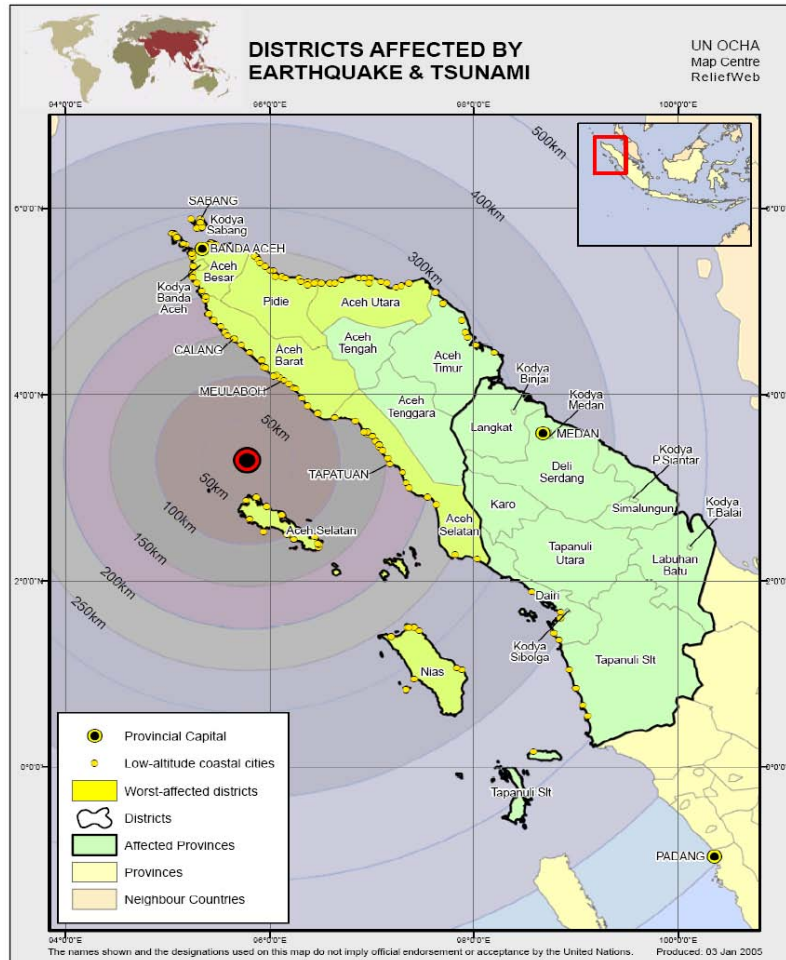


Independent One Year Post-Tsunami Impact Assessment of Catholic Relief Services Programs in Aceh, Indonesia



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACCORD Aceh Community-Based Recovery and Development
ACT Area Coordination Team
BRR National Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (*Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi*) (quasi-governmental agency, Indonesia)
CI Caritas Internationalis
CFW Cash for Work
CRS Catholic Relief Services
CSG Civil Society and Governance
ERST Emergency Response Support Team (CI)
ERT Emergency Response Team
FGD Focus group discussions
HQ CRS Headquarters, Baltimore, MD, USA
HR Human Resources
IDP Internally displaced person
INGO International Nongovernmental Organization
LL Lessons learned
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
NFI Non-food Item
NGO Nongovernmental Organization
OFDA USAID Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
PM Project Manager (CRS)
PQSD Program Quality and Support Department
RD Regional Director (CRS)
SO Strategic Objective
SOA Special Operations Appeal
SOW Scope of Work
TDY Temporary Duty (Assignment)
TLC Temporary Living Center
UN United Nations
UNORC United Nations Operations for Relief and Coordination
USAID U.S. Agency for International Development
VDC Village Development Committee
wat/san Water/sanitation
WFP World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CRS responded with relief and reconstruction programs in Aceh Indonesia after the 2004 earthquake and tsunami crisis primarily in Meulaboh and surrounding areas and in Pulao Aceh and Banda Aceh. Programs were implemented in the following sectoral areas:

<u>Program Area</u>	
Shelter and reconstruction	38.2%
Emergency	40.3%
Restoration of livelihoods	10.9%
Water and sanitation	4.5%
Health	3.5%
Child protection and education	2.6%
Total	100.0%

The CRS/Aceh program was structured into a framework with the following strategic objectives:

SO1	Reconstruction: Affected communities have rebuilt and improved their households and community assets
SO2	Health: Families and communities improve their household health practices and make greater use of improved preventative and curative health services
SO3	Civil Society and Governance: Affected communities and local governments have a positive influence on the allocation of public goods
SO4	Livelihoods: Families improve their livelihoods and increase family income

In January 2006, CRS contracted an external consultant to conduct a one-year impact assessment of its tsunami programs in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. This report is for activities carried out in Indonesia during the first year of the program.

The purpose of the assessment in Indonesia was to 1) gather information on program delivery, including impact on beneficiaries, 2) review the initial response to set the stage for the current program response, and 3) identify issues to consider for future programming direction.

The following aspects of the CRS response worked well:

Program: Despite many challenges in the relief phase, CRS effectively met basic needs, targeting populations that corresponded to its mission and delivered a wide range of relief and recovery services. While all agencies, especially the Christian ones, walked a tightrope beyond the first few months in the traditional and isolated Islamic society, CRS developed good relations with the beneficiary communities, government, and Islamic leaders and drew on its good reputation of over 4 decades in Indonesia. Assistance to Islamic NGOs in the early stages of relief operations was strategic and conveyed positively.

CRS' greatest strength has been its contribution to shelter recovery and reconstruction which has brought international and Sphere standards into the process. CRS advocated for pro-poor

and -vulnerable aid, and renters and relocation policies that were adopted; was responsive to government requests, especially for rehabilitation of public buildings and roads; offered technical advice or led discussions on shelter and water and sanitation; and led the coordination in Meulaboh in the initial stages of the relief response. Use of local engineers and firms helped reinvigorate the economy.

Beneficiaries of market revitalization programs (joineries, spice traders, fish and vegetable markets) were especially grateful for CRS assistance, and visible signs of recovery were found. The National Bureau for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (BRR) appreciates CRS' "can do" attitude and ability to respond to requests outside its own strategy. Reconstruction of religious buildings, basic infrastructure, roads, schools, and other key public buildings placed CRS in good standing with local officials.

Cash for Work (CFW) was a success in providing traumatized people with meaningful work, and survivors put the cash to good use to pay for complementary foods, school clothes and fees, fuel for cooking, and other immediate needs. CFW also served as therapy after such a tragedy. Beneficiaries overall were happy with this form of assistance, so much so that they may be becoming too dependent on it.

CRS quickly built positive relationships with Caritas Internationalis (CI) Special Operations Appeal (SOA) partners, local partners, the Government of Indonesia, and the National Bureau for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (BRR). CRS' strategy of partnering, reinvigorating, as well as generating local partners was showing real payoffs as they assisted in other program areas such as water and sanitation, small-scale market livelihood recovery, and the beginning of resurgence of civil society. Partners especially appreciated physical resource support and skills training.

Health, water, and sanitation program components got underway with a strong footing and firm management. For the relief phase, the collective efforts of organizations working in health and sanitation have mitigated any outbreak of disease and malnutrition rates have not escalated. While the need for internal coordination with other sectors remains, these programs have solid strategies though at the same time face challenges with systems that have been destroyed or marginalized from war, the tsunami, or neglect.

Management: CRS faced numerous challenges in hiring staff in Indonesia—strict labor laws, a limited pool of skilled workers, and competition from other organizations. The strategy of recruiting primarily Acehnese staff was mostly successful. Donor allocations of funding for a robust and prolonged response indicates trust in CRS' ability to respond to disasters but also recover lives and livelihoods. An ambitious 5-year CRS Aceh strategy was quickly drawn up and served as an early blueprint for interventions drawing on CRS strengths in the region, particularly in peace building and disaster mitigation.

In the context of these positive results, the following aspects of the CRS response could have gone better:

Program: Besides the harsh environment in which aid agencies worked –the ongoing war, destruction from the tsunami, etc., other factors posed extra challenges: the unprecedented demand for immediate spending of aid monies and as in other emergencies, frequent visitors consumed scarce time and human resources.

While there were many successes in the shelter process as noted above, there were also

significant obstacles. Unskilled contract labor is slowing program progress, and untrained staff slow service delivery. Additionally, agencies have to contend with the impact of massive aid and potential for corruption.

CRS, similar to other humanitarian actors in Aceh, faced two major challenges: 1) communication with communities and engendering its participation in their recovery processes, and; 2) provision of sufficient and timely transitional shelters. Adequate communication with communities about the building process or reasons for delays is lacking, as is a good understanding of Acehnese culture. With respect to transitional shelters, the importance of the need for a robust transitional shelter response was underestimated in the planning of recovery interventions due to a variety of complex factors. The issue is multifaceted and all parties involved had a stake in its failure. CRS delivered shelter kits for transitional shelters early on, stopped, and restarted later with a new kit composition. At the time of this assessment tents were rotting and beneficiary frustrations rising because of the slow pace of permanent shelter construction by most agencies. Few families have moved into their new homes because communities prefer to move in together or to wait for electricity and water.

Future attention should include a focus on program transparency and accountability as well as assessing the potential for crosscutting activities in human rights, protection of tsunami survivors, psychosocial needs, children's social needs in temporary living centers and camps for internally displaced persons. Such concepts are relatively new to Aceh and may need time to sort out and take hold. In future months CRS will need to work more closely with local and district government on these and civil society issues.

