

CONTEXT

Angola ordered the expulsion of Congolese refugees in October 2018, resulting in the return of an estimated 370,200 people, some voluntarily and some by force, to the greater Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They are returning to areas where resources are already strained, as communities are still rebuilding after the devastating regional armed conflict of 2016–2017. Unable to reach their homes due to insecurity and lack of means, returning families are settling in areas without the infrastructure or resources to support them.

Urgent needs for 656,600 returnee and host families include safe shelter and living supplies. Families need help for a dignified return to their homes. Cash assistance will make use of the functional markets in the area and give families the dignity to choose those items that best meet their urgent needs.

CRS RESPONSE

In Kasai-Central, CRS teams are providing emergency food, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. CRS is one of the largest agencies providing cash assistance in the country, particularly in the Kasai region, having helped 27,190 families since December 2016.

CRS has been active in the area for almost five years, implementing a large-scale water, sanitation and hygiene program as part of a consortium funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

CRS partner Caritas is one of the lead actors identifying the needs of the returnees and mobilizing help. CRS is working with Caritas Kananga and Caritas Congo to support 500 families with essential relief and living supplies.



CRS is helping families like Mukuna Ndiaya and her seven children, who lost everything when they fled fighting. Photo by Sam Phelps/CRS

Priority needs include:

Household items and shelter

- **Transitional shelter:** Families will ideally find refuge in community centers, schools or churches.
- **Basic supplies:** People unable to return home require shelter and essential living supplies while more permanent solutions are developed.

Food

- Emergency food assistance, through various types of cash-based responses.

- Monitoring children's nutritional status.
- For those in transit, a seven-day food ration will help provide strength and nutrition.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Hygiene promotion and the installation of hand-washing stations in high-traffic areas to help combat the spread of communicable diseases.
- Hygiene supplies for health centers.
- Chlorination and water delivery by truck in arrival zones.

Staff Spotlight

Database officer Jacques Nkwar is excited about the integration of information and communications technology for development, or ICT4D, into the monitoring and evaluation process.

"It has enabled our programs to reach vulnerable populations in a more timely manner. This improves data collection, and results in greater efficiencies, effectiveness and quality," says Jacques. "We work in areas with limited or no internet, electricity or mobile network, and where ICT4D might not be as familiar to field workers."

To facilitate monitoring and evaluation activities, Jacques and his team:

- Organize frequent trainings and refresher sessions for partner staff.
- Use generators, solar panels and external batteries to charge ICT4D equipment.
- Design tools to limit data entry errors, facilitate the data collection process and ensure it is done in a timely manner.
- Invest time at the project start to develop and test tools.

Read more about CRS' use of ICT4D across Central Africa in the [Central Africa Emergencies Newsletter](#) on [crs.org](#).

Jacques Nkwar
CRS database officer, DRC



LAKE CHAD BASIN

VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT



A child is tested for malnutrition in Nigeria. Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS

CONTEXT

Now in its 10th year, the Lake Chad Basin crisis has affected about 10.9 million people in one of the world's poorest, most drought-prone regions. Across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, Boko Haram has killed thousands of people, and 2.4 million have fled their homes. The violence—including deliberate attacks on civilians and relief workers—has hindered farming, livelihoods and cross-border trade; prevented delivery of humanitarian assistance; and restricted people from accessing basic services in the four countries.

Deteriorating security conditions in northeastern Nigeria continue to obstruct humanitarian work, prompting a temporary evacuation of more than 260 relief workers in Borno between November and January. Attacks in January by armed opposition groups in Borno's town of Rann resulted in multiple civilian deaths and the destruction of humanitarian infrastructure and supplies, with 35,000 people fleeing to neighboring Cameroon. Insecurity is hampering the return to normal life, keeping conflict-affected families on the move, without their assets and dependent on humanitarian assistance. The United Nations estimates that nearly 11 million people in the region require humanitarian assistance. In Nigeria alone, more than 1 million children under age 5 are experiencing acute malnutrition.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is supporting people across all four countries, providing emergency food, agriculture and livelihoods support, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene support. CRS and our partners are prioritizing monthly food e-vouchers, plus cash assistance and cash-for-work opportunities to help families meet their basic food needs.

