

Work as Key to the Social Question

The Great Social and Economic Transformations and the Subjective Dimension of Work



Movement of the Spirit: Catholic Social Teaching in the International Workplace

by Ken Hackett, [Dave Piraino](#), and Tiziana Dearing
Catholic Relief Services

Catholic Relief Services is the official relief and development agency of the United States Catholic Church. In 1996, the agency created strategies, based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), that sought 1) to incorporate justice into all of the agency's work; and 2) to create a "just workplace" for staff. While these strategies held tremendous promise for the agency's impact on the lives of the poor and of its own employees, implementing them in a religiously and culturally diverse international setting had its challenges. Further, the agency had to implement "from scratch," not finding many nonprofit and for-profit role models for this kind of undertaking. CRS used a combination of office reflections, iterative stages of drafting and receiving input from staff throughout the world, and working sessions with partners to help its strategies take hold. Along the way, the agency learned the importance of using broad-based participation, providing people with an opportunity to relate CST to their own religions and cultures, and combining a sense of rights with responsibilities. Five years later, the agency works for permanent structural change, has embraced solidarity as a central operating concept, uses decision making processes that are significantly more open and participatory, has 3500+ employees with a basic understanding of the principles of CST, and has a staff that can have confidence in the organization's commitment to justice in the workplace every day.

Adopting CST as the Root of Catholic Relief Services' Work

Who We Are and What We Do

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official relief and development agency of the United States Catholic Church. For nearly 60 years, CRS has provided emergency relief, economic and social development and the promotion of justice and peace for the poor and marginalized overseas. The Gospel of Jesus Christ motivates our overseas work, and the

way in which we do it. The Gospel's call to love and solidarity also motivates the work CRS does domestically—educating people regarding, and increasingly providing them opportunities to act upon, their moral responsibilities toward our brothers and sisters around the world.

Flowing from traditions of the Catholic Church, grounded in and as a reflection of its social teaching and supported by the Catholic Bishops, clergy and lay people in the United States, Catholic Relief Services reaches out to people in 88 countries and territories throughout Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Our work is motivated by a sense of justice as we stand in solidarity and in support of those who face poverty, war, civil strife and terrible violations of their basic human rights. Our assistance is offered to all those in need without regard to religion, ethnicity, race or nationality but purely on the basis of need. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in ways that attempt to enhance and preserve human life and dignity whether it be in circumstances of short term emergency or longer term economic and social development.

Our overseas assistance efforts involve any combination of agriculture, AIDS, community health, education, emergency response, peacebuilding and microfinance. We complement such work with several themes woven throughout our work, including justice, local capacity building, peacebuilding, gender and food security. Domestically, we implement educational programs in dioceses, parishes, schools and homes to inform people in the U.S. about Catholic Relief Services' work, and to foster solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need around the world. We work with parishioners, youth ministers, teachers, seminarians and even entire diocesan communities. Finally, to complement these activities, we support the United States Catholic Bishops' call for global solidarity by promoting awareness of international and social justice issues. Because root causes of poverty are often international or domestic policies that perpetuate inequity and injustice, Catholic Relief Services works with local dioceses, the offices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and with other international Catholic networks to promote more just and socially responsible policies and practices - at home and abroad.

How CRS' Thinking Evolved

CRS' view of itself and its international perspective have evolved since our inception. That evolution has mirrored both the state of international affairs and the evolution of international thought in the development and relief communities. When founded in 1943, we principally were a war relief agency, begun at the time of and in spirit with the Marshall plan. The US Catholic Bishops formed CRS primarily to respond to the devastation World War II caused in Europe, both during and after the fighting. CRS also helped to rebuild and strengthen the capacities of European CARITAS organizations in countries like France and Germany. Through the 1960s, CRS continued to see itself primarily in this light—as an agency that provided immediate relief needs in emergency situations.

During the 1960s through 1980s, however, we broadened the application of our original mission. Many people in “non-emergency” situations also needed the kind of help CRS knew how to provide. At the same time, Vatican II was calling for the empowerment of laity and a new experience of the Church in the World. Finally, the field of international development also came into its own during this time. As a result of all of these forces, we maintained our emergency expertise, but also began trying to create long-term, sustainable solutions to local needs for all poor and marginalized, not just those facing immediate emergencies or disasters. Helping local communities build their capacities proved central to this effort.

The early 1990s brought two new factors: the post-Cold War era and a CRS staff that had been reflecting seriously upon the strengths and weaknesses of the development approaches they had been employing. The end of the Cold War helped lead to volatile political and social climates in many developing and Third World countries, as conflicts and instability previously kept in check by the two superpowers for their own purposes were now free to boil over. Throughout Africa and parts of Europe, Asia and Latin America, unstable or failed nation-states, ethnic conflict, and corrupt governance erupted, coupled with and sometimes leading to famine, drought and other natural disasters. This environment, combined with a mature analysis of our development successes and failures, led our staff and partners to recognize that without true systemic change and without more peaceful or tolerant surroundings, relief and development efforts could not work. Local communities could not build sustainable capacity to meet their own needs and abolish their own poverty if they were trying to build on a foundation of quicksand.

