



Catholic Relief Services

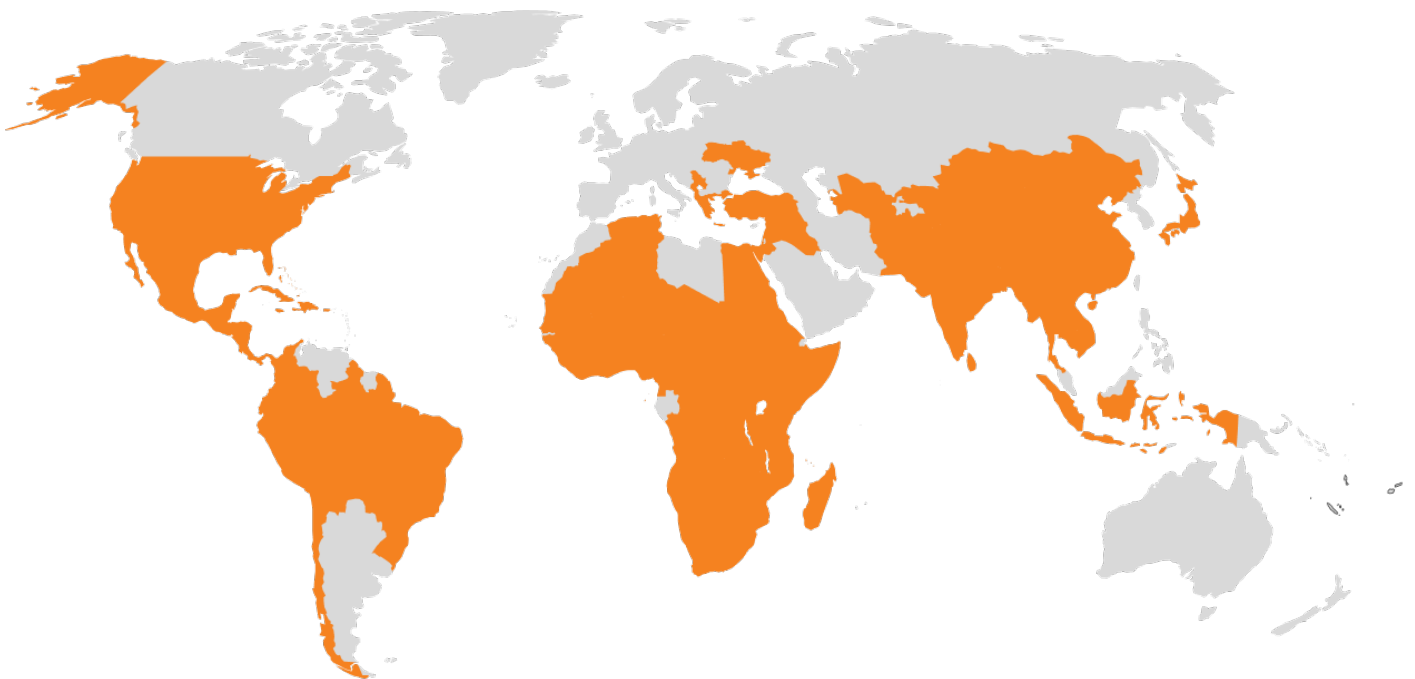
CommCare as a Global Solution for iNGOs



Overview

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is an international aid organization of more than 5,000 employees that supports relief programs around the world. CRS's programs are deployed in the world's most resource-constrained settings, and many programs involve both frontline service delivery and community-level data capture for monitoring and evaluation.

In 2019, CRS supported 159 million people in 114 countries around the world. Partnering with 1,929 local organizations, CRS supported programs in every sector from public health and agriculture to education, microfinance, and water and sanitation.



● Countries where Catholic Relief Services (CRS) programs are deployed

Five core objectives of CRS

1

All people live in just and peaceful societies

2

All people survive and thrive in the face of disaster

3

All people achieve dignified and resilient livelihoods in flourishing landscapes

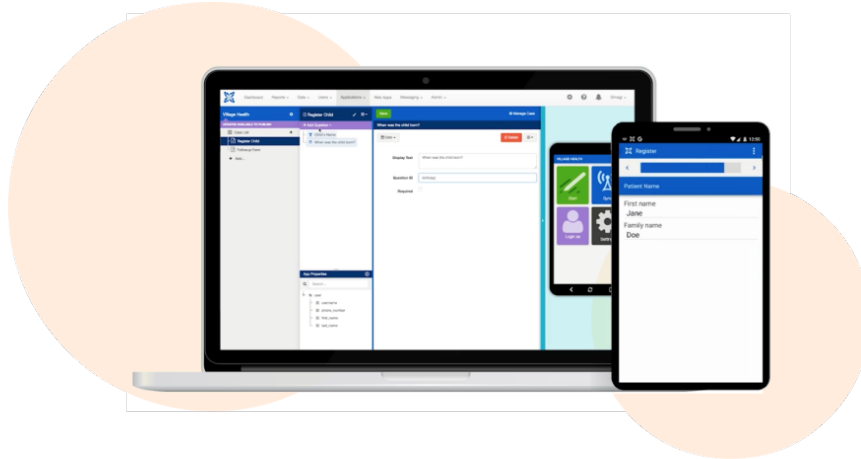
4

All children reach their full health and development potential in safe and nurturing families