A stronger facilitation role by CRS in management of the SOA or advocating with CI Rome for a 'neutral' capable CI facilitator may have relieved CRS of wearing so many hats—facilitator, trainer, and monitor/manager of funds—during the first months of the SOA. The process during the better part of the first year appeared chaotic yet amicable. Local partners voiced frustration with the funding process and wished they had skills training sooner to contribute meaningfully and in a timelier manner to their parishes and vulnerable populations. In the later part of 2005, overall facilitation and management began to improve. CRS and partners are actively addressing opportunities to better the running of the SOA over the next year.

Finally, in many program sectors, more frequent and better CRS program monitoring would improve accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness as well as defuse community tensions.

Management: Delayed recruitment of a permanent director and senior program management staff and constantly changing management affected planning, program delivery, morale, and image. Support was needed for finding the best "A" team to expedite hiring of key staff.

Improved coordination between CRS Aceh programming and support for financial reimbursement, approvals, procurement, and hiring would strengthen the program. In the initial rapid response, the decision-making structure was unclear, planning processes were ambiguous despite a strategy, and regional and HQ management support was inconsistent. However, efforts were made at all levels and most people, including regional staff, were impressively dedicated to this operation. The regional office and Aceh have subsequently worked together better.

Recommendations

Key areas for improvement in the current operation of CRS' tsunami response are engagement and communication with local actors: transparency, communication, and accountability with the

affected populations; mechanisms within CRS and in the villages to deliver programs more effectively such as rethinking of the village development committee structure and revitalization of the Area Coordination Team structure. Given the numerous unanticipated challenges it faced during its first year of tsunami response in Aceh, CRS should solidify systems, structures and current program progress before embarking on new areas such as agro-enterprise, -finance, and -governance, as well as expanding operations.

Relief phase

1. Secure a permanent director as soon as possible and put in place upfront needed senior management.
2. Reduce/avoid higher-level micromanagement of day-to-day field issues.
3. Create a supportive environment through good basic management and staff promotion.
4. Carefully weigh decisions about embedding journalists with field staff.
5. Schedule periodic visits with all visitors together, wherever possible, instead of ad hoc visits that drain resources and time.
6. Engage ERT TDYers for the first 4 – 6 weeks of the emergency, remaining flexible for large-scale disasters. Commit follow-on TDYers to 4–6 months.
7. In orientation of new staff, place a high priority on conveying CRS' mission, policies, and procedures; and training on Propack, Proframe, and CRS' integral human development model in emergencies. Do within first month of hire. Equip all staff with appropriate reference materials, forms and tools.
8. Consider an "aide-de-camp" for the director or ERT leader for the initial phase to assist with tasks, help smooth transitions, and as on-the-job training for future emergencies.

Programs (SO 1-4)

1. Prioritize provision of transitional shelter kits to beneficiaries in tents or Temporary Living Centers.
2. At the end of year 2, take stock of program progress; review the strategy against staff capacities, program management, and needs.
3. Weigh options for outsourcing permanent shelter construction to speed up process.
4. Enlist communities in monitoring the progress of housing construction.
5. Have staff monitor and communicate with villages more frequently, transferring program information to audiences (especially women) beyond the village development committees, and using media outlets when appropriate.
6. Capitalize on the expertise of experienced local partners and involve them in training CRS staff on community participation and development.
7. Link with agencies working in health in CRS priority villages where CRS does not implement health interventions to share resources, approaches, and materials.
8. Reconsider extent of livelihood interventions and prioritize women's needs.

Crosscutting

1. Conduct in-depth Sphere and humanitarian principles courses twice yearly.
2. Make staff security a high priority, purchasing and disseminating needed equipment.
3. Step up disaster preparedness and mitigation activities, drawing upon the CRS/NEAR model and resources. Train villages on conflict transformation.
4. Monitor local media regularly to learn how humanitarian aid affects the community; include information on the local situation and culture into regular internal meetings.

Management and Human Resources

1. Take appropriate steps to reduce delays in approval of critical staff positions and financial payments to contractors and partners.

2. Consider combining staff from program support and programs to work as teams so that programs do not run ahead of program support operations.
3. Have higher level executive management give greater emphasis to program support (e.g., finances, human resources, and logistics) of emergency operations and place skilled staff in these positions, including on the ERT.
4. Survey and document the emergency experience of the more than 4,000 national staff and expatriate emergency staff. Make this information available to CRS and the ERT to draw on in emergencies. Document staff skills, including languages.
5. Place needed hiring staff in operations and prioritize HQ hiring in large emergencies.
6. Prepare systematic training for nascent CI partners in financial systems, procurement, staffing, and programming so that the partners can be deployed rapidly in SOA emergency operations. Modify this training for each situation.

Coordination, Collaboration and Communications

1. Inform field staff about the Acehese understanding of priority villages and clarify that any agency is open to work with them. Encourage communities to look for opportunities to collaborate with other agencies in implementing the village development plans.
2. Redesign the Area Coordination Team model (once) to meet intersectoral needs to communicate, monitor as well as serve recipient communities; host regular and structured intersectoral meetings.
3. Encourage agencies to provide value-added services to villages where CRS is working.
4. Communicate program progress to communities regularly, using techniques outlined in the paper, "Where's My House" and elsewhere. Ensure all communities have bulletin boards and appoint specific staff to regularly update information.
5. Inform staff of key internal policy changes in face-to-face meetings that allow feedback.
6. Promote CRS activities in Relief Web, the Humanitarian Information Center, and in brochures for visitors to Aceh, updating the information regularly.

M&E

1. Make closer monitoring of field programs compulsory. If necessary, require PM field visits at least 4 times a month. Set up a weekly schedule for visits to priority villages for field staff and coordinate with other sectors or the Area Coordination Team.
2. Hire additional M&E staff for Aceh to build field staff monitoring capacity and provide HQ support (Propack trainings). Define impact indicators for SO's.
3. Conduct baseline assessments early in the recovery phase for all programs to measure progress toward impact indicators; programming can be adjusted to meet needs.
4. Monitor for Do No Harm at the outset of an emergency response, training staff in DNH.

PART II: ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This report covers only Indonesia, where the field assessment was conducted from January 31 to February 17, 2006. In keeping with evaluation criteria used in other tsunami assessments, the consultant took into account the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Cooperation Directorate (DAC) criteria for evaluating humanitarian aid (effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and relevance). The assessment methodology was primarily qualitative, with quantitative analysis undertaken wherever possible and appropriate. The team documented outputs and outcomes across sectors and measured impact on the communities as a whole qualitatively. The following assessment methods were employed:

- Pre-assessment desk study of available reports, documents, and evaluations.

- Development of focus group discussion (FGD) and interview questionnaires, as well as a shelter assessment checklist. Focus group questions were devised to address the DAC criteria mentioned previously, phase of the relief operation, and sector-specific questions. Interview questionnaires also went into the above topics and included sections on management and M&E, among other topics.
- Interviews with approximately 27 CRS headquarters and regional staff and 23 CRS Indonesia staff
- Pre-planning with country evaluation point persons.
- Review of in-country documents and field reports.
- Interviews with most staff involved (TDYers, the Emergency Response Team [ERT], temporary Aceh directors, and staff from Jakarta and the region), questionnaires distributed to approximately 50 project support staff from Aceh (with 28 responses), and focus group discussions (FGD) with 243 direct tsunami beneficiaries in 11 locations.
- FGD with beneficiaries in all sectors of CRS operations, community recovery, regaining of hope, and crosscutting issues such as gender, security and protection, peace building, civil society, and capacity building. FGD were conducted with 6 groups of men, 7 groups of women, 4 groups of children, and 9 additional groups including partners, village development committees (VDC), and cooperatives. FGD participants were not chosen randomly but rather to ensure of village diversity. Sites for the FGD were prioritized according to importance, financial investment, and range of program activities. Sites that had been evaluated previously were avoided to minimize “evaluation fatigue.” Annex 4 provides details of the FDGs.
- Eight success stories from direct beneficiaries (individuals, cooperatives, NGOs, and VDC). Unfortunately no learning stories were collected.
- In-country interviews with 69 local government officials, CI partners, international NGOs, local partners, associations, and networks with which CRS works.
- Distribution of 28 questionnaires to Project Managers (PM) and support staff attending a CRS-sponsored summit meeting in Medan just before the assessment to obtain a wide range of responses and reduce survey time in the field.
- Consultant site visits, including FGD and interviews, to villages representing a range of programs and well as geographical diversity. These included an IDP camp, a seaside village, a relocation village, an island village, and villages 1 to 2 hours from the main CRS office.

A. Assessment Process

Planning. The assessment was as participatory as possible. The information collected was reviewed and analyzed and triangulated for this report. It should be noted that there are many opinions and perceptions on processes, especially in the early stages of the operations, and many differing recollections of events by the FGD participants, making it a challenge to analyze certain aspects of the data.

Interview coverage. More interviews with external agencies, especially international NGOs, more time with local partners and temporary shelter staff would have helped round off information collected.

The FDGs included interviews with children to gain insights into how disasters affect children's lives and how CRS' recovery efforts can better address their needs. The FGD gave children a voice that is seldom heard or understood.

