



Go FAR
faith. action. results.
The Campaign for Catholic Relief Services



Campaign After Action Review

FALL 2023



BACKGROUND

Five years ago, Catholic Relief Services launched our first targeted Leadership Giving campaign, Go FAR: The Campaign for Catholic Relief Services. In taking this step, we put our faith into action to achieve bold results, accelerating the agency's Vision 2030 strategy. We answered our Gospel calling to champion people to become agents of their own destiny in a world where all people can reach their God-given potential. As the solicitation phase of Go FAR concluded in September 2023, we now reflect on its achievements, and plan how to sustain our increased momentum. We are committed to assessing lessons learned from the experience of Go FAR to further enhance the agency's success in generating revenue from private donors, as we all walk together in solidarity with the people and communities we serve overseas.

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

At Catholic Relief Services, we go far by putting our faith into action to achieve results. It's what Jesus called us to do—and through the generosity of our donors, it's what we've been doing for more than 80 years. Through the Go FAR campaign, we challenged ourselves to answer this Gospel calling by going further—to build on our reach, the investment of our loyal supporters and the influence of the global Church to solve some of the most pressing problems of the 21st century.

The CRS board of directors approved the Go FAR campaign in June 2018, as informed by a feasibility study conducted with key donors, to achieve several goals to strengthen the agency—mainly to accelerate fundraising to fuel our Vision 2030 strategy and provide focus to campaign priorities aligned with strategic change platforms. These priorities were closely aligned to our mission and expertise, and with the tangible, global-level change called for by the United Nation's sustainable development goals supported by Pope Francis. To achieve these goals, we sought to use innovative new fundraising techniques and foster new ideas for Leadership Giving donors; learn how to conduct an all-agency campaign; and expand our exposure and influence among our Leadership Giving donors, prospective donors, board members, U.S. Bishops and partners overseas. Our collective efforts were intended to encourage collaboration, inspire pride across the agency and enhance a culture of philanthropy. As this review shows, we have achieved all these goals and far exceeded what we initially hoped for, thanks to your strong efforts and visionary leadership.

CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

In October 2018, under the leadership of our then board of directors chair Bishop Gregory John Mansour, CRS' board of directors and foundation board approved conducting a targeted Leadership Giving campaign with an **ambitious working goal of \$275 million in order to** support our programmatic goals to build homes for 1.5 million people, transform the livelihoods of 1 million farmers and their families, empower 2 million young people, strengthen the families of 1 million children, and further our mission across the world.

The campaign was led by Honorary Chair Timothy Cardinal Dolan and Co-Chairs Mary Jane and Glenn Creamer, and Karen and Mark Rauenhorst who guided the campaign and engaged donors through multiple forms of outreach. We also received invaluable guidance from members of the Go FAR Campaign Steering Committee (CSC), and present and former board directors. The CSC was comprised of leaders from the board of directors, CRS foundation board and donors and included Geraldine Carolan, Sarita Hanley, Chip Mulaney, Julie Kraemer, Andrea Kaneb, Carleen Suttman, John Scheid and Denise Tollinche. Additionally, consultation with former board directors like Jim Perry and Charmaine Warmenhoven was seminal in guiding the planning and architecture of the Go FAR campaign. The Go FAR name, suggested by Glenn Creamer as a reference to CRS' tagline "Faith. Action. Results," was established as the official campaign name by our co-chairs. In a critical moment of decision making, the CSC encouraged CRS to continue with the campaign through the COVID-19 pandemic, a recommendation that has proved highly valuable for the agency. Board directors also helped us pivot to a virtual donor engagement platform and worked with us hand-in-hand to make this transition possible.

In September 2021, the campaign's original revenue goal was realized. At that point, the board of directors—led by Chair Bishop Frank Caggiano—voted to **increase the Go FAR final goal from \$275 million to \$350 million**. Archbishop Nelson Perez joined the leadership of the campaign as CRS' Chair in November 2022, helping us surpass the raised revenue goals and maintain our focus on increasing impact and driving mission agility.

As of August 31, 2023, **Go FAR has surpassed even this elevated final goal, having raised \$421 million**. This achievement marked a landmark milestone in the fundraising efforts of CRS, showcasing the momentum created by this truly all-agency effort. Its substantial revenue will support CRS in catalyzing transformational change at scale and embody the collective solidarity of our donors, volunteer leaders and staff, united in answering the Gospel call to serve the world's most vulnerable.

CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

Inspired by our faith-driven mission, Go FAR was created to generate substantial private revenue for priorities identified within the agency's Vision 2030 strategy. Additionally, the campaign aimed to achieve several operational goals, including innovating donor engagement methods; offering focused, multiyear priorities; increasing exposure among donors and our leadership; boosting annual revenue from Leadership Giving donors; and fostering a culture of philanthropy across the agency.

PRIMARY GOALS

Go FAR's overall programmatic and financial performance significantly exceeded targets, setting us on a path toward powerful programmatic impact. Several board and CSC members' early gifts to the campaign and their willingness to actively champion Go FAR served as an important catalyst for additional campaign commitments from Leadership Giving donors. The campaign also served to attract gifts of a larger size with gifts of five-figures and above increasing 30% from the first year of the campaign to FY23. The faith and generosity of Go FAR supporters has enabled CRS to make considerable progress toward meeting our ambitious Vision 2030 goals and advancing the five campaign priorities to accelerate impact against poverty and suffering. CRS is now securely poised to achieve [these impact goals](#), having already built homes for 1.9 million people, helped 385,000 vulnerable children live in safe and nurturing families, empowered 156,000 young women and men, and helped 715,000 farmers and their families transform their livelihoods through improved farming practices.

FURTHER GOALS

The Go FAR campaign has transformed lives around the world and empowered CRS and our supporters to embody our Catholic faith and go further than ever before. More than this, however, its success signifies—and is due to—a meaningful, positive shift within CRS. One key goal of the Go FAR campaign was to enhance CRS' culture of philanthropy, and every division across the agency played a significant role. From participating in cultivation and stewardship events, to providing expertise in the development of campaign materials and platform products, Go FAR was able to meet and exceed its goals due to this all-agency collaboration.

CRS' President & CEO Sean Callahan, executive leaders and board directors were especially critical in advancing donor relationships. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Go FAR campaign co-chairs and Campaign Steering Committee, our board of directors, foundation board, and Executive team for their guidance, insight and energetic engagement. We would also like to recognize our colleagues in Overseas Operations, Finance, Marketing & Communications, Global Knowledge and Information Management, and Mission & Mobilization for their partnership in helping us enact this ambitious initiative. Our Overseas Operations colleagues identified and developed specific funding opportunities that would advance our mission and be appealing to donors and acted as technical experts during conversations with donors. Our Marketing & Communications colleagues partnered with us to create a compelling website and series of visual assets to support our communications to

donors. Within Charitable Giving, a true cross-section of staff contributed, including those on the Leadership Giving, Planned Giving, Analytics, and Content teams. Our Content team created a messaging platform that married our mission to serve our sisters and brothers around the world with the technical expertise of our colleagues executing our programming, and our Charitable Giving Analytics team developed new tools in donor research and data analysis to assist in the identification of and connection with new donors.

The campaign sharpened focus on and increased visibility of our efforts, offering a platform on which to showcase the ambitious goals of the agency's strategy to our donors, and discuss the future vision for the agency.

Operationally, we witnessed substantial innovation during the campaign, especially in the realm of donor engagement tools. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated fresh approaches to maintain donor outreach. With guidance and support from the Campaign Steering Committee and CRS board members, CRS created a range of campaign-specific digital initiatives and events, including webinars, small group discussions, and Virtual Journey of Hope trips. These were tailored to donors at different stages of engagement and hosted by CRS executives, board members, and country program staff. CRS board directors acted as hosts and leaders on many online donor engagements. For example, Glenn and Mary Jane Creamer, Michael Wolohan, Bishop Kicanas, Andreas Sashegyi, Brian Wenger, Pat Dinneen, Gerry Carolan, Ann Thivierge, Christina Lamas, and Sarita Hanley hosted small virtual Living Room conversations. Sarita Hanley hosted our virtual Journey of Hope to El Salvador, and Kay Redmond, Carleen Suttman, and Sarita Hanley took donors on a multi-day virtual journey to Madagascar. We also instituted a pilot project wherein board directors shared notes of thanks to donors. Participants in the pilot included Bishop Brendan Cahill, Bishop Oscar Solis, Bishop Denis Madden, Glenn Creamer, Mary Jane Creamer, Steve Kaneb, Andrea Kaneb, Rob Suttman and Carleen Suttman.