Agricultural tools, seeds and livestock are helping people get back to work and transition out of emergency assistance, and are supporting the recovery of the local economy. Investment in water, sanitation and hygiene has brought safe drinking water through borehole construction, as well as hygiene activities and supplies.

CRS is supporting nearly 200,000 people across all four countries:

Food assistance and nutrition

- Providing families with e-vouchers for food, which has also injected cash into the local economy.
- Screening 18,234 children under age 5 for malnutrition (Nigeria), and referring malnourished children to clinics for treatment.
- Educating caretakers on child nutrition and hygiene.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Providing hygiene kits and messages on cholera prevention, water quality, hand-washing with soap, food safety, latrine use and environmental sanitation.
- Distributing water purification tablets with information about clean water.
- Constructing and desludging latrines, and installing hand-washing facilities.
- Rehabilitating water supply systems, repairing water points, and chlorinating water at key points.
- Training community mobilizers to promote hygiene.

Shelter and household items

- Rehabilitating houses for displaced people and returnees, enabling them to live in safe shelter.
- Distributing emergency shelter kits and building emergency shelters.
- Distributing e-vouchers for families to buy household items from local vendors.
- Leading fire safety trainings.

Agriculture and livelihoods

- Training vendors in seed handling, storage and distribution.
- Training families and farmers in crop production, post-harvest handling and seed selection.
- Organizing farmer groups to be trained in good agricultural practices, and setting up demonstration plots for agriculture trainings.
- Distributing seeds and tools to families.
- Holding seeds-and-tools fairs, and cash-for-work activities.
- Training families and communities in social cohesion.



KENYA AND SOMALIA

FOOD INSECURITY

CONTEXT

Between 2017 and 2018, a prolonged cycle of drought led to an erosion of assets at the family and community levels. This diminished food production and led to widespread land degradation, deforestation, and poor soil and water management practices. The drought was followed by heavy rains, wreaking havoc on farming and pastoral households. An estimated 45,200 families were displaced due to flooding and mudslides, mostly in the northern, western and coastal regions of Kenya, and especially in Tana River County. In addition, risks to food and nutrition were heightened by a locust infestation and an invasion of fall armyworm, a pest that destroys crops.

Meanwhile, political unrest in parts of Ethiopia's Oromia region led to an influx of more than 10,000 refugees to Kenya's Marsabit County.

In Somalia, a massive humanitarian effort in 2017 largely averted famine, but the situation remained dire throughout 2018, especially for an estimated 2.3 million displaced people.

Across the region, people continue to face challenges in accessing food and clean water, as well as malnutrition, vulnerability to diseases like cholera, and risks to their safety including sexual violence or forced evictions.

CRS RESPONSE

- Repairing community water infrastructure and providing clean water at camps for displaced families.
- Helping coordinate local emergency water, sanitation and hygiene responders.
- Distributing critical sanitation supplies and supporting hygiene promotion activities.
- Promoting the health of livestock weakened by drought.



CRS livestock restocking fairs help people who have lost sheep, goats and cattle.
Photo by Nancy McNally/CRS

**Kenya
Drought crisis response**

CRS assisted 16,800 families in the counties of Kwale, Kilifi, Turkana, Isiolo and Samburu, by supporting access to water for people and livestock, hygiene promotion, livelihood recovery efforts and improved livestock health.

- Hygiene promotion is reaching 67,250 people through the training of 190 community leaders, and radio messages, posters and other communications.
- Roof catchments and/or water points were installed at 19 public schools.
- Water infrastructure for 16,000 families is being built, repaired and maintained, including the rehabilitation of 27 community boreholes and installation of 12 new boreholes.
- High-quality feed was distributed to 7,600 livestock farmers in 5 counties.
- 6,800 farmers are benefitting from seed fairs.
- 6,540 goats and sheep were reestablished for 1,940 families who had suffered livestock losses.
- 188,080 livestock were vaccinated and 122,230 received deworming treatment.
- 57 irrigation groups received irrigation equipment, farming tools, seeds and greenhouses.

Marsabit response

CRS partnered with the Catholic diocese of Marsabit and the county

government to offer emergency medical assistance to 10,000 refugees.