So, we evolved again. We began to understand our mission also to include helping our partners create a just, tolerant and peaceful foundation on which local communities could build their social and economic progress. This commitment to systemic change, to creating right relationships and to promoting peace and tolerance began to take hold throughout the agency as our strategic planning process began in late 1995.

Our view of ourselves as an agency evolved with our view of our work and our world in the early 1990s. During that period, CRS’ executive leadership began to reaffirm the agency’s rooting in its Catholic identity. The American dimension of our identity had remained strong throughout the previous fifty years. Now the board and executives wanted to reassert the truly Catholic dimension as well.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) provided the perfect framework with which to do that. CST called people to solidarity, to right relationships and to structural change. At the same time, the principles it outlined spoke truth not only to Catholics, but to people of other faiths as well. As an international agency, we were challenged to re-ground ourselves in our Catholic identity while maintaining and strengthening our community of staff and partners representing religions and cultures from every corner of the globe. We also needed to employ new skills to meet new challenges. CST promised to make that possible.

The Transformation to Justice and a “Just Workplace”

1996: The Adoption of the Justice Lens and CST/Management

In late 1995 and 1996, CRS undertook a strategic planning process to guide its choices and actions through 2001. As previously mentioned, people throughout the agency entered the strategic planning process ready to expand their understanding of our mission to include justice, peace and systemic change. The subject was not without debate, as would be the case any time a successful organization considered making a change to what it had been doing well for decades. Nevertheless, our own evolution in thinking is supported in *Laborem Exercens*, when John Paul II writes:

Commitment to justice must be closely linked with commitment to peace in the modern world. This twofold commitment is certainly supported by the painful experience of the two great world wars which in the course of the last ninety years have convulsed many European countries and, at least partially, countries in other continents. It is supported, especially, since the Second World War, by the permanent threat of a nuclear war and the prospect of the terrible self-destruction that emerges from it. [1]

Throughout 1996, CRS worked to develop a strategy. Given the factors previously discussed, CST took a central role in the definition of that strategy. Through a series of retreats and executive workshops, the agency named the concept of justice as defined in Catholic Social Teaching as a distinct strategy. [2] From this came our “Justice Lens”—a commitment to “build a culture of justice and peace through the promotion of just and right relationships.” [3] We formed a representative sub-team of staff to develop in greater detail what the Justice strategy meant. Part way through its development, the agency’s put its full support behind the strategy, proclaiming that the Justice Lens should be incorporated into all of CRS’ overseas activities. The push to incorporate it into our domestic outreach and education activities followed closely.

As the justice strategy evolved, two other complementary things were happening. First, the discussion and data gathering being done for plan development was surfacing a range of human resource concerns throughout the agency. These included tensions regarding the status and treatment of local staff in countries where we worked and the largely American expatriate staff we placed there, concerns about the mix of work and family life, pay and other issues such as gender and ethnicity that were representative of workplaces in the 1990s and of nonprofit and religious organizations. Second, people working on the strategic planning process began to ask why we would apply the Justice Lens to our overseas work, but not to the way we operate and manage ourselves internally?

This train of thought gave birth to the second of the four strategies, Catholic Social Teaching and Management, or “CST/Management.” The emphasis of the CST/Management strategy was and has been creating a “just workplace.” The team working on this strategy,

using input from throughout the agency, has identified seven areas that we as an agency should pursue. They include:

- Leadership Engagement in Development of a Just Workplace
- Balancing Rights and Responsibilities
- Institutionalizing CRS' Guiding Principles into Our Work
- Management Policies and Practices
- Employee Relations (Due Process)
- Effective Communication
- Valuing Differences. [4]

By pursuing the Justice and CST/Management Strategies together, we seek to create a work environment that promotes human dignity, provides people with a moral and personal connection to their work, and ensures that the values of CST are incorporated into all that we do. Our daily attempts to bring that vision to fruition help keep CRS within the spirit of *Laborem Exercens*.

Implementing the Justice Lens and CST/Management Internationally

It would be inaccurate to say that CRS *completed* its Justice and CST/Management strategies at the end of 1996. Indeed, now in 2001 our undertaking continues, even as the agency has developed a new vision and strategy to carry us through 2006. The process we have gone through to help the Justice Lens and a Just Workplace take hold throughout our 80+ country programs and with our nearly 4,000 employees both demonstrates a commitment to the principles of CST and *Laborem Exercens* and provides some important lessons learned along the way.

While the move to a Justice Lens was a somewhat natural progression, with staff and partners so culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse, we could not assume that everyone would understand, agree with or want to implement the concept of justice in the same way. Indeed, justice can carry vastly different meanings, depending on the community in which one sits.

Therefore, we undertook a participative, reflective process that allowed people to explore the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching from their own perspectives, and begin to decide together how to carry the Justice Lens out in their work. The Justice team created a set of documents explaining CST in general terms and describing the meaning and intent of the Justice Lens. Then, over about a two year period, every office in every country program in CRS engaged in a facilitated "justice reflection." People from all levels of the agency read through the documents and met with their colleagues to reflect on them, discuss their

implications for their local reality, and provide feedback to the Justice team. CRS invested considerable time, staff and resources to make this happen.