Capacity building. Teams were trained for a half day and coached after the initial sessions. At the end of each day, teams briefly reviewed progress. The teams in each country, particularly the field staff who conducted the FGD, found the assessment training positive and timely.

Control group. The evaluation did not include non-beneficiaries. Coverage of the tsunami-affected beneficiaries was already a large undertaking, and cost and time restraints did not allow a more extensive review. In future assessments, it might be beneficial to sample non-beneficiaries as well as war-affected IDPs for a clearer idea of project impact as well as unaddressed needs.

B. Methodological Concerns for Focus Group Discussions

Observation and feedback were key to the success of the process. The consultant trained all focus group discussion (FGD) facilitators and was able to observe at least one FGD per day, or more than half of the FGDs completed.

The participation of male CRS staff, observers, and facilitators in some of the women's FGDs may have limited the information contributed by the women or biased the results. The same was true for the men's FGDs. Although it was communicated to participants prior to the start of the FGDs that response would not affect the assistance they received, the presence of CRS staff during the FGD likely affected to the openness of some responses and depth and scope of issues discussed. Choosing communal spaces for the discussions decreased privacy and required turning away additional respondents. The way the focus groups were conducted and the steps taken to address issues helped ensure a reasonably high quality of information gathered.

C. Data Analysis

The assessment information was summarized and triangulated to ascertain the impact of CRS programs on beneficiaries and their communities. The consultant reviewed gross discrepancies or gaps in information to see whether further clarity could be gained. FGD rather than household surveys were used for the assessment to save time and human resources that were already stretched thin and to reduce the burden on beneficiaries who had undergone multiple surveys.

The consultant used NVivo software for a robust analysis of the FGD results. Documents were coded by three coders trained in Indonesia. FGD were analyzed by pre-designated topics using Nvivo, as well as all summaries read to gain a full understanding of beneficiary responses and impact of programs.

Aceh staff should further analyze the focus group information from this assessment to understand community issues for program planning. Other agencies working in Aceh might be interested in the results from the focus group discussions, and CRS can use this as an information resource.

PART III: FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into two sections: the initial emergency response phase (section A), and the recovery phase broken down by strategic objective (section B). Findings are based on data collected defined in the methods section.

A. Initial Response Phase

CRS arrived in Banda Aceh 2 days after the tsunami with staff from the CRS/Indonesia Jakarta

Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Unit. According to CRS situation reports (“sitreps”), the first weeks of the operation transport posed the biggest problem as roads were destroyed and helicopters or small planes were hard to contract. Volunteers moved some supplies by foot.

CRS was innovative in finding transport to difficult to reach places, in the first few weeks renting trucks, helicopters, and twin otter planes, and purchasing 4 trucks. By January 7, 3 CRS offices were opened and functioning —Medan, Banda Aceh, and Meulaboh. CRS began coordination with Caritas agencies and with WFP. CRS, given its excellent and long track record in food aid, was the lead food and nonfood distribution agency in Meulaboh by mid-January.

There were significant health challenges for survivors and for CRS staff the first month—diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory infections, trauma, infected wounds, etc. CRS mobilized hygiene and sanitation kits and distributed 4,600 kits to Meulaboh by January 24. CRS also mobilized cleanup and rehabilitation of wat/san infrastructure at schools and worked with local health authorities to set up a water testing laboratory (accomplished by 9 weeks into response operations). However, water and sanitation were immense problems faced by all, and efforts to address them were insufficient to the need. Agencies sent too many medical teams and supplies, but not enough experienced wat/san experts. CRS began cash for work by week 3 post-tsunami, paying for cleanup of a parish school and health clinic (reference: CRS sitreps). Initial shelter issues were also addressed the first month with distribution of plastic sheeting, rope, and family tents.

CRS Aceh staffing grew from 0 to approximately 330 by the end of the first year. Because CRS did not have the advantage of partners on the ground or a national Caritas partner, it faced major challenges in the start-up of emergency operations. With strong technical and administrative capacity, CRS was designated to facilitate the Caritas Internationalis Special Operations Appeal (SOA). CRS management and staff had to simultaneously hire and screen staff, care for staff in a fairly austere environment, build staff capacity, build the capacity of nascent SOA partners, manage donor funding and emphasize accountability with all the Caritas agencies, implement activities directly, and respond to demands and spending pressure from headquarters and donors. Managing the SOA was a lower priority for CRS at first.

Conclusions

Most all INGOs faced similar operational problems in Aceh—lack of skilled labor, cultural differences, staff with an undeveloped understanding of humanitarian operations, salary differences between expatriates, Indonesians, and locals, no previous operations in Aceh, language barriers, and insufficient orientation and training of new staff. In addition, most agencies were pressured to spend quickly and put into either/or situations where they had to build houses quickly or develop community relationships. One or the other of these options was usually compromised, and in Aceh it tended to be the latter.

Every respondent interviewed had his or her opinion about how the events unfolded in the emergency phase. It was challenging to determine the precision of the responses, especially those of the Acehese beneficiaries. Other evaluators, INGOs, and CRS expatriate staff concur with the challenge of understanding beneficiary responses.

CRS has made important strategic decisions that are better practices. Examples are working with local Islamic organizations for selected interventions (part of the peace-building strategy), prioritizing reconstruction of places of worship with communities and officials, and establishing exit strategies, e.g., not tankering water and stopping food aid delivery for some relief operations.

Accomplishments: Initial Response Phase

- ✓ Rapid deployment of emergency relief team and qualified staff
- ✓ Rapid hiring of emergency response staff (from none to 149 in just 4 months)
- ✓ Distribution of food to more than 60,000 beneficiaries in a few weeks
- ✓ Delivery of 11,742 metric tons of food aid to 186,136 beneficiaries and more than 54,000 non-food items
- ✓ A rapid community assessment to understand preferences for food and non-food items
- ✓ Communication and relationship building with the Acehnese to create good will in the early months, including giving food for an Islamic feast, donating prayer kits, rebuilding mosques, and working with Islamic scholars
- ✓ Advocacy for the poor and vulnerable in the selection (de facto in some cases) of villages, shelters and target populations

Better practices

- * Linking with the community and local leaders for consultation and delivery of relief aid in the initial stages to ensure that all received the same amount of assistance
- * Rapid development of a longer term strategy
- * Responsiveness to immediate needs and working out of the box when needed
- * Timely exit strategies for (selected) unsustainable interventions
- * Use of CFW to help affected populations purchase other needed commodities, clean up sites, put people to work, and help heal emotional wounds, but used judiciously and stopped on a timely basis to avoid dependency or other negative impacts such as disincentive for volunteerism or market price inflation
- * Early social, cultural, and economic analysis to aid programming
- * Prioritizing community participation in interventions that impact their lives
- * Preparedness planning, especially in disaster-prone countries and regions
- * Careful weighing of joint activities with the military, whose priorities for reaching target populations may conflict with the agency mission
- * Balancing pressure to spend money quickly with efforts to maintain good emergency and development practices
- * A command and control-style management in large emergencies, with field commanders supported and generals focusing on strategic matters and encouraging the troops

Challenges

- ✎ Responding to pressure, including from the media, to spend large amounts of money quickly, effectively, and efficiently (US\$24 million out of \$128 million was spent in the first 9 months in Aceh) and without compromising program quality.
- ✎ Program interventions in different villages, especially in health, increase the time needed to work with other agencies to ensure needs are met.
- ✎ Doing more reconstruction and rehabilitation than ever before, CRS is faced with a tension between being an NGO and being a construction firm.
- ✎ WFP beneficiary criteria for food were not clear.
- ✎ Food is not always distributed evenly because IDPs change and beneficiaries are not always present on distribution days.
- ✎ Lack of coordination with other NGOs can lead to duplication of distribution of aid.
- ✎ Large number of staff need capacity building in CRS policy and procedures, good emergency programming, as well as cultural orientation.
- ✎ Staff salaries and local staff competency widely vary.

Recommendations for improving relief responses

- Hire a permanent Director of Operations as soon as possible. In large operations, put in place a strong and experienced permanent Director, Field Office Director, and Head of Programs
- Find a workable management chain of command from HQ to the field, similar to a military command-and-control style.
- Move personnel into positions where they are strong if their current positions do not capitalize on their skills; support and supervise all staff to create a supportive atmosphere.
- Hire strong program support staff as part of the ERT to better respond to large emergencies.
- Have HR survey and document the emergency experience of the 4,000 national staff and provide this information to CRS and ERT to draw on; document expatriate emergency staff skills and languages for future emergencies.
- ERT should prepare systematic training for nascent CI partners in financial systems, procurement, staffing, and programming that can be deployed rapidly in SOA emergency operations. Modify as needed for each situation.
- Weigh decisions about media involvement (embedding) with operations staff in the field.
- Monitor local media from the beginning to understand how beneficiary communities view foreign aid. Engage staff to inform beneficiaries about the organization to broaden understanding and facilitate cooperation.
- Begin peace-building activities and communicate “Do No Harm” principles at the outset of the emergency response.
- Consider scheduling field visits from outside the program (for example, all visitors going together for 1 week every 3 months) to reduce program disruption and preserve time and human resources.
- Engage TDYers for the first 2 to 4 weeks of the emergency response, but insist that new TDYers commit to a minimum of 4 to 6 months afterward.
- Promote CRS activities in more web outlets such as Relief Web, the Humanitarian Information Center, and in brochures, updating the information regularly.
- Consider adding a component to address children’s social needs in priority villages.
- In emergencies and times of rapid hiring, orient all staff in CRS policy and procedures either in person or through Webreeze within the first month of employment.