- 4,000 families received treated mosquito nets.
- 3,000 women received hygiene kits.
- Refugee and host communities received vaccinations and other medical services.

Flood response

CRS rushed emergency nutrition, water and sanitation to flood-affected communities in Tana River County.

- Hygiene kits for 4,700 families, including water containers, food storage containers, soap and water purification tablets.
- Mobile health support at five temporary camps, including providing 5,000 displaced women and girls with hygiene kits.
- Insecticide-treated mosquito nets for 2,900 families to prevent malaria.

Somalia

- Hygiene kits were distributed to 6,250 families at 18 camps for displaced people.
- 150 community leaders were trained in essential hygiene practices, reaching 16,650 people.
- Clean water was provided for four months to an estimated 30,000 people living in 19 displacement camps outside Mogadishu.
- Clean water supplied by this project was pivotal to the success of other CRS projects.

UGANDA

DISPLACEMENT



A newly constructed teacher's residence and an administration block at Ariwa Primary School. Photo by CRS staff

CONTEXT

Since South Sudan gained independence in 2011, fighting between government and opposition forces has uprooted more than 1.8 million people from their homes. As of March 2019, about 1.07 million South Sudanese refugees had fled to Uganda.

CRS is working in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in northwest Uganda, one of the largest in the world. It was declared saturated when the population exceeded 288,000 people. Significant support gaps remain within Bidi Bidi, and agencies are trying to respond to families' critical needs. Uganda is unique in its openness and hospitality toward refugees, but its resources are stretched.

Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to cross into Uganda seeking refuge from the ongoing violence and unrest in their country. CRS was recently selected by the UNHCR, the U.N. Refugee Agency, to provide shelter support for nearly 145,000 refugees—mostly from DRC—at two further settlements, Kiryandongo and Kyangwali.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is assisting people with specific needs, including the elderly and people with disabilities or serious medical conditions, as well as vulnerable families in refugee and host communities.

School construction

- Ayivu Primary School was constructed, and the completed and furnished facilities were handed over to local government for use, operation and maintenance.
- At Ariwa II Primary School, three blocks with nine classrooms, an administration block and teachers' residences are complete. Latrine construction is ongoing.
- Lokopio Primary School and Kena Valley Primary School were allocated for classroom construction, and layouts drafted and shared with the stakeholders for feedback.

Shelter and settlement

CRS provides permanent, secure shelters for vulnerable refugees.

- 725 shelters were constructed for people with special needs.
- Sites for 488 shelters for the especially vulnerable were allocated.
- Temporary structures for refugee registration by UNHCR were constructed or renovated.

Livelihoods

CRS is supporting 6,000 vulnerable refugee and Ugandan families to start or strengthen their livelihood options. This includes:

- Instruction for trainers of micro-savings field agents in group engagement and management, financial management, marketing basics, natural resource management and innovation. Training will cascade to 1,200 micro-savings group members.

- Training and coaching of 55 farmer groups in negotiation skills to enable refugees to negotiate with host communities for arable land. Host farmers can use the skills in farming and off-farm businesses.
- 1,396 refugees and host community members have completed a three-month vocational and business course focused on carpentry, tailoring, masonry, catering and motel management, hairdressing or car mechanics.
- 1,050 members of micro-savings and lending groups—80 percent of whom are women—have engaged in small enterprises like agricultural production and food sales.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

To prevent cholera and other life-threatening diseases, CRS is supplying vital access to clean water, household latrines, and information on sanitation and hygiene:

- 1,736 household latrines, and hand-washing stations for 8,680 people were constructed.
- Motorized, solar-powered water supply systems for potable water were constructed or improved.
- 1,461 people—including 1,097 women—were trained in sanitation practices and safe water handling.
- Water-user committees are receiving training in the maintenance of water systems and supervision of new construction.
- 2,800 households received hygiene supplies.
- 700 latrines were decommissioned and 160 waste pits constructed.
- Water and sanitation supplies were provided to 4,800 families.