These justice reflections not only helped us achieve a certain amount of penetration and hold of the concepts of CST and the Justice Lens, but also laid the groundwork for two other important elements of the strategy. First, the feedback from the justice reflections led to development of Guiding Principles. These eight principles guide the way each person in CRS pursues his or her work. They are based on an understanding of CST that incorporates its Catholic principles while respecting the beliefs and perspectives of people of other faiths. We have finalized these guiding principles, listed below, and are distributing them in poster form to be hung in every CRS office. We have also created a computer “screen saver” so staff can be reminded of them every day. The presence of these Guiding Principles helps ensure that we keep these important concepts alive in the workplace.

- **DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON** All of humanity has been created in the image of God and possesses a basic dignity and equality that come directly from our creation and not from any action on our own part.
- **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** Every person has basic rights and responsibilities that flow from our human dignity and that belong to us as humans, regardless of any social or political structures. The rights are numerous and include those things that make life truly human. Corresponding to our rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good of all.
- **SOCIAL NATURE OF HUMANITY** All of us are social by nature and are called to live in community with others --- our full human potential isn't realized in solitude, but in community with others. How we organize our families, societies and communities directly affects human dignity and our ability to achieve our full human potential.
- **THE COMMON GOOD** In order for all of us to have an opportunity to grow and develop fully, a certain social fabric must exist within society. This is the common good. Numerous social conditions -- economic, political, material and cultural - impact our ability to realize our human dignity and reach our full potential.
- **SUBSIDIARITY** A higher level of government -- or organization -- should not perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level by people who are closer to the problem and have a better understanding of the issue.
- **SOLIDARITY** We are all part of one human family -- whatever our national, racial, religious, economic or ideological differences - and in an increasingly interconnected world, loving our neighbor means.
- **OPTION FOR THE POOR** In every economic, political and social decision, a weighted concern must be given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. When we do this we strengthen the entire community, because the powerlessness

of any member wounds the rest of society.

- **STEWARDSHIP** There is an inherent integrity to all of creation and it requires careful stewardship of all our resources, ensuring that we use and distribute them justly and equitably --- as well as planning for future generations.

Second, the justice reflections laid the groundwork for defining what a “just workplace” means at CRS. Once staff throughout the agency had a stronger and more common understanding of justice and other CST principles, the CST/Management team could begin to draw on their input to establish the tenets of a just workplace. This, too, took several years and is an on-going process. Indeed, the final just workplace document was not released until April of this year. We did not wait for completion to start initiatives, however. Instead, the agency adopted four major milestones with ten supporting objectives to try to achieve while this work was in progress. The CST/Management team completed an evaluation of our progress against those objectives in early April.

Impediments to Implementation

Any time an organization makes a change, it will encounter impediments to implementing that change. Some impediments are more significant than others, too. We encountered three impediments particularly relevant to this discussion: ownership and cultural and religious diversity.

Ownership

Headquarters leads strategic planning in almost any organization. The larger and more geographically diverse the agency, the more difficult it becomes to use broad participation in developing that strategy. CRS was no exception to that.

We put forth tremendous effort to include people from throughout the CRS world in developing our strategy. As a headquarters-driven initiative, however, we did not completely escape a sense—especially among local staff in the countries we serve—that the Just Workplace initiative, and to some extent the Justice Lens, were “headquarters initiatives.” With more than 3,500 staff in 80+ countries, we would have found it extremely difficult and time consuming to include everyone. Therefore, we faced a sense of lack of ownership from some staff.

The Justice Lens experienced this a little less than did the Just Workplace effort, because all offices went through the justice reflection process. With both strategies, however, we have had to work to overcome some sense of, “I didn’t make it, so it isn’t mine.” *Laborem Exercens* emphasizes workers exercising “influence over conditions of work and pay, and also over social legislation.” [5] CRS took the need for participation and ownership of these strategies seriously. As a result of this impediment, and indeed as a result of the Just

Workplace work itself, we continue to explore ways to increase participation throughout the agency, give voice to the full gamut of opinions, and incorporate feedback into all of our decisions.

The Identity Dilemma

We consider our cultural and religious diversity to be one of our greatest assets. It makes CRS more effective, ensures a better chance of being accepted and being able to help build local capacities, and helps ensure the practices of solidarity and subsidiarity. Even as a strength, though, concerns about whether our new approach reflected and included a culturally and religiously diverse staff proved an impediment to implementing our justice-focused strategies.

Much of CRS' staff around the world live in communities in which religious beliefs are expressed openly and are fundamental parts of daily life. Once given an opportunity to discuss the new strategies, understand why the fundamental tenets of Catholic faith called CRS to live by them, and relate them to their own religious beliefs and experiences, in general we found international staff of other faiths accepted and worked with the new approaches. They needed time to overcome understandable concerns regarding whether CRS was moving to evangelization, and whether we were changing our fundamental mission. Once we built trust about those issues, however, we got past them.