As pandemic restrictions eased, the board encouraged the reinstatement of in-person events and international trips. Our international Journey of Hope trips have been attended by many episcopal and lay members of our board of directors and foundation board, many of whom have invited peers to join them. These visits offer our leadership an important opportunity to see programming firsthand. These trips represent a partnership between our leadership, our Executive team, Overseas Operations and Charitable Giving.

Milestone domestic events held throughout the campaign included: a February 2020 event held in Naples, Florida, co-hosted by Karen and Mark Rauenhorst and Anne and Chris Policinski; a November 3, 2021, Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, followed by a dinner jointly hosted by our honorary campaign chair and campaign co-chairs which featured testimony from Bishop Octavio Cisneros; and a September 27, 2022, donor reception at the residence of Cardinal Timothy Dolan, co-hosted by Mary Jane and Glenn Creamer. Many former and current board members also hosted events, for which we are particularly

appreciative to Pam Gilardi, Kay Redmond, Gerry Carolan, Sarita Hanley, Brian Wenger, and Ann Thivierge for their generous hospitality.

KEY CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The Go FAR campaign period has produced valuable learning. Below we enumerate key challenges, successes and how we propose building on both as we seek to elevate our revenue in coming years.

SUCCESSES

- **Impact Goals:** As a result of surpassing fundraising goals, CRS was able to build homes for 1.9 million people; help 385,700 vulnerable children live in safe, nurturing families; empower 156,000 young women and men to secure job training and opportunities; assist 715,000 farmers transform 2.2 million acres of land; and in fiscal year 2022 alone, touch the lives of 255 million people in 122 countries. In all but one area, these results exceeded annual programmatic targets set by Overseas Operations.
- **Donor pipeline expansion:** Peer engagement by board and Campaign Steering Committee members in the form of new approaches—small, targeted events, peer screenings, and personal introductions—produced some of our most significant gains related to advancing existing connections and forging new relationships with prospective donors at the Leadership Giving level. Our first Go FAR peer screening held in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis hosted by Karen and Mark Rauenhorst and attended by Archbishop Hebda and Brian Wenger set the standard for those that followed. Participants in peer screenings included Archbishop Bernard Hebda, Karen and Mark Rauenhorst, Brian and Kate Wenger, Julie Kraemer, Denise and Charles Tollinche, John and Deb Scheid, Rob and Carleen Suttman, John and Kelli Connor, Kay Redmond, Glenn and Mary Jane Creamer, Sarita Hanley, and Ann Thivierge. In future campaigns, as we seek to expand our donor pipelines at the highest levels of giving, these efforts will continue to be of significant value to the agency.
- **Revenue:** Go FAR total revenue greatly exceeded expectations despite a challenging domestic environment for philanthropy. We see this as an indicator that even greater giving can be achieved in future efforts.
- **Driving Mission Agility Funding:** Campaign donors contributed significantly to the Driving Mission Agility campaign priority, outstripping its expected performance by 60%, as of August 31, 2023. Although we only exceeded our financial goals in two of the five campaign priority areas, agency leadership was able to allocate resources to strategic priorities aligned to campaign goals. This strong response of these gifts, the majority of which were discretionary, has not only fueled our Vision 2030 priorities and ability to meet emerging needs, but also underscores the trust our donors have in us to use funds where they can have the greatest impact. Bequest revenue also contributed substantially to campaign revenue. The Planned Giving program was a

critical component of Go FAR's success, and will continue as an area of innovation, collaboration and focus for Charitable Giving.