BANGLADESH

ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS



Midterm shelters have been completed in one of the camp extensions. *Photo by CRS staff*

CONTEXT

Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh is the center of a large-scale refugee response. Since August 2017, widespread violence in their home state of Rakhine, Myanmar, has caused 700,000 Rohingya people to flee to Bangladesh, bringing the total Rohingya refugee population to about 909,000. Some 628,000 people are now living in the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site, the world's largest and most densely populated refugee camp.

After much debate over repatriating the Rohingya people to Myanmar, the government of Bangladesh announced that no refugees would be forcibly returned, pending national elections. However, the uncertainty means the Rohingya people are now wary about registration and the collection of personal details, which may hinder the ability of humanitarian agencies to deliver critical goods and services.

A lack of suitable land to enable communities to disperse and improve their living conditions is the key challenge. Congestion increases the risk of fire and disease, insecurity and protection issues, including gender-based violence.

CRS AND CARITAS RESPONSE

CRS and Caritas Bangladesh are supporting more than 263,000 Rohingya refugees with shelter and settlement, water and sanitation, protection for children and vulnerable groups, and disaster risk reduction within Kutupalong-Balukhali. CRS and Caritas Bangladesh continually work to build relations and transparency with the host community. To date, CRS and Caritas Bangladesh have completed the following:

Shelter

- Distributed 7,390 shelter kits with technical construction support.
- Provided pre-monsoon tie-down kits to 171,697 households.
- Provided transitional shelter to 2,909 households.
- Completed 677 midterm shelters.
- Relocated 43,640 refugees for landslide and flood risk mitigation, and infrastructure development.
- Completed 325 shelters, with plans to build 250 more. An updated design includes a kitchen, and a bathing area for the improved dignity and safety of women.

CRS and Caritas Bangladesh are in discussions with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to build 1,500 midterm shelters in Chowkali, a new area of land being developed.

Together, we plan to upgrade and maintain existing shelters through a community-led program that trains people in shelter improvement and maintenance. The distribution of building materials will be complemented by vouchers to enable families to buy from a list of preselected materials and tools. Families will be responsible for construction, supported by technical assistance. With an initial pilot serving 280 families, the assistance will scale up to assist 5,000 families, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration.

Site improvement

- Repairing drainage, paths and retention walls.
- Planting trees, shrubs and grasses.
- Installing street lights.
- Constructing peripheral drainage and discharge points.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Distributing hygiene kits, and promoting hand-washing and safe water handling.
- Providing supplies and training community volunteers for cash-for-work activities, including cleaning latrines and bathing spaces, repairing wells and managing solid waste.

Protection

- Expanding programming to manage child protection, gender-based violence, and community-based protection projects in four camps.
- Building five new child friendly spaces, in addition to the six already running. These will provide counseling support for children and families, recreational activities and meeting spaces.
- Counseling and life skills activities for women who have suffered violence or abuse will be held in three new women friendly spaces.
- Training Rohingya volunteers, both women and men, for the Barefoot Counselor project, which offers protection and counseling support.

Living supplies

Distributing stoves to 12,000 families along with liquid petroleum gas.

INDONESIA

EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

CONTEXT

On September 28, 2018, a devastating 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck the island of Sulawesi and triggered a deadly tsunami. The disaster caused an estimated 2,077 deaths. Homes, shops, mosques and hotels collapsed, were swept away or suffered extensive damage. At least 2 million people were affected across 85 districts, and 211,000 people were displaced. The earthquake caused liquefaction—when saturated soil loses strength—moving structures away from their original locations.

Some families had to permanently leave their homes due to the widespread structural damage caused by the earthquake and tsunami, while others have been temporarily displaced because their homes are damaged and unsafe. In the most heavily affected coastal areas, up to 80 percent of houses were destroyed. The rainy season increased the risk of landslides, flooding and waterborne disease. Some 68,000 people needed urgent shelter and living supplies, and about half of those still need support to rebuild their homes. As the area is prone to strong storms and periodic earthquakes, affected communities will also need to improve their disaster preparedness and build resilience.

CRS' ongoing presence in Indonesia—and our close partnership with the local Church and other local organizations—has proved vital, as the government limited the access of international humanitarian agencies to disaster-affected areas.