Justice reflections were critical in building that trust. In Buddhist countries, for example, an office might invite an expert to discuss the similarities and differences between CST and Buddhist thought in the same areas. Staff of other religions had the opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences between CST and their own beliefs, and to plan together how to implement the justice strategy in their work. This was not a process of "relativizing" CST. It was, however, a process of open and honest discussion.

Paradoxically, our American staff—Catholic, Christian and non-Christian alike—expressed significant concern about adopting such a "Catholic" tone. Ever-conscious of international perspectives regarding Western or American dominance, and much more accustomed to a secular world in which religious beliefs are not so openly and firmly expressed, they found this new, overt position uncomfortable. CRS had to build their trust in the agency's dedication to diversity and multiculturalism as well. In headquarters in particular, we had to continually reaffirm that our commitment to employ people of other faiths, and to respect their beliefs and practices, was not only a practical necessity, but also a part of the Catholic faith's call to love.

As an organization that embraces religious diversity, we will always experience some internal tension regarding our Catholic identity. This tension, when addressed well, only serves to make us stronger, and to serve the poor and marginalized better.

Resistance to Change

Finally, one of the greatest impediments to implementation CRS experienced was natural resistance to change. By 1996, CRS had a strong track record of “doing good.” We were feeding people, providing for their immediate needs and helping them living longer and healthier. Our staff felt good about that work, and should have.

It’s a natural tendency, under such circumstances, not to want to change to approaches. People think, “We’re already doing good, and making a difference. Why would we endanger that, or change approaches now?” As a result, the agency had to become very good at making the case for change. We had to spell out clearly, and in a compelling manner, why affecting underlying structures and creating systemic change was so critical to our mission, and to adapting to maintaining our high standards and strong success in a changing world.

The other resistance to change came from a misunderstanding about what the Justice Lens and the Just Workplace called us to do. Before the agency developed a more sophisticated understanding of the call of the Catholic faith in these areas, most staff felt confident that CRS already practiced a just workplace, and incorporated justice into our work overseas. Only as we learned more about our responsibilities and received feedback from our staff, our partners and the people we serve did we understand the ways in which we were still falling short. Once we could demonstrate that, it became easier for everyone to embrace the new approaches we needed to take.

How the Agency Has Changed

Five years after launching the Justice Lens and CST/Management, how has the agency changed? First, staff throughout the world, whether Catholic or of other faiths, have a grasp of the language and concept of justice as understood in Catholic Social Teaching and are attempting to incorporate it into all aspects of their work. Second, the people we serve and the partners with whom we work are receiving support not only to provide for immediate needs, but also to create lasting changes for peace, right relationships and permanent solutions to local problems.

Third, because of our focus on structural change and because of our greater understanding of the principles of CST, the concept of solidarity has taken hold in the agency in a whole new way. In October of 2000, 250 CRS staff and partners from 55 different countries gathered to create a new vision for the agency. Solidarity is at the center of the vision they produced, which says,

Solidarity will transform the world to:

- cherish and uphold the sacredness and dignity of every person;

- commit to and practice peace, justice and reconciliation; and
- celebrate and protect the dignity of all creation.

Fourth, CRS has adopted a more participatory approach to making decisions that affect the lives of our staff, our partners and the people we serve. We are striving for a new kind of ownership in our work. During the visioning work that we did in 2000, we held participation sessions for every office in the world. Janitors and drivers worked with senior staff to provide input to our new vision and to how we would carry forward the Justice Lens and create a Just Workplace in the coming years.

Fifth, justice is no longer a concept we advance as part of a strategy. It has taken root. It has become a given in our approaches, in the way we think about our work, and as a principle we will continue to build on in the coming years.

Sixth and finally, managers and decision-makers throughout the agency are called to an open, decided dedication to justice in the workplace. Staff can rely on that commitment and can call on the principles behind it. Each person who works for or with us knows that we as an agency have made a commitment to try to live out the principles of CST in the way we work and the way we treat each other. While we still struggle to define what that means on a day to day basis—and always will—that foundation provides a special peace of mind.

Lessons Learned along the Way

How We Differ from Businesses or Other International Agencies

In the previous section, we described how CRS is different for having implemented its Justice and CST/Management strategies. One might argue that many of these changes reflect just plain good business practices, or better ways to do relief and development. For CRS, though, it is more than that.

First, good business practices come and go. In the 1980's, for example, business process reengineering was considered an outstanding business practice. Today, many practitioners revile it. Best practices in relief and development evolve in the same way, as has been evidenced by CRS' own evolution from 1943 through the early 1990s.

While the Church will continue to advance Catholic Social Teaching, on the other hand, its fundamental principles do not change. It is not a “flavor of the month.” Therefore, even as CRS tries a new program, or experiments with a new management practice, our fundamental underpinnings will not change. This gives us a particular consistency and credibility of commitment with our staff, our partners and the people we serve.

Second, good business practices do not inherently advance the spiritual dimension of a person's work. *Laborem Exercens* emphasizes that, “As a person [man] works, he performs

various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil (sic) the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity." [6] The principles of Catholic Social Teaching all drive toward the realization of human dignity. By infusing our work and our internal management with these principles, work for or with CRS has the opportunity to become part of a person's spiritual fulfillment—whether that person is Catholic or of another faith. We do not always succeed, nor do we pretend to be an agency of spiritual greatness. Nevertheless, our commitment to peace, justice and a just workplace carry us beyond businesses or other agencies that simply try to incorporate practices that are pragmatic or useful at a given time.

