



How We Serve

Our work is about more than helping people survive for the day. Catholic Relief Services approaches emergency relief and long-term development holistically, ensuring that all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, are able to participate in the very fullness of life — to have access to basic necessities, health care and education — all within peaceful, just communities.

To achieve this, we focus on six key areas of service:



Families forced from their homes by the violence in Darfur need shelter as well as access to food, water and ways to make a living.

Photo by Scott LeFevre/CRS

Emergencies

In areas devastated by natural disasters and wars, CRS is often among the first on the ground providing water, food, shelter, protection from abuses and other basic needs. But our work does not stop there, especially during times of war or when disaster strikes in conflict zones. In the course of

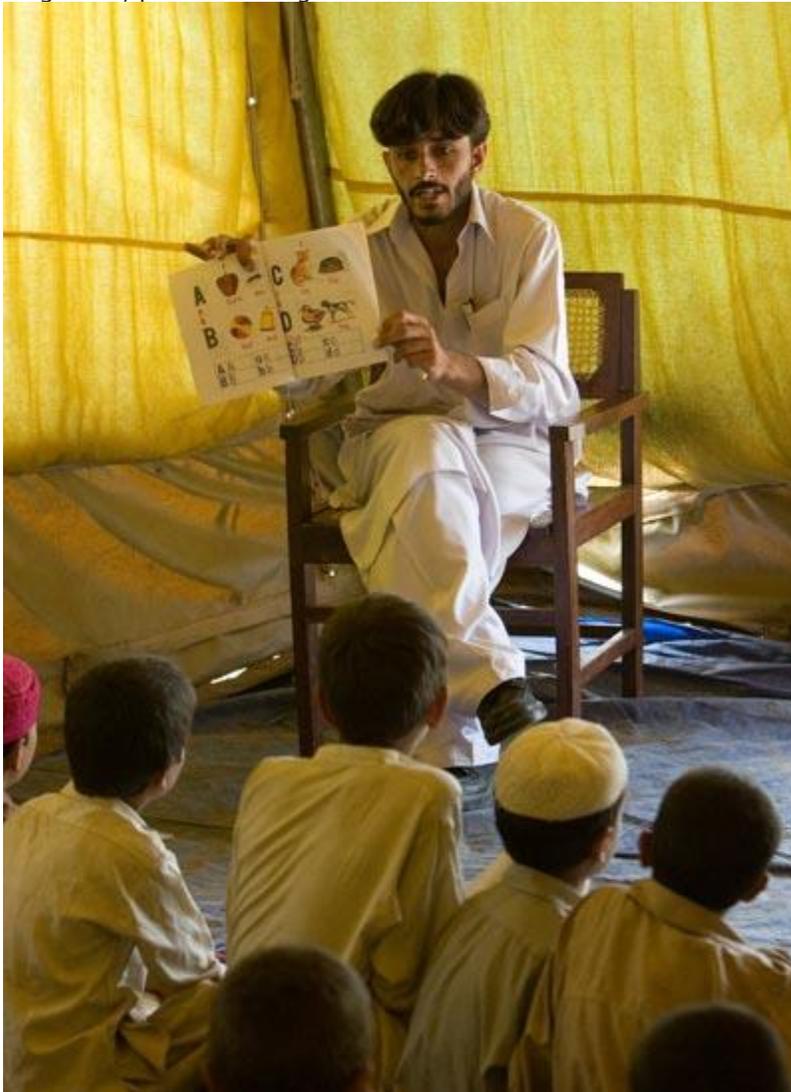
providing [emergency assistance](#), we also address the root causes of conflict and help communities bring about lasting change and peace.

Hunger

Millions worldwide are unable to meet their most basic, daily needs for a variety of reasons. CRS takes a multipronged approach to combat chronic hunger and poverty. We address a combination of pressing concerns by mitigating [hunger](#), developing [agriculture](#), improving [water and sanitation](#), developing sustainable work options, providing [microfinance](#) to support small businesses, and providing a [safety net](#) for those who have no other means of support.

Education

Lasting improvement in the lives of the poor cannot be achieved without education. Access to [education for all](#), particularly girls and women, as well as improved quality of education are key components of CRS' work around the world. Equally important is community involvement in education, without which long-term, positive change is elusive.



CRS promotes increased access to educational opportunities for marginalized children, improved quality education and increased community involvement in education. Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS

Health

In much of the developing world, people have little access to health care — no clinics, no hospitals, no doctors, no medicine. Focusing on remote and underserved areas, CRS establishes [community-based health care systems](#) that give people the tools they need to manage their own health needs. Our community health programs focus on caring for those affected by [HIV and AIDS](#); improving child survival, especially among orphans and vulnerable children; developing proper water and sanitation systems; improving nutrition; and advancing maternal and child health.

Peace

The way we provide emergency aid and development assistance can actually prevent or transform conflicts. [Peacebuilding](#), therefore, lies at the heart of all we do. Conflict resolution, education and prevention are integral to our work of development and emergency recovery. Part of peacebuilding also means strengthening civil society through civic organizations that help communities collectively advocate for their own needs. This, in turn, encourages good governance and holds governments accountable to their people. In this way, such tragedies as human trafficking can be halted and the most vulnerable are given the protection they need.

Helping at Home

CRS serves the poor and vulnerable overseas. Here at home, we work to help American Catholics put their faith into action, encouraging them to [advocate for changes](#) that uproot the unjust structures that constrain the lives of the poor and perpetuate poverty, conflict and inequality. Programs educate Catholics at home about the causes of hunger, help them foster economic justice through conscientious consumerism, and build peace and justice in the world by raising their voices in the halls of U.S. and international governing bodies.