“ We saw the ground splitting, with mud and water coming out. We walked with our neighbors, and kept walking. We slept under the sky that night, as we brought nothing.

Umi Sumbajono, recipient of CRS/Caritas hygiene supplies, Jono Oge village



People line up to receive assistance from CRS in Palu. Photo by Yusuf Wahil for CRS

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is leveraging our expertise and experience in the country to take the lead on shelter, sanitation, hygiene promotion, cash assistance and disaster risk reduction. We will also coordinate and advocate with government and service providers for emergency and transitional settlements that meet families' needs, including water and sanitation.

To date, CRS has supported partners to provide the following:

- 550 emergency shelters with wood frames and plastic sheeting.
- Hygiene kits with complementary informational materials for 6,594 families, and shelter kits for 3,943 families.
- 284 emergency latrines, with hundreds more ongoing.
- Nearly 300 trainings in Build Back Safer techniques.

Inspired by the expression *rumah tumbuh*—Bahasa Indonesian for “a house that grows”—CRS will focus long-term support on safe, dignified transitional shelters, and address families' needs through comprehensive programming built around shelter assistance. Since the Indonesian government is likely to help permanently displaced families with the construction of new settlements, CRS will focus on helping those that are temporarily displaced or in need of support to rebuild their homes. CRS is coordinating with three local partners in Donggala, Sigi and Palu districts in Central Sulawesi Province.

CRS will serve 10,000 families directly, supporting 40,000 indirectly in the wider community through Build Back Safer trainings for local construction workers, disaster risk reduction activities with community groups, and an integrated market-based response.

 **faith.**
action.
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES **results.**

THE PHILIPPINES

TYPHOON MANGKHUT

CONTEXT

Close to 100 people lost their lives during Typhoon Mangkhut—which made landfall in the Philippines on September 15, 2018. With sustained winds exceeding 124 mph, Mangkhut affected more than 3 million people across northern Luzon island. More than 9,600 houses were destroyed and another 79,000 damaged in Cagayan province alone. The hardest-hit areas are heavily agricultural, with 288,000 farmers and fishermen severely affected. Farmers reported losing 90 percent of their impending rice harvest. Global attention focused on the town of Itogon in Benguet province, where a mudslide at a mining camp caused dozens of fatalities, prompting the local government to prevent people returning home.

Assessments in Cagayan showed that materials to repair homes were families' most immediate needs. These were available locally, but the most vulnerable families did not have the money to buy them. Many families also needed support to restart farming, their primary source of income. In Benguet, families needed household items after their homes were flooded, heavily silted or buried by landslides. In Kalinga and Apayao provinces, many expressed the need for agricultural tools and supplies to restart rice and corn planting.

CRS AND CARITAS RESPONSE

CRS partnered with the Diocesan Social Action Centers of the Archdiocese of Cagayan, the Diocese of Baguio in Benguet, and the Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk in Kalinga-Apayao to support vulnerable families by providing cash assistance to enable them to buy critical supplies. Unconditional cash assistance—possible in places where the local markets are still functioning—enables families to buy what they need most, and their local purchases help support the recovery of local businesses.



A mother and her 7-month-old daughter wait to receive a CRS voucher for vital supplies in Camarines Sur province, Philippines. Photo by April de la Cruz for CRS

- 1,310 households benefited from cash assistance for household, shelter, agricultural and other supplies. The amount was based on the local cost of roofing repair materials, food, and agricultural and household supplies, and cross-checked to align with local government rates to avoid conflict.
- CRS established agreements with local money transfer agencies to disburse funds in familiar, convenient and secure locations.

TROPICAL STORM USMAN

CONTEXT

Tropical Storm Usman made landfall on Eastern Samar on December 28, 2018, dropping 22.5 inches of rain in 48 hours, just half an inch less than the typical monthly rainfall for December. Usman's slow movement resulted in flooding and landslides in mountainous areas in central Philippines, particularly in the Bicol region of southern Luzon, where most of the recorded deaths occurred.

The government declared a state of calamity in three provinces, including Camarines Sur and Albay. The coastal town hit hardest was Tiwi in Albay, where there were landslides and flash floods. The government estimates that 308,450 people were affected.