Third, Catholic Social Teaching and our Just Workplace initiative raised both the standards of how we treat each other and staff expectations on how supervisors manage. Everyone is expected to respect the dignity of each person, whether a peer, subordinate or supervisor. All are guided by the principles of rights and responsibilities, the common good and stewardship. A common understanding was developed on what to expect from each other. While not everyone lives up to the standards at all times, when expectations are not met, pressure from colleagues and staff in general remind those of acceptable behavior and right relationships based on the CST principles.

Fourth, we pursue the Justice Lens and our Just Workplace initiative because we are a Catholic agency. Our good business practices, therefore, are "good" in part because they help us realize the full strength and promise of our identity. As part of the Catholic Church worldwide, we can leverage a tremendous network of faith, resources and access to bring to bear on the needs of the world's most poor and marginalized. Our use of CST helps strengthen our identity in that network, and our connection to other members of it. This makes us unique among international relief and development agencies.

The Lessons We Want to Share

The "Catholic" in CST

Catholic Social Teaching contains many universal principles. As we integrated CST into all of our work, we found ways to draw out those universal principles. At the same time, we were challenged not to lose the value of the truly Catholic dimension of CST. We had to learn how to bring CST to a diverse community of people, while still embracing that which made it, and us, Catholic.

Our Catholic identity is bound up not merely in a vision of how we treat each other and how we embrace the elements of Catholic Social Teaching. We are an organization owned by the Catholic bishops of the United States. This Episcopal dimension adds a new and different layer of Catholic identity for many who came to CRS for the first time.

We consciously increased the visibility and opportunity for interaction between our staff and

our board of bishops while introducing a heightened awareness of CST. And, we saw that such interactions among staff and American bishop board members helped ease some of the discomfort some staff members may have had with appreciating our Catholic identity.

The tension of the Catholic part of our identity and the truly Catholic dimension of CST will always exist for us, as it will for any Catholic organization that also reaches out to people of other faiths. One thing we have learned from this is the importance of striking a balance between embracing the gift of our Catholic identity and openly embracing *other people who share our vision*.

That phrase has become an important one for CRS as we have defined our vision more clearly and started developing the next wave of our strategy in the last year. We have learned that the principles of CST appeal to all kinds of people of good will, that there are people who fundamentally feel our vision is theirs, too, and that it fits with the ethics that they want to bring to their work, giving and volunteer lives, even if they practice another faith.

At the same time, we recognize that there are people who could share our vision, but shy away from us because they are uncomfortable with “Catholic.” They fear it eventually could lead to exclusion, attempts to evangelize, or even persecution by others just for being associated with us. Because we wish to embrace people who share our vision, and because maintaining a culturally and religiously diverse staff is so fundamental to our work, we have learned to give people time to become comfortable with the concepts in our Justice and CST/Management approaches. We have learned to give them the chance to engage with us and our approach to living out Catholic Social Teaching in stages, and providing them with plenty of room for dialog and feedback. In essence, we have learned that along with building justice—into our programs and into the way we operate—comes building trust.

Invest in Participation

The second important lesson we want to share is the importance of investing in participation. We learned this both through creating our Justice and CST/Management strategies, and as an output of the Just Workplace work. Practically speaking, participation is necessary as an organization—especially a disperse, international organization where employees may inherently feel disconnected—begins to make fundamental changes. People will own and support those changes if they feel they were a part of creating them. From a Catholic perspective, it is important that workers have an opportunity to affect their surroundings, the way they execute their work, and the values that their work community espouses. From that perspective, ensuring participation is also critical.

As an organization of nearly 4,000 employees, we also had to learn how to balance participation. If we tried to ensure that everyone participated in every major decision, the agency would grind to a halt. Through experimentation and trial and error, we have learned three best practices for participation. First, there are times when an organization should

make the investment to get broad-based participation, especially for major initiatives or organizational changes. Second, when such broad participation isn't possible, use a smaller group containing a representative cross-section of the agency. In this way, all employees have reassurance that the initiative or decision involved input from someone with views like their own. Third, communicate with staff regularly, clearly and honestly. This ensures that when people do participate, they trust the process and have a common baseline of knowledge. When not everyone can participate, the trust built by such communication practices will also help people accept decisions or approaches in which they were not directly involved.

Balance Rights and Responsibilities

Implementing the Just Workplace still is a new experience for CRS. In addition, we have not found another organization or business doing it. As a result, each one of us continues to define what a "just workplace" means in our daily work lives.

One of the mild risks we have found associated with trying to implement true justice in the workplace is the risk of employees feeling that uncomfortable equals unjust. With the definition of justice in the workplace fuzzy, people very humanly will associate decisions, practices or events that they dislike with being unjust. When that happens, it can weaken the true concept of justice.