B. Sectoral Rehabilitation: Recovery Phase

SO1 Shelter & Reconstruction

Temporary and Transitional Shelter

Accomplishments

- ✓ During the first year of the tsunami response, CRS built or helped households build 710 transitional houses for families and had committed to another 1,301.
- ✓ CRS assisted the BRR in establishing shelter standards.
- ✓ Communities participated in the very early stages in selecting house styles, expressed interest in housing, and set up committees.
- ✓ The design of the transitional houses was solid, and techniques were specified, based on strong social and technical data.
- ✓ The reconstruction motivated the community and increased confidence in CRS.

Lessons Learned

- * Houses should have been repaired where possible, during the push to get permanent

housing underway.

- * Short-term forecasting of the needed type and quality of construction materials can prevent delays in procurement.
- * Procedures for contract approval should be simplified and fully communicated to staff.

Challenges

- ✓ Helping other organizations move 64,000 IDPs out of tents
- ✓ Communicating to communities the length of time needed to build permanent shelter
- ✓ Increasing the pace of delivery and construction of transitional shelters
- ✓ Coordination with other sectors from the beginning of operations and regularly thereafter
- ✓ Designing appropriate and environmental friendly transitional shelter kits, procuring those materials
- ✓ Maintaining sufficient and consistent level of housing sector staff
- ✓ Coordinating with water and sanitation experts to address gaps/needs in government built Temporary Living Centers

Permanent Shelter

Accomplishments

- ✓ A strong CRS advisory role with the GOI, BRR, and agencies in Aceh on shelter standards, processes, and issues, including advocacy for the following:
 - Renters policy
 - Policy for the poor and marginalized and for orphans
 - Relocation policy that gives communities (not the government) first choice of relocation sites
 - Construction practices and standards using a local NGO architectural committee to design culturally appropriate designs
 - Quality control practices
 - Use of local engineers
 - Bringing in positive technical change
- ✓ Offers of funding from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for infrastructure development because of CRS' excellent reputation in construction
- ✓ Responsiveness to local government and agencies in providing technical advice and meeting unmet needs
- ✓ Use of the services of local Acehnese workers and local firms and holding them accountable
- ✓ Assistance to the BRR in monitoring transparency and accountability
- ✓ Advocacy for sensitivity to environmental concerns (e.g., timber use, water resource protection, shoreline protection, erosion, and watershed management)

Lessons Learned

- * Emphasis on housing construction and infrastructure recovery goals must be carefully weighed against CRS' core mission.
- * Communities desire consistent and ongoing information about recovery processes that affect their lives.
- * Housing construction should be monitored closely and regularly by staff and communities to mitigate problems with contractors.

Challenges

- ✓ Regular dialogue with communities given the inexperience and shortage of staff in this arena, and coordination of the information with other sectors in CRS
- ✓ Mitigating conflict and working in concert with other CRS interventions, especially water and

- sanitation, civil society, and peace building
- ✎ Lowering expectations of completing permanent houses in the near future
- ✎ Increasing the speed of construction, including hiring Type 1 and 2 contractors (larger firms), improving forecasting of material needs for advance procurement to save time and money, or considering alternative construction such as allowing people to rebuild themselves or without CRS contractor assistance (the last option needs to be weighed with caution)
- ✎ Lack of quality materials coupled with poor workmanship
- ✎ Meeting targets with all the issues listed above
- ✎ Developing the civil society aspect of the program to coincide with community development
- ✎ Balancing the need to build more houses (e.g., by working with external contractors) and the need to develop local capacity and boost the local economy (this may be done already through the collective efforts of other organizations)
- ✎ Balancing good development with a massive construction effort

Water and Sanitation

Accomplishments

- ✓ Installation of water supply and sanitary facilities in devastated areas (13,200 beneficiaries benefited)
- ✓ Establishment of water laboratory and water quality testing for CRS and other NGOs, affecting approximately 30,000 beneficiaries
- ✓ Cleaning of 838 wells
- ✓ Provision of water and sanitation for public buildings (schools, clinics, markets)
- ✓ Agreement with 16 communities on community water and sanitation facilities/plans
- ✓ Agreement to provide water and sanitation for approximately 6,000 permanent CRS houses over 5 years

Better Practices

- * Promoting sustainable solutions (tube wells vs. tankered water) from the beginning of relief operations

Challenges

- ✎ Intrasectoral coordination within CRS
- ✎ Increasing lines of communication internally and externally to communities

Recommendations for SO 1 – Shelter and Reconstruction

- ⊕ Pay immediate attention to providing shelter kits; coordinating with agencies and/or advocating for the prioritizing of IDPs out of tents first and then out of barracks, if possible.
- ⊕ Consider hiring external (to Aceh) and larger contracting companies to speed the construction process.
- ⊕ Enlist communities in monitoring housing construction by educating sub-committees on expected quality of materials and basic construction methods and having these sub-committees report weekly to clear discrepancies quickly.
- ⊕ Have shelter project manager and staff visit and communicate with villages (not just priority villages) at least bi-weekly, including transferring program information to audiences beyond the VDC, increasing the use of bulletin boards and media outlets when appropriate, and ensuring that women receive information through women's groups, prayer groups, kiosk owners, or other means.
- ⊕ Ensure transfer of critical project information, verified by the PM or Head of Program, to incoming CRS staff.
- ⊕ Capitalize on the expertise of experienced local partners and involve them in training CRS

staff on community participation and development.

SO 2 Health

Accomplishments

- ✓ Strong relationship with and trusted by the MOH
- ✓ 115 village-based health education programs for 81,021 people
- ✓ 6 health facilities at district, sub-district, and village level provided with resource support and training of MOH staff
- ✓ More than 700 training courses for community health workers, potentially reaching 30,000 beneficiaries
- ✓ Revitalization of posyandus, even those that had stopped as a result of conflict
- ✓ Strong community involvement with the mother and child health program

Better Practices

- * Approaching the MOH with a cooperative spirit facilitates cooperation and running of programs

Challenges

- ✎ Building the skills and confidence of community health workers to conduct outreach to the most vulnerable populations
- ✎ Working with the impoverished MOH, which lacks equipment, vehicles, and fuel for supervisory visits
- ✎ Engendering volunteerism in spite of past history of people receiving CFW for recovery efforts
- ✎ In the early months, frequent turnover in key government health positions meant CRS needed to reintroduce plans and keep fostering relationships
- ✎ Security of CRS health staff who travel the furthest and reach patients in far-flung places most exercise even greater caution when traveling (especially as road and weather conditions risk stranding staff on the road overnight).
- ✎ Need for support department to assist programs in a more consistent and systematic way.

Recommendations for SO 2 – Health

- ⊕ Coordinate with NGOs and UN agencies working in health in CRS priority villages where CRS does not implement health interventions, to share resources, approaches and education and training materials.
- ⊕ Sensitize other SO field staff to health issues and objectives so they can alert NGOs as to needs when working in villages where CRS health interventions are not conducted.
- ⊕ Weigh alternatives to address the potential need for psycho-social interventions.

SO 3—Civil Society and Governance

Accomplishments

- ✓ 12 villages and 24 village leaders engaged in community planning for approximately 9,500 beneficiaries
- ✓ Developing good relationships with partners
- ✓ Establishment of BDCs as a mechanism to deliver aid and plan for community rehabilitations including assistance in generation of village development plans

Challenges

- ✎ Perceived lower priority for upper management on the need and scope of this SO
- ✎ Increasing attention required to mitigating conflicts in other sectoral interventions, especially

- shelter and staying on track with Civil Society & Governance interventions
- ✎ Conveying information about CRS to generate more Acehnese support
- ✎ Lack of CRS staff experience with Acehnese culture and 'Do No Harm' principles
- ✎ Generating information about voting and democratic choice in a relatively short time before mid-term elections.

Recommendations for SO 3—Civil Society and Governance

- ⊕ Monitor local radio and newspapers to understand how the NGO community and humanitarian aid are affecting the people
- ⊕ Build information on working in Aceh and Acehnese culture into weekly cross-sectoral meetings
- ⊕ Address Village Development Committee structural issues and manage expectations about the VDGs
- ⊕ Subcontract trainers to facilitate and expedite capacity building of partners

SO 4—Livelihoods

Accomplishments

- ✓ Immediate income (CFW) for beneficiaries and generation of savings
- ✓ Infrastructure sector support for reconstruction of cooperatives (joineries, spice traders, etc) and their successes engaging other agencies contracts and support
- ✓ Positive linkages for future agro-enterprise projects as a result of markets built by the infrastructure sector (Markets Project)
- ✓ Grants to small business association members to restart businesses and these businesses are reporting a high rate of successful first year upstarts
- ✓ Encouragement of local brainstorming of solutions and participation in rehabilitation by multiple partners

Challenges

- ✎ Finding time to supervise and monitor field staff amid other duties
- ✎ Limited internal staff community development skills
- ✎ Need for more direction (first year) and internal cohesion
- ✎ Unclear and multiple expectations from HQ, senior management, and regional advisors
- ✎ Difficulty of obtaining vehicles and other support for after-hours needs such as night deliveries (new vehicle policy)
- ✎ Dependency created by CFW, lowering of incentive to perform other kinds of work activities in a timely manner
- ✎ Integrating risk reduction/disaster mitigation activities in a timely manner
- ✎ Procurement of appropriate materials on a timely basis

Recommendations for SO 4—Livelihoods

- ⊕ Reconsider the breadth and depth of livelihood interventions, giving priority to women's needs and rethinking the new IRs proposed under this ambitious SO until CRS programming and management overall are more established
- ⊕ Routinely scrutinize and monitor field activities
- ⊕ Phase out short-term CFW without delay
- ⊕ Integrate risk reduction/disaster mitigation activities as early as possible and bring expertise across sectors. Draw on the CRS/NEAR model and resources for disaster preparedness and mitigation and hire experienced staff.