CRS AND CARITAS RESPONSE

CRS is responding in partnership with the Social Action Center of Legazpi in Albay, and Caritas Caceres in Camarines Sur, prioritizing hygiene and support for the purchase of key shelter and household supplies. CRS and our partners prioritized families who were living in evacuation centers or unsafe areas, had destroyed or partially damaged houses, faced economic challenges or had an elderly family member or person living with a disability in their household. To date, we have achieved the following:

- Provided cash assistance to 1,630 families for key supplies.
- Helped families use their cash assistance to buy supplies from local vendors and shops.
- Carried out hygiene promotion.

 **CRS** faith. action. results.

YEMEN
CHOLERA
CONTEXT

Yemen is being devastated by war between forces loyal to the government, backed by a Saudi Arabia-led coalition, and Houthi rebels. More than 10,000 people have been killed since March 2015. The conflict and a supply blockade have triggered a humanitarian disaster, leaving 70 percent of the population urgently in need of aid. Eight million people depend on food aid for survival, and the United Nations has warned that an estimated 14 million are on the brink of starvation.

Compounding the crisis, a deadly cholera outbreak continues to escalate at a rate of roughly 10,000 suspected new cases per week. As of January 2019, more than 1.2 million cases, resulting in 2,515 deaths, had been recorded. The epidemic struck when the capacity of the health system was crippled by two years of conflict and import restrictions. Health infrastructure has collapsed, hampering water, sanitation and hygiene services. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.8 million children under age 5 are acutely malnourished, including 500,000 suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Some high-risk areas are inaccessible to humanitarian aid, and there is a shortage of laboratory supplies and rapid diagnostic test kits. Communities need access to clinics, case management guidelines, training, and staff payment and support.

A significant ongoing response to cholera is needed, along with the identification of contaminated water sources, sample collection, chlorination, and the establishment of clinics with lifesaving equipment.



A woman and her son transport clean water to their home. *Photo courtesy of Islamic Relief*

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

CRS supports Islamic Relief Yemen as it provides 1,500 families with water and sanitation through the following activities in areas most affected by cholera:

- Rehabilitation of water sources and installation of a solar water system.
- Installation of water pumps for safe drinking water.
- Construction of water points, and construction and rehabilitation of livestock reservoirs.
- Formation and training of water management committees to operate and maintain systems.
- Testing of water quality.
- Promotion of hygiene through at least 100 sessions at the household and community levels.
- Provision of cholera medicine.
- Ongoing coordination with the Yemen Ministry of Public Health and other health actors.
- Rapid diagnostic testing and urgent response to reported cases.



Water management committee members and volunteers are trained to operate and maintain new water systems. *Photo courtesy of Islamic Relief*

“ We receive many cholera cases daily. We lacked medicine. We thank Islamic Relief for providing cholera medicine. It is a generous support and lifesaving aid for the affected population who are in severe need and can't pay for cholera treatment.

Daris Abu Talib, M.D., Sana'a Governorate

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

DISPLACEMENT

CONTEXT

March marks the eighth year of Syria's internal armed conflict, one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time. It has uprooted more than half of the population from their homes and forced 5.6 million Syrians to flee to neighboring countries. While some areas are stable and communities are trying to recover, other parts of the country continue to be subject to heavy rocket and mortar attacks. Since the crisis began in 2011, life expectancy among Syrians has dropped by more than 20 years.

Lebanon now hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees—equivalent to more than 20 percent of its population—while Jordan hosts 670,000. The influx has strained public services, especially the schools, and refugees have limited livelihood and education opportunities. Many children have been out of school for years, making it hard for them to integrate back into the classroom. Stress and trauma also interfere with their learning.

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

CRS and our partners in Lebanon and Jordan are providing comprehensive support for communities and families:

Education

- Remedial tutoring classes each school year for 1,815 students.
- Kindergarten for 540 children each year to prepare them to enter formal schools.
- Outreach to Syrian refugee families to promote educational opportunities for children.
- Transportation, healthy snacks, and supplies to facilitate attendance and learning.
- Trainings for teachers and bus monitors.

Parent involvement

- Parent-teacher association meetings and other engagement opportunities for parents.
- Training for parents to learn new techniques to support their children's education.