5

All youth are empowered to thrive

Evaluating CommCare



Prior to CommCare, CRS leveraged a tool for frontline surveying across many of their country teams. However, users found that this tool was too complex for self-service usage and too inflexible for the wide variety of use cases across CRS’s portfolio of work. The result was limited usage and – in cases where teams did choose to use the platform – slow time-to-deploy.

Looking for a solution to these challenges, Steve Hellen, Director of ICT4D at CRS, and his team of ICT specialists began a detailed evaluation of mobile application and survey platforms. After a multi-month process, Steve’s team chose CommCare as their preferred solution due to its flexibility to handle a wide range of use cases, from one-time surveys to long-term case management.

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CommCare is tailored to the international development sector. This is critical for CRS: The evidence base for global health is huge—that’s very unique among tech vendors, even in this sector—and CommCare’s data workflows align well with how our M&E teams look at data.



Steve Hellen, Director of ICT4D at CRS

Additionally, Steve’s team found that because CommCare is tailored to the international development market, many of the features were directly relevant to the CRS teams he supported, as was the evidence base of third-party research on the platform’s impact in global health settings.

300+ Projects on CommCare

After deciding CommCare was the best fit for their programs, CRS deployed the platform as their officially preferred tool for frontline surveys, complex longitudinal data workflows, and service delivery. CRS’s global ICT4D team pays for CommCare, meaning program teams in any given country can deploy CommCare for free.



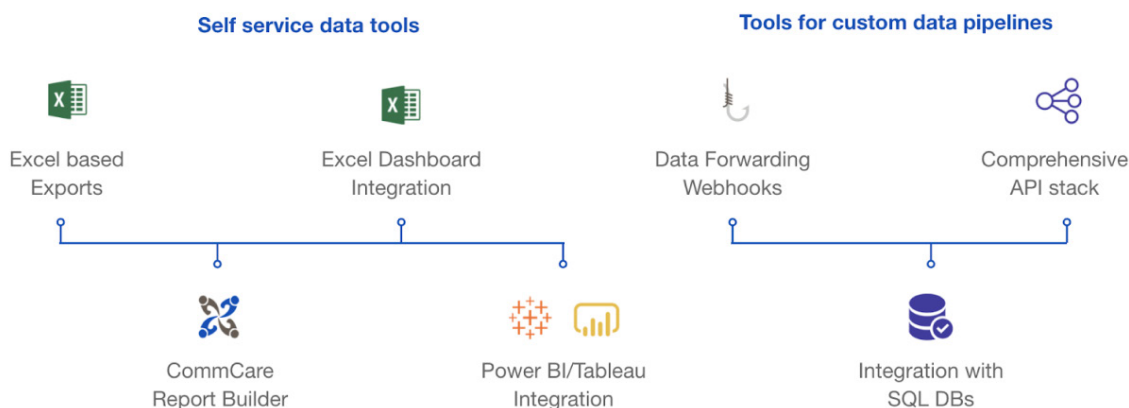
CommCare alleviates the learning curve required to capture and manage complex data.

Taralyn Lyon, MEAL Advisor at CRS

This setup has greatly increased the ability of smaller programs to leverage world-class data tools, while enabling CRS’s large programs with a very high level of technical CommCare support. **Today, more than 300 CRS programs leverage CommCare.**

CRS deploys CommCare alongside Power BI as their preferred analytics and reporting solution. Such intentional standardization around these two tools, which integrate seamlessly, translates to substantial country-level capacity from community-level data capture through analysis and reporting.

While M&E and Program teams at CRS can connect CommCare to a number of additional data tools that allow them to create self-service data integrations for day-to-day data needs, the central ICT4D team is able to support the more complex and ambitious projects at CRS with custom data pipelines. These integrations are included in their enterprise agreement and ensure their stakeholders get the reports and information they need.



A Multi-Tiered Support Structure

CRS's CommCare deployment involved three unique levels of support that greatly aid global adoption and use of mobile data collection:



Service Desk

Rather than route all their support questions to Dimagi, CRS offers all their country teams a globally-available service for all software-related queries. This allows them to develop broad internal capacity for its more than 300 projects that use CommCare. Their Service Desk Team acts as the first line of support (equivalent to L1) for teams with questions about CommCare, including administering new project spaces through their central portal. They are empowered to execute basic tasks and provide troubleshooting support and share issues beyond basic queries with the ICT4D Support Team.