Cross-cutting Interventions

Gender responsiveness: In the traditional Islamic culture of Aceh, women are seldom informed

of village undertakings and are engaged in select activities. Bringing women fully into relief and recovery operations is a sensitive undertaking. This complicated CRS' (and other agencies') efforts to get information to village women. For work in shelter and reconstruction, women's involvement appears to be more limited, although women were consulted early on housing design and selection of house models. Even the voices of women members of VDC who were elected are not often expressed in the community. In FGDs with women, almost all groups said they were not fully aware of the activities of the VDC and no one had taken time to come and communicate information to them or to other semi-formal women's groups such as the *arisan*.

The health component has incorporated women into all its activities and trainings. While this may seem obvious with posyandus designed for women and children, cadets are not always women and in many countries agencies are hard pressed to find women to fill these positions. For SO 4, in FGDs it was primarily women who asked about microenterprise options and cottage industry opportunities, while men requested livelihood training to a lesser degree. If the agro enterprise and agro business components to SO 4 go forward, it will require a deliberate and effort to engage women. Bringing women into information and decision-making processes will mean changing norms in the male-dominated society, a next-step process in the recovery efforts.

Conflict transformation: No formal activities have been undertaken in this area at the time of the assessment. Conflict transformation should be a higher priority in CRS programming because of increasing small-scale conflicts. These conflicts mainly relate to discrepancies in beneficiary lists, aid distribution, and slow payments, particularly in the shelter sector.

Staff security and safety: Threats to the aid workers have existed since the beginning of relief operations and have been documented in OCHA meeting minutes as well as internal CRS documents and reports. In the first 6 months of the emergency response, Aceh was still in a state of civil war, with human rights abuses and killings continuing until the signing of the MOU in August. Although the Indonesian military assisted with the relief response, reports of discrimination toward suspected GAM fighters continued. There were reports of kidnappings and abductions of civilians and the incident with the Red Cross vehicle heightened the international agencies' security concerns. OCHA hosts regular meetings where security is discussed and contingency plans made by groups working in Aceh. Until September 2005, the UN security classification for Aceh was high-Phase IV. The threat of criminality post- MOU with GAM fighters who have little or nothing to return to was also real and INGOs reported being approached by criminals seeking work. These conditions call for a heightened awareness of surrounding and events as well as precautions to be taken by aid agencies.

The government also has policies and laws on the number of people who may gather at one time (10 persons) and religious customs require observance of conservative dress and no consumption of alcohol, also under Syrah law. While these have relaxed somewhat over time, they are still in place 1 year post-tsunami, requiring that aid workers respect traditional customs that may be dramatically different than their own practices. An incident of perceived violation of customary law in particular impacted CRS directly when a newspaper advertisement they placed for contractors to bid on a proposal to build a gazebo (bar) was misinterpreted. Banners were placed and protests held around the CRS Meulaboh compound. This issue was raised by the *Bupati* (district head) some months later in the assessment interview, suggesting that CRS be more sensitive to the traditional values in Aceh. While this did not become a security incident, it easily could have been, and it underscores the need to understand and be sensitive to both the macro and micro complexities of the environment in which the aid agencies work. As noted earlier, other international agencies have experienced violent action against some of their

operations.

In the relief phase, CRS was conservative about staff security; for instance, staff were not allowed to drive to Meulaboh from Banda Aceh because of the security situation. Even in the current peace, risks remain in working in Aceh, including driving along poor quality roads and challenges of driving in the rainy season. CRS works along a long stretch of the west coast of the province, particularly staff in the health sector. CODAN radios have been ordered for vehicles but apparently have been stuck in port for several months. Actions to improve security for traveling staff need higher prioritization.

Protection of beneficiaries: CRS will need to assess and address potential protection issues of its target population. Staff should be made aware of human rights abuses before the ceasefire, since grievances will not disappear overnight. As mentioned earlier, prospective owners of new homes have been threatened when they have complained about poor construction. Other new human rights violations have been documented, including abuse toward women. Protection work has focused on service delivery, particularly health services, including ensuring access to services is open to women. Other examples of security issues for women are in the TLCs where privacy is an issue (raised in 2 FDGs) and lack of lighting at night (also mentioned in 2 FDGs). Standards for privacy and security are set out in Sphere standards and UNHCR guidance.

Protection needs deserve cross-sectoral attention but actions must be sensitive and well planned. Only a handful of agencies are addressing protection issues. CRS should take steps to be aware of the protection issues (a role for the CSG to share with all sectors) and monitoring activities to ensure the greatest protection possible of beneficiaries.

Protection of the environment: The complexity of this issue deserves more in-depth assessment than was afforded during the field assessment. The environmental destruction from the tsunami was massive—to the coral reefs, mangroves, and the livelihoods of many who worked near the sea (e.g., rice and shrimp farms). An environmental assessment conducted by CGI recommended that environmental considerations be mainstreamed in all rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, paying attention to areas where livelihoods were touched (often the more vulnerable and poor sectors of society).

CRS has highlighted environmental protection as an important crosscutting issue and has internal policies on designing programs to protect the environment. Protection of the environment is likewise high on the radar screen of UN and international agencies working in Aceh. The need to continue to protect the environment is emphasized in each of the four SOs. For example, CRS has engaged with the World Wildlife Fund to obtain timber from reliable sources, and the shelter sector has helped raise the consciousness of the BRR and other NGOs about the need to preserve forests and obtain “legal” lumber. But there is room for improvement, as seen in 2 examples encountered during the field visit involving safety and health environmental concerns: 1) meeting Sphere standards for clearing unsafe debris (children, nails, and dangerous debris in the same vicinity) or 2) reduce breeding sites for mosquitoes. Given malaria is one of the top causes of mortality in Aceh, every effort should be made by shelter, reconstruction, wat/san, and health activities to mitigate potential breeding sites.

Crosscutting Interventions Accomplishments

Accomplishments

- ✓ Support and training of local organizations, hundreds of trainings conducted in the space of a year, reaching thousands of participants
- ✓ Building of trust and good relationships with regional and local health authorities

- ✓ Two newly formed and operational Caritas Indonesia diocesan partners (Sibolga and Medan)
- ✓ Contribution to reinvigoration of civil society by support to numerous CSOs and NGOs
- ✓ Successful advocacy with the BRR for legal timber purchasing policies (contributing to the preservation of Sumatra's rain forest)
- ✓ Engaging women in village decision-making (VDC) processes

Challenges

- ✎ Integrating all crosscutting themes in programming where appropriate, being aware of the main issues and nuances in each sector
- ✎ Orienting large numbers of staff who have been working without a full understanding CRS policies and procedures
- ✎ Updating all staff on Aceh's history, culture, and changes in the fluid relief environment
- ✎ Giving women more of a voice in a male-dominated society
- ✎ Building staff awareness of protection and human rights issues
- ✎ Preventing and mitigating small-scale community conflicts and transferring these skills to communities

Recommendations for Crosscutting Interventions

- ⊕ Place a high priority on orienting new staff in Aceh on CRS mission, policies, & procedures.
- ⊕ Proactively designate a trainer-in-waiting for larger emergencies that would be upfront ready to go and equipped with Agency (policies and procedures), Sphere, and humanitarian principle trainings.
- ⊕ Form a core group of wise and knowledgeable people who can advise CRS on specific issues and broader contextual aspects for effective functioning.
- ⊕ Appoint a senior staff member dedicated to context analysis and preparing documentation for management.
- ⊕ Prioritize and adequately staff conflict transformation activities.
- ⊕ Add protection to the crosscutting themes and develop awareness-raising activities.
- ⊕ Conduct at least 2 Sphere training courses a year, covering sector-specific training and humanitarian principles.
- ⊕ Make staff security a higher priority, purchasing radios, SAT phones, walkie-talkies, or other needed equipment and disseminate a plan for their use.
- ⊕ Staff morale and motivation are at an all-time low.
- ⊕ Clarify and strengthen communication lines among staff (in all directions), with communities, and sometimes with partners.
- ⊕ Work to ensure that CRS' image does not reflect internal issues
- ⊕ Reduce staff turnover to contribute to consistent delivery of aid and coordination with other agencies.

Human resources: Perhaps the most significant problem faced by CRS was securing appropriate staff on a timely basis. This is a problem confronted by all humanitarian actors in most disasters. Literally hundreds of other agencies were vying for the same (traumatized) local labor pool, drawing on their own scarce emergency staff, and trying to find staff in other parts of Indonesia and worldwide with specific expertise. This assessment found the main human resources challenges, in no specific order, as follows:

Skills

- Aceh is not known for technically skilled labor, although many residents have general skills. CRS needed to find staff from other parts of Indonesia as well as Aceh.