- **Campaign messaging:** With the guidance of our Campaign Steering Committee and in collaboration with the Strategic Change Platform teams and our Charitable Giving Content team, we successfully tested and improved campaign messaging. This messaging effectively conveyed our campaign's mission-driven purpose and its strong programmatic foundation to motivate and engage our donors.
- **Advancement of and alignment with the Vision 2030 agency strategy:** The boldness and clarity of the agency's Vision 2030 strategy provided the Go FAR campaign a clear target for how to advance the agency's mission and engage Leadership Giving donors. Vision 2030 enabled the entire agency and both boards to play critical roles in advancing the campaign. It also built connections between the private contributions of Go FAR donors and the leveraged resources driving programmatic results both within CRS programs and with governments, the Church and institutional partners in the countries where we work. Policy advocacy by Gerry Carolan, John Scheid, Sarita Hanley, Matt McKenna, Brian Wenger, Bishop Seitz, Ann Thivierge, Michael Wolohan, Bishop Hartmayer, and Bishop Rhoades was valuable in advancing our Vision 2030 efforts to leverage our influence so we can take our work to the next level and achieve transformational change at scale. The alignment of Vision 2030 with the Go FAR campaign positioned CRS in an unprecedented way to receive more government and institutional funding—and achieve our largest operating budget—than ever before.

CHALLENGES

- **COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic represented a significant challenge at its onset in March of 2020. Our campaign strategy had relied heavily on a highly personalized, in-person approach to donor engagement. With the guidance of our Campaign Steering Committee and specific encouragement by Chip Mulaney, we continued to implement the campaign, but with a newly revised strategy that utilized digital tools. Our co-chairs and CSC members played a leadership role in hosting virtual events including Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Mary Jane and Glenn Creamer, Karen and Mark Rauenhorst, Chip Mulaney, Gerry Carolan, and Sarita Hanley. Additionally, multiple board and foundation board directors lent their time to virtual events and shared personal testimonials of support with CRS supporters. As a result of this new approach, we now have an expanded suite of donor engagement tools to draw from.
- **Economy:** Throughout the campaign time period, we have experienced an uncertain economic environment. Our donors' generosity has carried on, nonetheless. Ongoing economic volatility only underscores the need for the agency to continue to seek enhanced sustainable revenue sources.
- **Planning timeframe.** Go FAR's campaign period began prior to the finalization of the Vision 2030 Strategic Change Platform teams. The work of these teams would become the basis of four of the five campaign priorities we offered to donors as funding opportunities. We were able to work with these teams in the early stages of the campaign to quickly articulate and message their work to donors, but in future efforts

recommend additional planning time be devoted to aligning programmatic planning and donor messaging before an official solicitation period begins. In the initial phase of campaign planning Jim Perry, Chip Mulaney and Julie Kraemer shared their valuable insights on Catholic campaigns in which they had participated.

- **Investment.** One of CRS' key strengths is our incredibly conscientious stewardship of donor resources, with support services constituting a significantly lower rate of our budget than many of our peers. To meet the needs of Go FAR, the agency did invest in counsel for the campaign, as well as adding two new functions—Campaign Director and Principal Gifts. As the agency continues to grow in an increasingly competitive philanthropic environment and seeks to serve more people in need, we will continue to recommend focused opportunities for additional investment in Charitable Giving that will generate additional revenue for the agency. We are appreciative to Glenn Creamer, Julie Kraemer and Chip Mulaney who raised this topic multiple times over the course of the campaign.

CONCLUSION

CRS' board of directors, foundation board, and Campaign Steering Committee were a driving force in the success of Go FAR, providing inspirational leadership, operational excellence and relationship building assistance. Board directors and CSC members guided many aspects of the campaign's implementation, which was critical in the first stages of the pandemic when Go FAR pivoted to virtual donor engagement strategies. Board directors and CSC members were also early champions of peer screening and hosting intimate events to expand donor and board pipelines and inspire first-time campaign donors. Their tireless commitment to travelling, hosting events, screening donor lists, opening doors with donors and writing thank you letters, among countless other contributions, continues to propel Go FAR's success.

The Go FAR campaign represents an historic milestone in private philanthropy at CRS. The revenue it generated is crucial for funding key program areas and setting the stage to mobilize future revenue. Together, we have forever altered and accelerated our ability to serve our sisters and brothers across the world and follow our Gospel imperative. However, as Go FAR was a targeted Leadership Giving campaign, it most closely engaged those with the ability to give significant funds each year. We now aim to consider what a comprehensive campaign could mean for the agency—one that is fully inclusive of our donors' giving. As many other sectors and organizations have seen, these initiatives can produce significant interest, visibility and resources for critical needs. In recognizing the true meaning of the word Catholic—a Church for all—CRS is humbled by the tremendous generosity already shown by our closest donors, and we now seek to expand our partnerships further. After all, together, we can go far—**because we should, and because we can.**