



# Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

**SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Executive Summary

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. CRS works with local, national and international Catholic institutions and structures, as well as other organizations, to save, protect and transform lives in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

Accountability is a top priority for CRS. In 2018, CRS, Caritas Australia and CAFOD, jointly developed a Protection Mainstreaming/Safe and Dignified Programming Framework that lays out eight core components needed to uphold safety and dignity, meaningful access, accountability, and participation and empowerment in programming. CRS further demonstrated its commitment to accountability in 2019 by becoming a member of the CHS Alliance, "a global alliance of humanitarian and development organizations committed to making aid work better for people".

In 2021, CRS embarked on an agency-wide validated self-assessment process to assess its performance against the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). The CHS – administered by the CHS Alliance and required for membership – "is a set of nine commitments made by organizations and individuals delivering humanitarian assistance to people affected by crises"<sup>1</sup>. The CHS has traditionally focused on humanitarian contexts, as has CRS' own Safe and Dignified Programming Framework, which shares many elements with the CHS. However, recognizing the need for quality and accountability regardless of the context, CRS utilized the CHS self-assessment process to collaboratively reflect, learn, and improve on how it applies the standards in both in its relief and development work – as one-agency. With demonstrated adherence to the CHS becoming increasingly important for donors in both the humanitarian and development spaces, intra-agency ownership of the analysis and Improvement Plan herein is critical.

CRS' Humanitarian Response Department (HRD) led the agency-wide self-assessment process from 2021 to 2023 using the methodology and tools developed by the CHS Alliance. The process called for the organization's performance to be measured against a series of indicators derived from the 9 CHS commitments, drawing from multiple information sources: staff, agency documents, community members, and partners. Following data collection from these sources, the CHS Alliance provided to CRS a Tableau-based dashboard of its scores and associated qualitative feedback for the following:

- Overall Commitment Scores,
- Key Action Indicators (derived from 687 staff surveys),
- Organizational Responsibility Indicators (derived from desk review conducted by a steering committee of CRS staff),
- Performance Indicators (derived from 229 key informant interviews with community members),
- Partnership Scores (derived from 14 partner organization surveys and a desk review conducted by a steering committee of CRS staff).

In addition to the above scores, CRS received three Index Scores on "PSEA", "Localization" and "Diversity and Gender". These cross-cutting themes are mainstreamed through the CHS. Scores for all indicators ranged from 0 to 4, with 0 being the lowest possible score and 4 being the highest possible score.

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<sup>1</sup> CHS Alliance (2022). Core Humanitarian Standard Self-Assessment Manual. [https://d1h79zlgfht2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2020/06/Self-assessment\\_manual-v5.pdf](https://d1h79zlgfht2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2020/06/Self-assessment_manual-v5.pdf)