- Staff need to be more carefully screened for ability to work in emergency operations in austere environments.

Staffing up

- Finding both expatriate and local staff is a slow process. Some key staff positions still have not been filled (February 2006).
- Few indigenous people speak English, and finding expatriates fluent in Indonesian languages (even some speakers of Bahasa Indonesia do not understand Acehnese) is a challenge.
- Approval for staff is time consuming, requiring the director's signature. More aggressive expatriate hiring was warranted.
- CRS does not appear to have recruited actively from enough angles or with attractive enough incentives.
- A hiring priority schedule was attempted. If adhered to, such a schedule could be a better practice in emergency operations hiring when HR is stretched.

Building knowledge of CRS and humanitarian principles, knowing the job ahead

- Capacity building of new CRS staff has received inadequate attention. Many if not most of the 350 staff had not worked in relief or development. Unskilled staff slow progress unless management is there to facilitate and give support. Only one-third of the 28 staff interviewed in this assessment had received an orientation to CRS.
- According to 28 staff interviewed, two-thirds had job descriptions before starting work. Some job descriptions changed after the employees were in the field, and some Aceh managers did not fulfill promises to staff made by their predecessors.

Miscellaneous

- HR staff generally feel undervalued in the management structure.
- There is little room to budge between CRS policies and Indonesian labor laws, making hiring and letting staff go an added challenge.

Some simple information sheets and step-by-step purchasing procedures were developed (good practice to standardize). However, the driving force was to spend, hence programs ran ahead of themselves (getting going without solid planning). Less attention was paid to people than to spending money and getting programs going. Again, these experiences were not unique to CRS.

Problems that arose early in the emergency response are still being fixed a year later. Management support issues were voiced as a residual problem from the emergency period. For instance, slow payment to contractors and to partners was an issue raised in the majority of interviews. Finance staff interviewed said delays are usually related to forms being filled out incorrectly. It did not appear that program support staff and program staff were working together to problem solve and improve flow of aid.

CRS/Aceh currently has approximately 350 staff and reportedly needs 100 more. At the same time, the HR Manager appears to be underutilized, despite the immense problems and need for staff capacity building in CRS policies and procedures and relief and development theory and practice. People have not felt empowered to fix problems. Even in the Medan office, relatively removed from immediate pressures of the field, staff report less supervision of staff and more disjointed management of human resources than they have seen in previous CRS positions.

An issue clearly evident during the field assessment was the way upper management handled (and is handling) policy changes, particularly changes that revised staff benefits as the emergency phase wound down. Staff were first informed electronically about a contentious vehicle policy, a downward adjustment of the cost of living allowance, and a mistake made by CRS for which staff were made to pay back. Interpersonal communication, valued in Acehnese culture, may have been a better means to relate these key changes.

There is a need for more well organized and expedient human resources in at least one of the field offices, as well as better management of current staff, are additional factors that contribute to long delays in getting needed staff on board and working efficiently.

A concerted effort by supervisors to praise good work would help boost morale and encourage good performance. The recent summit was a good start, serving to explain CRS' mission, define the work strategy, and advance teambuilding.

A major success is that looking at hiring across all offices, HQ, Jakarta, and Aceh hired approximately 330 staff, expatriate and local, in less than a year, no small task in any situation. CRS can be proud of this accomplishment, particularly because local staff appear to be qualified and/or advancing quickly in skill and have more than proved their value to CRS.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation consists of establishing a complete system with development and maintenance of indicators (output and impact), definition of reporting templates and periodicity, supervision of M&E database development and follow-up maintenance of the system, data quality control, provision of analyses responding to the needs of program managers, and feedback to the partners and beneficiaries themselves.

For a combination of reasons, CRS monitoring of programs was below its usual operating standard in the tsunami response in Indonesia. Generally speaking, under monitoring or lack of monitoring can constitute "Doing Harm", as was found in Aceh.

It would be unfair to measure CRS Aceh progress against targets because of the many unforeseen contingencies that emerged during the first year of the tsunami response. With abundant funds available, targets were initially set optimistically. For example, the original shelter targets were 18,000 houses built or repaired. This figure was gradually reduced to 9,000 and then to 6,000 permanent houses over 5 years (according to CRS staff) and another 400 for repair. The initial strategy target of 22,500 water and sanitation facilities or systems is perhaps equally unrealistic. World Vision mentioned they had to lower their targets over the first year as well, as was likely the case with many other agencies when the costs, complexities, and challenges to work in Aceh became more evident.

Given the enormous task of setting up an effective M&E system, the head of the CRS HQ M&E Unit, with the support of HQ, commissioned the commercial consulting firm Accenture, which has a humanitarian branch, Accenture (ADP), that assists selected projects at low cost. Two consultants analyzed the accounting and M&E systems in Aceh, examined HQ project and financial systems, and supported the M&E Advisor in Aceh for nearly 5 months in establishing a project tracking system (PTS) that tracks (mostly) output indicators for the strategic areas in which CRS operates. Accenture recommendations from its first assessment of Aceh and CRS systems are in sync with recommendations from an internal CRS study of emergency capacity and M&E. This assistance helped establish an easy to read format for recording data. The M&E Advisor is educating staff in this format and the importance of monitoring projects.

The task remains to inculcate monitoring and evaluation into each sector's operations and institute monthly information gathering and reporting from each project. The next step will be for the M&E Advisor to help SO teams develop impact indicators for sector activities (health has already completed these). The task is large, especially since training is needed in M&E, as well as for Propack and Proframe. Baseline assessments are needed for some sectors to measure progress against objectives in the strategy. The M&E officer currently sits in the Medan office; it would be useful if an additional staff member could rotate between Meulaboh and Banda Aceh to work daily with staff in the above-mentioned areas. Given this is the largest CRS project in the world (cash value), it requires a high level of accountability, achieved only with sufficiently knowledgeable staff who can track and monitor progress.

Comments on monitoring emerged in interviews with local partners, VDC, and with one INGO. One partner commented that the PM needed to get out to the field more and see what their staff are doing. This partner felt that it was not clear "whether CRS staff know what kind of information they should be collecting". The danger in Aceh is that poor or no monitoring of staff and community activities can drive a program into the ground. The larger agencies operating in Aceh face similar M&E issues.

Among the weakest areas for monitoring are the delivery of non-food items, CFW, and shelter, as noted in observations and interviews with CRS staff. There were not enough CRS field staff and/or supervisors to properly monitor the activities of CFW. Monitoring of shelter in terms of direct outputs is one thing, but monitoring the pulse of the community on the progress and impact of interventions is another. The latter is poorly done, if rarely, by CRS and many other agencies. In most of the FGDs conducted for this assessment, survivors' positive views of the recovery process were clouded by their negative impressions of slow shelter aid and lack of communication with agencies.

The BRR has established a web-based database (RAN) that asks organizations to report progress monthly on a variety of activities. The RAN database is an information-gathering tool that catalogs, tracks, and analyzes all organizations' project and funding in Aceh. It can be a useful tool for NGOs, donors, and the local government to provide up-to-date, transparent, and accountable information on the recovery process in Aceh and Nias. BRR is using it to coordinate activities, find gaps, and resolve bottlenecks, and it is available to agencies to do the same. Although BRR is supposed to monitor the quality of housing, the agency has only two staff in Meulaboh for the whole west coast and has stated it does not have the capacity to do so. The database can be used to detect potential overlap in activities and see where there are gaps in services. Aside from the M&E Advisor, it was not clear if other staff were tapping this database for their programmatic purposes.

Coordination and Collaboration

Despite the problems cited earlier in the report, on the whole, the government and agencies hold the impression that CRS has a good reputation and is doing good work for Aceh's tsunami survivors. All people interviewed in this assessment said CRS' contributions to coordination meetings were generally constructive and that CRS played a leadership role in many sector areas, particularly shelter and wat/san in Meulaboh. CRS has collaborated on joint endeavors, taken over others that NGOs have given up, and willingly assisted the government and BRR when asked.

Coordination, particularly in the early phase, has not been easy in Aceh (too many funds acted as a disincentive to coordinate, as agencies didn't need to partner with other agencies to

provide complementary services). Coordination and communication with direct implementing partners such as Green Corner, RTA, and Papan has gone relatively well. Coordination with village-level partners has been more uneven, with some villages experiencing good communication with sector staff and others having problems with miscommunication and insufficient field visits.

Attention is needed on collaboration with complementary agencies in the priority villages where CRS works. Some VDP are long “wish lists” that CRS cannot undertake and it should invite, or encourage, villages to invite other NGOs to help meet those needs. This will be a challenge for some local CRS staff, who may have fostered the idea that only CRS can work in their villages. There are many positive aspects about having complementary partners in a village, including increased accountability. CRS could encourage other organizations to work in trauma counseling for women and children, for instance, as FGDs revealed that this is an unmet need and continuing problem.

Communication

External Communication. Most external literature reviewed for this assessment points to failures of communication between agencies and tsunami survivors. Communities have been “assessed” but not asked. They gave initial input into housing design and chose models (a better practice), but have not been updated sufficiently on progress. Lack of communication and community perception of little or no control in the recovery of their lives is reaching the breaking point in some villages. The Listening Project documented issues relating to communication, of which most found resonance in the FGDs conducted during this assessment.