At CRS, we have addressed this problem by ensuring that the dual concepts of rights and responsibilities are a central part of our thinking about a just workplace. This creates a balance between having the right to justice, and having a responsibility to coworkers to also support what is best for them, the organization and the people we serve. In this light, it becomes a little easier for people to find a way to distinguish between occurrences that truly are unjust and those that simply are unpopular.

What the Next Ten Years Hold

At CRS' World Summit in October of 2000, 250 staff and partners from around the world created not only the vision statement quoted earlier in this paper, but also five new "visionary directions" for the agency. These visionary directions will guide the agencies priorities, choices and investments over the next ten years. They include:

- Pursuing the right to peace
- Transforming our responses to poverty and vulnerability
- Promoting participatory and responsive governance
- Expanding community

- Becoming an agile, innovative and responsive organization.

CRS' visionary directions stem directly from the fruits of having implemented the Justice and CST/Management Strategies.

The agency has gone further, identifying five specific objectives that it will achieve by the end of 2005. They flow from our vision statement and visionary directions, seeking to put them into specific action. These objectives include:

1. CRS, working with our partners, will have facilitated concrete changes to systems and practices that contribute to injustice.
2. The people that CRS and our partners serve are fuller participants in local, national and global actions for the common good.
3. CRS and our partners will meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable through building sustainable local capacities.
4. CRS, our partners and the people we serve demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that promote peace, tolerance and reconciliation.
5. CRS has systems, structure and culture that promote staff initiative and ownership, and achievement of our strategy.

We believe these objectives show genuine progress—a growing sophistication in each employee's understanding of and commitment to the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching. They also show how the agency's staff, when given the opportunity to develop specific goals, choose targets that uphold the dignity not only of the people we serve, but also all of those with whom we work.

Case Study: Rwanda

As part of implementing the Justice Strategy, country programs from every region in which CRS works completed "justice case studies." These case studies describe how the country program implemented the Justice Lens and the Just Workplace, and the resulting impact both on the people we serve and on our staff's working environment. The following is an edited version of the justice case study produced by CRS/Rwanda. It demonstrates not only how a CRS project rooted in justice can help carry forward the principles of *Laborem Exercens*, but also how they can benefit from and advance the larger body of Catholic Social Teaching.

The Rwanda case study is particularly cogent for another reason, too. CRS had worked in Rwanda for 30 years before the genocide broke out in 1994. Much of the project work that CRS had done in Rwanda with local partners was wiped out in a matter of a few months after the genocide began. Staff inside the CRS/Rwanda office faced the same devastation,

loss and need for reconciliation as people in the rest of the country.

While many people knew there were major political and social problems, most were surprised and few "sensed" that there would be such a widespread massacre of innocent people and participation of so many people in the killings. After, many CRS staff felt that the agency must become more involved in promoting right-relationships within a country and more aware of peace and justice issues. This was necessary to help ensure the basic fabric of society keeps its values of respect and solidarity of all people. This basic lesson from the Rwandan genocide has been instrumental for the agency in developing programmatic areas in peacebuilding and global solidarity. Programs in these areas are now being implemented in Rwanda as well as other areas of the world such as the Balkans.

Application within CRS/Rwanda

Most of the staff working in CRS/Rwanda immediately after the 1994 genocide were there when it happened. Many were Rwandan nationals whose families and communities were torn apart by the violence. In this environment, the staff itself needed healing, reconciliation and a sense of solidarity in order to be able to go about the business of providing the same to their countrymen.

When CRS brought the Justice Lens and Just Workplace to CRS Rwanda, the agency had already spent months, almost years, providing the emotional and psychological support necessary after such trauma. But the office's wounds were still as raw as the country's. With our justice agenda, we brought principles like "solidarity," "reconciliation," "human dignity" and "rights and responsibilities." But, we brought them into a traumatized environment, and one in which our key partners—the Rwandan Church—had been accused of participation in the genocide and relations at all levels of the Church were exacerbated. In this environment, people were not ready to talk about a Catholic justice—one merged with peace and its implication of reconciliation.

This situation meant three things for implementing the justice strategies in CRS/Rwanda. First, the challenges to implementation were very clear, set in stark relief. This paper mentioned earlier some of the resistance to the new expression of the agency's Catholic identity. In places like headquarters in the United States, that apprehension was subtle, and the sources were difficult to apprehend. Not so in Rwanda.

Second, the need for the changes we were implementing were also incredibly clear. Though it would take time, implementing the concepts of CST and helping to create solidarity were critical for the future of the office, and the future of the office's important work. Third, the process of reflection and discussion we were using to help bring the justice strategies to our offices was just the right one to use in this situation. That process is explained in subsequent paragraphs.

After the acquisition of documents explaining the Justice Lens' inspiration and principles,

CRS/Rwanda started the application of that reflection in its everyday activities. Moreover, CRS/Rwanda conducted a three-day workshop for all staff. Though based on the CRS Headquarters format, the approaches were adapted to the Rwandan context. The main documents were translated in the national language and the workshop was held in Kinyarwanda so that everybody could follow.

