
Food Aid Project: Catholic Relief Services Fact Sheet

Mission and Overview: Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States and serves as the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church. The mission of CRS is to assist the poor and disadvantaged, leveraging the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to alleviate human suffering, promote development of all people and to foster charity and justice throughout the world.

Program Areas: CRS operates on 5 continents and in 99 countries through an extensive network of partners around the globe, providing humanitarian relief and development assistance in the fields of community health and HIV/AIDS, peace and justice, education, agriculture, microfinance, and emergency response. In addition to providing immediate response to emergency situations, CRS is also dedicated to addressing the root causes of disasters, violence, and suffering in order to truly help communities find paths to long-term recovery and rehabilitation. Central to this vision are common themes that are present throughout each CRS program: capacity building, food security, gender, and justice.

CRS also works to inform and engage American Catholics about poverty and injustice overseas. CRS supports local parish outreach, fair trade, farmer to farmer support, advocacy, and high school and college programs in the U.S.

Financial Information: In FY 2004, CRS' annual operating expenses totaled \$571,495. Almost half of this amount was spent on emergency relief programs, with the remainder of program expenses divided between agriculture, education, HIV/AIDS, and other development programs. CRS maintains a low overhead cost structure, with almost 95% of funds going directly to programs. In FY 2004, over 50% of revenue came from donated agricultural and other commodities, 26% from cash grants from the U.S. government, and 20% from private donor, foundation, and corporate contributions.

Leadership: Kenneth Hackett, President

Kenneth Hackett joined CRS more than 30 years ago and was named executive director in 1993 and appointed president in 2003. CRS has undergone significant institutional transformation under Mr. Hackett's leadership, including a strategic planning effort, a reevaluation of its relief and development programs in conflict areas that led to a change to a more justice-centered focus in all its programming, and the launch of a new strategy to engage the U.S. Catholic community in CRS' work around the world. Additionally, lay people were appointed to the Board of Directors for the first time in 2004; previously, only Catholic bishops had served on the CRS Board.

Prior to joining CRS, Mr. Hackett served in the Peace Corps in Ghana. Mr. Hackett joined CRS in 1972, starting his career in Sierra Leone. He has served CRS in posts throughout Africa and in the Philippines, as well as a variety of positions at CRS headquarters.

He has served as North America president of Caritas Internationalis and is currently a member of the boards of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum; U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration; U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy; and the Africa Society. In 2004, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed Mr. Hackett's nomination to the board of directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a federal effort to increase aid to countries that demonstrate a commitment to ruling justly, investing in people and encouraging economic freedom.

The Tasks:

1. Prepare a 10-12 page strategy memo for President Hackett on how to respond to the USAid proposal. Be sure to link the strategy to Catholic Relief Services core values propositions while also taking account of the interests of all other crucial stakeholders including USAID, Cargill and Oxfam.
2. Prepare a 15 minute Powerpoint presentation to persuade USAID, Cargill and Oxfam on the merits of your position. The presentation will be given during a meeting (held during the last class session) that will include members of all four groups and will be hosted by USAid.
3. Prepare a 30 minute presentation to be given to the advisory board of Catholic Relief Services that covers items 1 and 2 above. This presentation will be given outside of class during the week prior to the last class.

Important Links:

- CRS website: www.crs.org
- 2004 Annual Report: http://www.crs.org/about_us/newsroom/publications/2004_Annual_Report.pdf
- Food Aid Overview: http://www.crs.org/get_involved/advocacy/policy_and_strategic_issues/food_aid/index.cfm#background
- CRS response to Oct. 12, 2005, New York Times article: http://www.crs.org/about_us/newsroom/press_releases/releases.cfm?ID=312
- CRS response to Oct. 25, 2005, WSJ article: http://www.crs.org/about_us/newsroom/press_releases/releases.cfm?ID=317