CRS and Caritas Lebanon focus on improving the physical and psychosocial well-being of children with disabilities, such as Israa'a and Fatima, who live with their elderly grandmother.
Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS

Did you know?

In Lebanon, more than 60 percent of Syrian refugee families include someone with a disability or serious medical condition. They face challenges of costly medical care and services, limited transportation and access to specialized medical support, and social isolation. Refugee children with disabilities experience bullying and other risks of emotional and physical harm. Social stigma also affects their caregivers, particularly mothers, who experience shaming and isolation. Yet, Lebanon is recognized for its relatively progressive laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities. But the laws apply only to Lebanese citizens not to refugees.

CRS partner Caritas Lebanon is among the few organizations providing comprehensive support to refugees and vulnerable Lebanese families with disabilities. They focus on 1) improving the physical health and psychosocial well-being of children with disabilities, including medical care, consultations and referrals, lab tests and specialist care; 2) providing caregivers with support, information and skills they need to care for their children; and 3) activities and services to improve the social integration of children with disabilities, such as inclusive activities, accessible infrastructure, and access to psychosocial support.

- To learn more, watch [A mother's love](#), available on YouTube.



Psychosocial support

- Group counseling for 6,000 students and individual counseling when needed.
- Psychosocial classroom activities for 2,355 children per year.
- Recreational activities outside the classroom.
- Training for counselors, staff and teachers to support children with psychological needs.
- Infrastructure improvements to the learning environment.

Shelter and rent assistance: Monthly rent stipends for refugees.

Living supplies: Kits of bedding, stoves, buckets and other household items for new arrivals.

Food: Cash and vouchers to help people buy food and living supplies.

Medical assistance: Immediate care for both life-threatening injuries and chronic conditions.

Sanitation and hygiene: Vouchers for key hygiene and sanitary supplies.

IRAQ

DISPLACEMENT

CONTEXT

Since ISIS first captured Mosul in 2014, up to 5.9 million Iraqis have been displaced. Following an intensive operation, Iraqi forces retook most ISIS-held areas. With an estimated 8.7 million people still in need, the needs of returnees now surpass those of internally displaced people. As of January 2019, 4 million Iraqis had returned home. CRS has identified significant gaps in restoring education, repairing housing and recovering livelihoods in areas of return.

4 million

**IRAQIS HAD RETURNED HOME
AS OF JANUARY**

CRS and Caritas Iraq are focusing initial returnee support on the Nineveh Plains, where an estimated half of uprooted families have returned in the past year. Livelihood opportunities are limited and, for returnees, the relief of returning after years of displacement is tempered by the challenge of rebuilding their lives. The years of conflict have created instability and destroyed infrastructure. Iraq's education system has been deeply affected—an estimated one in four schools was destroyed, and many more damaged. Returning safely and with dignity to areas retaken from ISIS will also require land mine removal, significant investment in infrastructure and the rebuilding of local economies.



Hussein Jashni's home was destroyed by the conflict. CRS provided a core housing unit, enabling his family to expand their home according to their needs. *Photo by Hawre Khalid for CRS*

CRS AND CARITAS RESPONSE

CRS and Caritas Iraq have served over 300,000 conflict-affected people since 2014. CRS provides a comprehensive package of assistance including education and psychosocial support, shelter, water and sanitation, essential living supplies and cash grants, and livelihoods support. CRS and Caritas Iraq have excellent working relationships across communities, including with Muslim, Christian and Yazidi people and their leaders. We carefully consider the dynamics among people of various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Education

We are supporting over 10,000 displaced children, with access to quality formal primary and secondary education. Once they return home, support includes physical repairs and upgrades to school buildings, teaching materials and teacher training. CRS is scaling up our education support in areas of return, ensuring schools are structurally safe, and that teachers and parents are equipped to support the emotional needs of students.

Livelihoods

We are providing cash grants and coaching as families restart small businesses. This programming will be expanded with job readiness and entrepreneurship training to support youth who have returned home.