The CST principles were explained and discussed in comparison with the Rwandan context and the relations among CRS/Rwanda staff. From the lowest level employee to the highest, everybody expressed his or her views openly. Strengths (e.g., dialogue) and weaknesses (e.g., communication) were identified and the staff openly proposed ways of improving working conditions. After the workshop, people within the office could feel a better working atmosphere. The office introduced a new management decision-making process that has had positive impact on personnel management, use of consultative approaches and in other areas.

All of CRS/Rwanda's Project Managers now know the Guiding Principles. The existence of a Justice and Peace department also creates awareness, but the challenges to take the values into account systematically in all CRS/Rwanda interventions remains. CRS/Rwanda Project Managers have begun expressing a need for the integration of the Justice Lens in all projects. The Justice and Peace department has initiated an introduction to the Justice and Peace program for newly hired staff.

To achieve the integration of Justice Lens in its work, CRS/Rwanda recognizes that they must make it a priority, involving all departments and partners. Both staff and partners have sufficient information in their respective sectors to determine appropriate methodologies for integrating the Justice Lens. CRS/Rwanda must continue to provide an environment conducive to that happening. "Peacebuilding among Rwandan Youth," the project described below, provides one example of the changes CRS/Rwanda is bringing to people's social and work lives as a result of its own journey through implementing the Justice Lens and a Just Workplace.

Peacebuilding Among Rwandan Youth

Background

Just after the genocide and the 1994 war, the Rwandan people devoted themselves to moral and physical rehabilitation. The Rwandan people had to reconcile with themselves and with their collective past. The best route was pursuing programs of social justice and reconciliation. CRS has had a presence in Rwanda at every emergency stage. Presently, CRS is involved in the rehabilitation process in its various components, including reconciliation programs with the Rwandan people.

Beginning in 1995, CRS/Rwanda staged a series of workshops on conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. Since 1997, CRS' involvement in issues of social justice and

reconciliation among Rwandans has widened significantly, becoming more systematic and specialized in a series of projects. To date, CRS/Rwanda has five ongoing projects including the "Peacebuilding among Rwandan Youth" project. Apart from UN agencies, no other international NGO has invested as much as CRS in the domain of peacebuilding in Rwanda.

The Project

Youth between the ages of 13 and 25 years account for approximately 50% of the Rwandan population. Only a small minority of that youth, however, has access to education and the modern employment sector. Rural, non-schooled youth face a particularly dismal future, and make up the largest portion of Rwanda's young people. They face risks like alcohol addiction, drugs, diseases (particularly AIDS) and violence. When they leave their farms for urban centers, they find the living conditions no easier. Complicating matters for Rwanda's young, many are now orphans or even heads of households, with no shelter or means of support. Jobless and unable to care for themselves, the nation's youth could be a source of serious conflict if left out of the reconciliation and social development processes.

Addressing the challenges that Rwanda's youth face is a long task. Peacebuilding among Rwandan Youth is in its first phase, focusing on sensitization, developing public awareness and providing economic opportunity. This task cannot be properly implemented unless it is based on fundamental principles that are taught to the youth and are illustrated with examples drawn from Rwanda's history and that of other nations. Some of those principles include:

- respect for human dignity;
- equality and respect of basic rights;
- a sense of common property and interdependence;
- solidarity with vulnerable people;
- peaceful management of conflicts.

"Peacebuilding among Rwandan Youth" began in September of 1998 and was scheduled to last for three years. The idea for the project came from CRS partners—a critical detail given that Rwanda's people needed to have ownership for their own social healing and transformation. After the genocide and massacres of 1994, the two dioceses of Byumba and Kabgayi initiated gatherings to sensitize youth on the tragedy that befell Rwanda, its causes, its consequences and the means of preventing its recurrence, as well as the role of the youth in the reconciliation and social development processes. When BPRM funding became available, CRS/Rwanda and several partners, including four dioceses, the Ministry of Youth, and the National Council of Youth, devised a vast and diversified program which later became a reference point for others in the country.

The project targets approximately 26,000 beneficiaries from the Butare, Byumba, Kabgayi

and Kigali dioceses, involving both schooled and non-schooled youth. The main activities consist of organizing solidarity camps, training trainers, sensitization through social and cultural animation, and sensitization material developed in the context of IEC. They also involve the development of didactic material to be used by secondary school teachers in the domain of reconciliation, conferences at the National University of Rwanda, the promotion and support to Local Initiatives for Peace (LIP), and the provision of support to local structures for youth training and supervision.

Project implementation is done in close collaboration with state organs, other religious denominations and NGO's involved in similar programs in the region. CRS assists the diocesan coordination teams by providing all of the required assistance in material or human resources and by ensuring fulfillment of any commitments to donors. Involvement by all of these parties—especially those local to Rwanda, is critical to the project's success, and we believe promotes the principles of solidarity and ownership espoused in *Laborem Exercens* and other CST documents.

The Process

The project targets youth in 30 secondary schools per diocese and at the National University of Rwanda in Butare. Its components included sensitizing youth on values of social justice, tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflicts through round table discussions facilitated by trained teaching personnel, sports, and cultural events staged around those same ideals. Drawing and eloquence contests are organized in all secondary schools on the themes of peace, justice and reconciliation. Sensitization and supervision of non-schooled youth are mainly done through solidarity camps and local initiatives for peace (LIP). Solidarity camps bring together approximately 200 girls and boys representing their peers from independent groups and associations as well as religious groups from all denominations.