This urgent issue can be addressed with simple, low-cost measures such as increased and consistent use of information boards, where information is updated regularly in villages prioritized by size, level of dissatisfaction, or scope of interventions. FGDs can help, as well, especially for women, who have largely been left out of the information loop. Town hall-style meetings may be another method, and OCHA suggests the radio could be used more to communicate with populations.

During this assessment, the evaluator observed areas where CRS could communicate its work more visibly, and where other agencies were already, such as Relief Web, the humanitarian information center (HIC) sites, for example.

Internal Communication. Lack of effective and adequate communication among sectors, between management (three offices), and between management and staff is pronounced, although with upper management now in place numerous changes are being made. A revised ACT model that can be effectively operationalized would help sectors better communicate and collaborate. Teambuilding exercises would help, as would cross-visits to different sector projects, especially where value is added, such as between water/sanitation and health. Meetings should include ongoing updates about Acehese culture, what is being reflected about humanitarian aid in the local news, and brainstorming of solutions to problems such as the latest fraud schemes. These cross-sectoral meeting could also bring out better practices and reinforce monitoring and evaluation.

Sustainability

The CRS program was in the early stages of the recovery period at the time of this assessment. As a result, some activities in each SO were not yet underway, making it difficult to assess sustainability for many program components. CRS programming typically builds capacity of the local church and Caritas partners, as well as other partners, to ensure sustainability. CRS is

applying this strategy in Aceh, but with fewer church and Caritas partners there, has “created” local NGO partners to continue development work after CRS departs. This strategy was tried in Kosovo but was unsustainable because of the large number of NGOs. It is hoped that CRS will learn lessons from the Kosovo experience and focus on building quality, not just quantity.

CRS also will need to reinforce the VDC by encouraging them to take on as much of the community recovery as possible, such as assisting in clearing their land for permanent shelters, deciding on water systems, and helping with irrigation and wells. At present, “expectation management” of what CRS will do and what communities should contribute would be a good idea, as evidence of dependency was found in almost every FGD.

CRS has chosen sustainable options in a number of its program interventions—purchasing sustainable timber, looking for permanent water systems from the beginning, and developing VDC. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions CRS can make in Aceh aside from restoring housing and livelihoods is assistance in rebuilding civil society after so many years of war, and equipping people with skills to mitigate and transform conflict.

CRS and the Caritas Internationalis Strategic Operations Appeal

The role of an SOA is primarily a fund-raising mechanism to coordinate activities and funnel donor funds to Catholic agencies during emergency situations. A secondary purpose is to help build the capacity of newer or smaller Caritas agencies and enable agencies to share resources and expertise. The history of the SOA in Indonesia is somewhat unique, although each SOA situation is distinct. This turned out to be one of the largest SOA that Caritas Internationalis received funds for—an initial US\$26 million with a request for more over 3 years to total US\$43 million.

In other emergency settings, such as tsunami-affected India and Sri Lanka, the national Caritas plays a lead role, with the support of a CI facilitating partner, in channeling funds, facilitating their oversight and disbursement, and monitoring project accountability. In Indonesia, however, where there was no national Caritas, CRS was asked by other Catholic agencies present in Indonesia to act as the facilitating agency for the SOA. A few Caritas partners were present in the beginning of the SOA, but there are now about 40. These partners vary widely in capacity, from nascent (Indonesian-based, formed just after the tsunami) to seasoned agencies. This diverse capacity is reflected in an inconsistent quality of services, a challenge for the partners to address over the longer term.

Recommendations for effectiveness, relevance and appropriateness, sustainability

1. Reduce delays in approving critical staff and payments to contractors and partners.
2. Make closer field monitoring compulsory, requiring PM field visits at least four times a month, setting up a weekly schedule for visits to priority villages for field staff, and coordinating with other sectors (or the ACT team).
3. Have higher-level management give greater emphasis to program support, placing skilled staff in these positions.
4. Streamline, standardize, and train staff in rules for hiring, administration, and procurement/purchasing; reinforce training with key documents on the CD-ROM.
5. Inform field staff about the Acehnese understanding of priority village and inform communities that any agency is open to work with them. Encourage communities to look for opportunities to collaborate with other agencies in implementing the VDP.
6. Internally redesign the ACT model (once) so that it meets intersectoral needs to communicate and collaborate as well as serve recipient communities.
7. Communicate program progress to communities at least monthly, using techniques

suggested in "Where's My House," making sure all communities have bulletin boards; appointing a staff member to regularly update the information posted.

8. Inform staff of key internal policy changes in face-to-face meetings that allow feedback.

CRS' role in the SOA has not been without its challenges. CRS acts as a facilitating agency, providing administrative support on request, bank accounts for funds, and housing of the SOA coordination unit. CRS facilitates the work of the National Working Group in strengthening systems and procedures for the SOA. As the largest Caritas partner in the world and with a large capacity to obtain funds and implement activities, CRS was an obvious choice by other Caritas agencies to facilitate this SOA, and CI Rome has generally been pleased with CRS facilitation. The largest issues the SOA partners faced were in sorting out program and financial reporting and setting up agreeable, expedient financial mechanisms. While various Caritas agencies gave money, some were not physically present in the field to manage it. CRS stepped in as facilitator, capacity builder, accountability tracker, and SOA manager. Added to challenges of facilitating the SOA was that the SOA facilitator role was new to Caritas, as were a number of its members. CRS had a number of directors in the first year, there was no national Caritas in place, and roles and responsibilities of the working group, coordination unit, and facilitating partner itself were unfolding. This combination of factors made for a very challenging first year.

CRS has its own program funds (\$128 million) to manage and implement, under pressure to spend these dollars first and be accountable to donors. CRS draws a relatively small amount of money from this SOA (\$8 million) compared to that from its direct donors. Additionally, for a time, CRS saw its oversight of partner SOA funds disbursement, its own use of SOA funds, and its monitoring of the use of SOA funds writ large and of its own funds in the SOA as a conflict of interest. CRS took action to mitigate this conflict of interest by clearly separating the work of the SOA Coordination Unit (housed in CRS and managed by a staff member seconded from Trocaire) and the management of CRS responsibilities within the SOA.

CRS has assisted the newly formed Caritas Sibolga with hiring, capacity building, and community development programs, as well as housing and distribution of relief items. On Nias, Caritas Sibolga is building 200 houses with assistance from CRS, Caritas Italy, and Caritas Austria. Caritas Sibolga has learned when to say "no" to building more houses. On Nias, people consider Caritas a housing agency, possibly because of its success. Caritas Sibolga is also learning to better monitor beneficiary lists and sees a need to communicate better with beneficiaries.

Partners interviewed in this assessment called for clearer and more assertive leadership from CRS, even though its role is not one of leadership, but one of facilitator of the SOA. Because confusion reigned in the early months, some partners in the SOA were looking for more direction. It appears that no agency had taken this on; however, substructures were set up like the National Working Groups and Coordination Unit to fill needed roles. Some partners also realized that they needed additional training and support before they could administer programs and manage funds. Capacity building has been slow, in part because the implementing Caritas partners are busy managing their operations. Local Caritas partners are keen to enhance skills to help not only tsunami survivors in their parishes but other survivors as well. It should be noted that other Caritas agencies assumed the responsibility for building local Caritas capacities, and that over the next year agencies plan to share specific expertise with each other (such as risk reduction). Since the arrival of the permanent CRS Aceh Director, more attention has been paid to these problems, and the partners appreciate his involvement.

Local partners also voiced frustration at the months of delay in receiving funds allocated. They

received approval in May 2005 but no funds until December. The partners said there were faster ways to receive money than through the SOA and questioned the value of being part of the SOA. The pace of funds allocation is stepping up now, but some partners are still frustrated over the funding process.

Way Forward

The present Aceh management structure will need to address residual problems to solidify programming direction: more assertive decision-making to hire needed staff; review of staff strengths and weaknesses; and move staff into positions that complement their skills. In turn, HQ action is needed to ensure that adequate HR and finance staff fill outstanding positions, and to hire an internal trainer for cross-cultural and procedural orientation. Management may need to be restructured so that managers are given a reasonable level of control.

Continual monitoring and assessment of VDCs' role in the community is needed to ensure aid is both delivered most effectively, meeting the needs of the vulnerable, and that genuine community participation is realized. Likewise, monitoring and assessment of the fluid environment and the Acehnese response to humanitarian aid and agencies will serve as a guide to designing and delivering more culturally sensitive programs. More frequent and directed program monitoring (and response to needed changes) would improve efficiency and effectiveness and as well as defuse community tensions. It would help ensure that, in fact, the program is doing no harm.

The agricultural program should be paced or delayed until other program issues are resolved, and immediate attention should be paid to staff security. Transitional housing should be fast tracked, especially for people in tents, and spending approval limits be re-evaluated given the magnitude of shelter needs in Aceh.

Finally, at the end of year 2 of strategy implementation, it would be advisable to conduct a "taking stock" of the program and closely review the strategy to recalibrate and match management and staff capacities with needed response. At that point, consideration of future roles vis-à-vis a more robust response in Nias, and adding new components or expanding beneficiaries (in a significant manner), could take place.