Shelter

Many families are displaced across Dohuk, Kirkuk, Nineveh, Anbar and on the outskirts of Baghdad. Families returning to cities recently retaken by Iraqi military forces are finding their homes damaged. With their finances depleted and few options for earning an income, they face huge challenges. These shelter activities are helping them transition home:

- **Building upgrades** Over 80,000 people have received shelter support, with a further 15,000 to benefit this year. This includes improving the safety, weatherproofing and privacy of buildings where families have taken refuge.
- **House repairs for returnees** Cash and technical help are being provided so families can repair their homes.
- **Core housing units** When a home has been severely damaged or destroyed, CRS constructs transitional core housing units on the returnee family's property. These are designed to enable families to add further rooms when they have the funds to do so.

Essential living supplies

Returning families often need basic living supplies like kitchen sets, bedding and stoves. CRS provides cash grants that enable them to buy what they need most, which supports local vendors and injects cash into the economy. More than 200,000 people have received such support.

EUROPE

REFUGEE INTEGRATION

CONTEXT

More than 1 million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in 2015, and another 700,000 between 2016 and 2019. CRS and our partners are helping people across southern Europe begin new lives in communities where they have been granted asylum. They are primarily from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and CRS is supporting programs that offer them safe options for living and becoming self-sufficient.

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

CRS and partners are supporting refugees and host communities across Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Language classes, education, a safe living environment, access to medical and social services, knowledge of legal rights and options, peaceful relationships, and job skills and opportunities are among the resources and support.

Bulgaria snapshot

CRS partner Caritas Sofia is the only organization in Bulgaria offering a comprehensive integration program. The St. Anna Center in central Sofia provides tailor-made services that enable refugees to become fully independent. Caritas Sofia staff provide a package of assistance based on the needs of individuals to resolve their legal status, find employment and enroll their children in school. They also receive financial management trainings, counseling and temporary cash assistance.

Case management

Most asylum seekers arriving in Bulgaria intend to continue to Western Europe. The Caritas Sofia case management team warns refugees and migrants about the dangerous, often unsuccessful journey, during which they risk being robbed or attacked. A mobile outreach team regularly visits reception centers to tell newly arrived refugee families and asylum seekers about options and support. Case managers listen to people's needs and help



Children take part in language classes at Caritas Bulgaria in Sofia. Photo by Oscar Durand for CRS

them create an integration plan to become self-reliant. This often involves teaching them how to navigate the public service system and preparing them for—and linking them to—livelihood opportunities. Caritas Sofia works in partnership with organizations, institutions and businesses that can provide specialized services, like healthcare for people with disabilities, legal assistance and mental health services.

Employment

The Caritas Sofia career center works closely with the case management team to find appropriate job options. Refugees receive a comprehensive set of services and trainings, including detailed job market information, financial management trainings, resume and cover letter writing sessions, job interview preparation, and mentoring programs that prepare them for the job market. No other organization in Bulgaria provides such comprehensive services to refugees.

The career center regularly holds job fairs. To form a network of companies willing to hire refugees, Caritas Sofia teams visit workplaces to introduce the program, assess working conditions and get a better understanding of the type of work available.

Many refugee women have never worked in the formal sector, and have fears and questions about what jobs will entail. Organized visits to potential workplaces enable them

to see the work firsthand. The career center and the case management team also assist employers and job seekers throughout the recruitment phase, helping refugees obtain essential documentation required for signing a contract.

Refugee “buddy program”

This mentoring initiative seeks to ease beneficiaries' adaptation to the host country and their new workplace. Refugees are paired with Bulgarian volunteers who share their professional experiences and give advice on how to find work, adapt to the workplace and adjust to life in Bulgaria. The initiative offers an opportunity for refugees to meet local residents, integrate, and learn more about the culture and the labor environment.

Cash assistance

CRS and Caritas Sofia provide the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers with cash assistance. This helps them cover their basic needs while they fulfill their integration plans and seek work. Cash assistance helps vulnerable groups—including single parents, large families, or people with disabilities—on condition that the recipients work toward the goals in their integration plan. Assistance lasts three months. If a beneficiary finds work or rejects a job offer more than twice, the cash assistance ceases.

- To learn more, watch this short video available on YouTube: [Cash grants help refugees integrate into Bulgarian society.](#)