ICT4D Support Team

CRS maintains an internal team of CommCare experts within the global ICT4D group. These specialists are practiced in both technical CommCare skills and program needs, including data capture, monitoring, and evaluation for CRS's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, & Learning (MEAL) efforts. The ICT4D Support Team offers L2 support, fielding requests that cannot be handled by the Service Desk.



Direct line to Dimagi's CS and Account Management teams

Whenever questions go beyond the responsibilities of the Service Desk and ICT4D Support Team, including in the case of bugs, CRS has a direct line of communication to Dimagi's Support team, which acts as in L3 capacity. Dimagi's collaborative support structure offers reduced response times compared to a tiered system, as each support engineer is empowered to usher the issue at hand through to its resolution, rather than simply "pass it up the chain." Often, when requests focus more on topics such as application architecture or other, more strategic topics, the Support team will pass the request on to Dimagi's Customer Success team.

The Dimagi Support team and the ICT4D Support Team at CRS hold monthly meetings to cover key metrics of support performance, a summary of all support tickets covered that month, and a review of any CommCare status issues that may have affected CRS project spaces. A quarterly meeting between the ICT4D Support Team and Dimagi's Customer Success, Account Management, and Product teams also provides regular opportunities to cover app development questions, as well as higher-level topics, such as product feedback, discussion of upcoming features, and ICT4D industry trends. This close relationship between Dimagi and CRS ensures that any high priority issues are quickly resolved, future strategy planning needs are addressed, and that CRS's internal ICT4D roadmap can be closely aligned with Dimagi's roadmap for CommCare.

The benefits of going global

Because CRS chose to deploy CommCare as their globally-preferred solution for mobile data collection and case management, they have been able to unlock unique value in their country programs. Most importantly, CRS has seen amazing strides in the digital capacity of their distributed teams. Director of ICT4D, Steven Hellen, outlined the distinct benefits of their approach:



Simplicity for Everyone

CommCare provides an easy-to-use, self-service tool for CRS's country teams, enabling them to manage application development and deployment largely on their own. "Teams can get a lot out of CommCare without too much training when you're deploying it for relatively simple workflows" says Steve Hellen. On more complex projects where technical support is required, that support is readily available via CRS's Service Desk and ICT4D Support Teams.



A Global Standard

Supporting a single solution across all of their programs has empowered CRS to build CommCare capacity across nearly every level of their agency:



Local Capacity

Many of CRS's country teams, comprised of M&E Officers and Program Managers, are already familiar with how to deploy mobile apps with CommCare. This decreases the time-to-deploy of new mobile apps, while also drastically decreasing the support burden for their IT team.



Internal Experts

Because they are supporting a limited suite of tools, the ICT4D team is able to become experts in those products. They serve as subject matter experts across the agency, from working with business development to demonstrating the value of CommCare and mobile tech in project proposal and program design. They also gain experience through advisory services, support, and capacity building for program implementation and maintenance.



Powerful Security and Administration

By using a single tool, CRS was able to retain greater administrative control around users and project spaces. This included permissions and access by user, but also project-level management.



Enterprise Dashboard

The administrator-level dashboard has offered CRS visibility into the hundreds of project spaces in their domain. They can monitor overall usage, including form submissions and mobile / web user information from one centralized dashboard. In addition, they have the ability to adjust certain Enterprise Settings, like restricting project space creation from users with an @crs.org email address. The dashboard also allows the team to see any problems in one place – from low usage rates to broken forms – allowing them to triage their issues and prioritize within their support structure.



Central Billing

By supporting CommCare across the organization, projects that otherwise would not have the budget or capacity to handle the subscription on their own are able to realize the benefits of mobile data collection and service delivery tools on their own projects. This means that on a per project basis, Enterprise partners can end up paying significantly less than if they supported each project individually.

A Growing Network

Not only is the use of CommCare within CRS programs growing and the understanding and expertise of their teams growing, but many INGOs around the world are following in the organization's footsteps. Today, CommCare is the preferred digital solution of organizations that believe in the simplicity, flexibility, and power of CommCare, such as:



Partners
In Health



ChildFund
International

World Vision



Tula
TULA FOUNDATION



Sightsavers



TECHNOSERVE
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY



Write to us at info@dimagi.com

Learn more about how CommCare may be able to support your organization's efforts across all of its programs



WITH THANKS TO

Steve Hellen

Director of ICT4D at CRS

Taralyn Lyon

MEAL Advisor at CRS