A solidarity camp lasts for one month, conducted by trainers selected at the diocesan. Throughout the camp, the youth engage in activities and debate issues relating to reconciliation and social development. The youth also are involved in activities of public interest such as the production of construction materials for schools, or reforestation, which benefit the most poor of the region. This promotes their sense of solidarity, gives them critical work and life skills, and reconnects them with their communities.

In Butare and Kabgayi dioceses, youth that attended solidarity camps and proved active within income generating associations were awarded small loans of \$600 from the funds provided by the project to finance solidarity initiatives (LIP). In addition to receiving loans, some youth train as commune/parish animators—influential young people who promote mobilization among their peers on issues of social justice, reconciliation, solidarity. Poverty and ignorance are common features among the non-schooled youth in particular. Further, work is a critical component of restoring the societal fabric and re-igniting a sense of dignity, pride and responsibility. e cannot reasonably talk of peace if we cannot concretely help Rwanda's youth overcome economic challenges. For this reason, the program stresses

concrete solidarity initiatives such as the income generating activities just mentioned.

Major Achievements and Outcomes

The following lists some of the most important and relevant achievements of this Rwandan project.

- Regarding labor organization, the project favors participation by all walks of life including government, religious denominations and associations. The frequent planning, monitoring and assessment meetings particularly evidence this.
- We have gained support or contributions from local public administration offices in the form of youth transport, equipment and public infrastructure. This ensures greater local roots for the project and its outcomes.
- The issue of youth is now on the local and national agendas. Government bodies, both local and international NGOs and UN agencies are getting more involved in providing them building blocks for their futures.
- The youth are growing confident and optimistic now that they have caught the attention of decision-makers. This helps them change the role they can play.
- One of the Justice Lens principles is to identify the causes of injustice. Decision-makers became aware that the marginalization of youth threatened society's stability and lasting peace. They realize now how much youth given voices, education, economic opportunity and a role to play in their own futures can become catalysts for stability.

Key Insights

Rwandan youth have received little attention from the political class. Traditionally, they have been denied a voice in debates or decisions considered reserved for elders. They have also been denied the economic and labor opportunities necessary for them to play the role they must in Rwanda's future, and for them to realize the full meaning of being human. That cannot last. As a majority of the Rwandan population now, the nation's youth must assume a leadership role of their own, be involved in the decision making process and the search for solutions, and have a hand in creating lasting peace and reconciliation for the Rwandan people. Further, targeting youth, analyzing existing and potential conflicts and developing solutions that involve the main stakeholders is the best way to prevent future conflicts.

CRS/Rwanda's Justice and Peace department is a separate department. The Justice Lens enabled CRS/Rwanda's Justice and Peace department to implement its program based on the fundamental principles of Catholic Social Teaching. These values gave an orientation to

discussions on the development of different projects within the Justice and Peace department and the exchange of ideas during workshops on conflict resolution, non-violence, and good governance. The reason for emphasizing them is that the crisis created by the Rwandan genocide is a moral crisis as well: all values that are the basis of society were denied by the massive killings.

The fact that the main partner of CRS/Rwanda's Justice and Peace program is the Rwandan Catholic Church offers an advantage, because we share vision and values. That situation favors efficiency in integrating the Justice Lens in reconciliation initiatives targeting various categories of people. In addition, proposing a peacebuilding program based on CST was a contribution to efforts of internal renewal for the Church.

CRS/Rwanda Justice and Peace department also collaborates with non-Catholic partners. The guiding principles of its program were proposed to those partners in a spirit of openness and mutual respect. This approach has resulted in enriching initiatives.

The Justice Lens was applied in the project as follows:

- In its development, the problem of youth marginalization was identified and analyzed based on real facts.
- Decision-makers and partners concerned were involved in the project's development.
- Implementation favored a participatory approach and mobilized and/or strengthened local resources.

The Rwanda case is just one example. CRS and its partners face similar issues in places all over the world. How, for example, does a community teach its young people not to hate in the midst of ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe? What hope do they have for education, economic opportunity and full expression of their human dignity in the midst of such violence? How does a community devastated by Hurricane Mitch address land use justice, in order to ensure that everyone has the chance to work and share in the reconstruction of society? CRS's encounters with justice, the goals of a justice workplace and the larger body of CST have made us much more aware of such underlying issues. Even better, it has made us much more dedicated to and capable of working with our partners and the people we serve to address them.

Endnotes

[1] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. (1981), www.vatican.va, Section II, 2.2.

[2] The agency named four distinct strategies of which Justice was one. The others included Catholic Social Teaching and Management, Fundraising/Growth and Program Quality.

[3] This text taken from an internal document, *CRS' Justice Lens*, written and updated through a collaborative effort, and maintained on CRS' internal web site.

[4] CST/Management Team, *Developing and Living Out a Just Workplace*, rev. ed. April 26, 2001.

[5] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. (1981), www.vatican.va, Section II, 8.5.

[6] *Ibid.* Section II, 6.2.