Recommendations

Issue	Main finding	Recommendation
Relief phase	Frequent director changes and inconsistent management have wide-reaching negative impacts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure a permanent director as soon as possible. In large operations, put in place a strong and experienced permanent Director, Field Office Director, and Head of Programs upfront and ensure necessary support and guidance from the Regional Office. 2. Reduce/avoid higher level micromanagement of day-to-day issues, which slows operations and may undermine trust in local staff. Layers of decision-making in the emergency context can be bulky and time consuming. 3. Create a supportive environment through good basic management and staff promotion. 4. Move personnel into positions where they are strong if their current positions do not capitalize on their skills.
	Decisions about embedding the press were made hastily and without sufficient field input.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Carefully weigh decisions about embedding journalists with field staff. Timing and level of involvement are critical. Care, feeding, transport, orientation, and protection of media representatives are challenging in austere emergency conditions and burdensome for staff in the first phase of emergency response.
	Poor understanding of the culture can cause conflict.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Monitor local newspapers and radio from the beginning of an emergency to understand how the beneficiary communities and local government view foreign aid. 7. Begin peace-building activities and pay attention to “Do No Harm” principles at the outset of an emergency response. Engaging local staff to inform beneficiaries about the organization can prevent hostility.
	Staff were overtaxed with frequent visitors and had to devote valuable program time to attend to their needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Schedule visits on specific dates or have all staff visit together for 1 week every 3 months. Avoid ad hoc visits that take up precious time and human resources and may disrupt programs.
	Human resources are the greatest challenge, especially in a large-scale emergency such as the tsunami.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Engage Emergency Response Team TDYers for the first 4 – 6 weeks of the emergency but remain flexible in a large-scale emergency. Insist that follow-on TDYers commit to a minimum of 4 to 6 months. 10. In emergencies and times of rapid hiring, make orientation in CRS policy and procedures mandatory for all staff in the first month of employment, either in person or through Webreeze. Equip all staff with appropriate reference materials (basic sector materials and CRS manuals). 11. Consider hiring an “aide-de-camp” during the initial period of an emergency for the director or Emergency Response Team leader, who are generally overwhelmed with tasks. The aide would assist with activities and help smooth transitions, and assist with on-the-job training for future emergencies. 12. In large-scale emergencies, consider hiring an orientation trainer and who can address

Issue	Main finding	Recommendation
		humanitarian and Sphere principles
Shelter and Reconstruction	Survivors, especially those still in tents, are frustrated with the slow permanent housing process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide beneficiaries in tents or other temporary living shelters with transitional shelter kits, wherever possible. In assessing priorities for of distribution, consider first getting IDP out of tents and then out of barracks. 2. Consider strategic options for outsourcing permanent shelter construction using larger scale contractors for faster response. Regularly monitor their work based on a set schedule. Weigh the regional proposal for Indonesian banking partnership and housing as an option for faster construction.
	Contractors do not comply with housing quality standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Enlist communities in monitoring the progress of housing construction by educating sub-committees on the quality of materials expected and basic construction methods and having these sub-committees report weekly so discrepancies can be cleared up quickly.
	Communities feel they do not receive enough information about aid that impacts their lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Have Project Managers and staff monitor and communicate with villages (not just priority villages) more frequently, including transferring program information to audiences beyond the village development committees (VDC) or making these committees more representative, increasing use of bulletin boards and media outlets when appropriate, and ensuring that women receive information through women's groups, prayer groups, kiosk owners, or other means. 5. Ensure transfer of critical project information to incoming staff, with the Project Manager or Head of Program verifying this communication.
	New and junior CRS staff generally lack expertise in community participation and communications.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Capitalize on the expertise of experienced local partners and involve them in training CRS staff on community participation and development.
	Communities express interest in monitoring contractor progress and informing CRS.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Inform VDC of expected quality of materials and simple details of construction methods. Design together a simple checklist for VDC to monitor contractors and inform CRS of discrepancies.
Health	Extra effort is needed to report and treat health problems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate with NGOs and UN agencies working in health in CRS priority villages where CRS does not implement health interventions to share resources, approaches, and education and training materials.
Civil society and governance (CSG)	Many staff do not have a solid understanding of the beneficiary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor local radio and newspapers weekly to understand how NGO humanitarian aid affects the community. 2. Build information sessions on the local situation and culture into weekly cross-sectoral internal

Issue	Main finding	Recommendation
	population or environment fluidity.	meetings. 3. Have management provide more support to CSG operations.
Livelihoods and relief	The SO4 strategy is a large undertaking when many program issues and management issues are not yet worked out.	1. Reconsider the breadth and depth of livelihood interventions and prioritize women's needs.
	Villagers are asking for more visits by staff	2. Routinely scrutinize and closely monitor field activities.
Crosscutting	Staff do not understand humanitarian principles.	1. Conduct at least two Sphere training courses a year, covering sector-specific training and humanitarian principles.
	Staff lack adequate security resources or measures, particularly health staff who travel the furthest.	2. Make staff security a high priority, purchasing radios, SAT phones, walkie-talkies, or other needed equipment and disseminating a plan for its use.
	Not all crosscutting themes are addressed in program operations.	3. Draw upon the CRS/NEAR model and resources for disaster preparedness and mitigation. Start activities as soon as possible. Maximize use of experienced staff for this critical intervention in Aceh, where future earthquakes are a real possibility. Train villages in conflict transformation, and consider protection and human rights issues
Management	Management support is undervalued and perceived as slow.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take appropriate steps to reduce delays in approval of critical staff and financial payments to contractors and partners. 2. Consider combining staff from program support and from programs to work as teams so that programs do not run ahead of program support operations. 3. Have higher level executive management give greater emphasis to program support (e.g., finances, human resources, and logistics) of emergency operations and place skill staff in these positions 4. For future emergencies, hire strong program support sector staff both for the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and ground operations

Issue	Main finding	Recommendation
M&E	Monitoring does not receive adequate attention from Program Managers (PM).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make closer monitoring of field programs compulsory. If necessary, require PM field visits at least 4 times a month. Set up a weekly schedule for visits to priority villages for field staff and coordinate with other sectors or the Area Coordination Team. 2. Hire additional M&E staff for Aceh. Monitoring of program progress is critical for accountability and communication with communities. Build field staff monitoring capacity and provide more headquarters support. Have M&E Unit conduct Propack training. Define impact indicators for SO's where there are none defined. 3. Conduct baseline assessments early in the recovery phase for all sectors so that progress can be measured against impact indicators and programming can be adjusted to meet needs.
Special Operations Appeal (SOA)	SOA management is disorganized.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have CI/Rome visit CI structure. Grant the facilitating agency authority in a large emergency, particularly one involving many partners, to facilitate smooth running of operations. 2. Have CRS take a stronger role in guiding the SOA processes (if no one else does), or if substructures aren't functioning effectively. Continue to provide Aceh Directors' inputs into the functioning of the SOA. 3. Have CRS take on its full responsibility as facilitator and dedicate knowledgeable staff to it, particularly if resources allow. Minimize tasks on CRS program staff by obtaining enough experienced staff to be solely dedicated to the SOA.
	Coordination is still problematic but improving.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Take the lead when requested and make sure there are no gaps. 5. Look for ways to link other agency skills to local partners and build capacity faster, including payment for program fund requests.
Human resources	The labor pool (initial phase) is inexperienced and Human Resources staff overstretched.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey and document the emergency experience of the more than 4,000 national staff and make this information available to CRS and the ERT to draw on in emergencies. 2. Document expatriate emergency staff skills, including languages (global recommendation). 3. Place necessary hiring staff in operations and have headquarters prioritize hiring staff in large emergencies.
	CRS staff spent large amounts of time training partners in the SOA and other work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prepare systematic training for nascent CI partners in financial systems, procurement, staffing, and programming so that the partners can be deployed rapidly in SOA emergency operations. Modify this training for each situation.
	Management, human resources, and financial processes are slow.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Place a high priority on orientation of new CRS staff on CRS' mission, policies, and procedures, ProPack, Proframe and Integral Human Development.
Coordination and	Some villages believe no other agency can	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform field staff about the Acehnese understanding of priority villages and explain to communities that any agency is open to work with them. Encourage communities to look for

Issue	Main finding	Recommendation
collaboration	work in a priority village.	opportunities to collaborate with other agencies in implementing the village development plans. 2. Reach out to other NGOs and INGOs to provide value-added and needed services to villages where CRS is working.
	Staff desire better intersectoral coordination and collaboration.	3. Internally redesign the ACT model (once) so that it meets intersectoral needs to communicate and collaborate as well as serve recipient communities. 4. Host regular and structured intersectoral meetings.
Communication	Beneficiaries feel they are not getting enough information.	1. Communicate program progress to communities regularly, using low-cost techniques outlined in the paper, "Where's My House." Make sure all communities have bulletin boards and appoint someone to update the information posted.
	Staff want to discuss major benefit changes.	2. Inform staff of key internal policy changes in face-to-face meetings that allow feedback (this does not mean that staff can change the policies).
	CRS' work is not as visible as that of other PVOs in Aceh.	3. Promote CRS activities in more outlets, such as Relief Web, the Humanitarian Information Center, and in brochures for visitors to Aceh, updating the information regularly.
Future opportunities	Gaps in services remain for IDPs from the war and recovery efforts on Nias.	1. Once issues are addressed and operations are routine, consider working with IDP populations in civil society development and peace building, health, and other sectors. 2. Weigh the possibility of increasing resource support and collaboration with Caritas Sibolga if recovery efforts continue to need assistance. 3. Program component needs are social activities for children and psycho-social needs of CRS' beneficiary population; add consideration of protection and human rights in programs.