



## **PROTECTION FROM ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION**

### **Caritas Internationalis**

### **Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy**

#### **1.1. Purpose**

Caritas recognizes the right of children and vulnerable adults to protection, regardless of gender, race, culture and disability. Caritas recognizes the power dynamics inherent in working with children and vulnerable adults and the potential for abuse and exploitation by staff of people we work with.

Caritas is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and exploitation of all people. Caritas staff <sup>1</sup>and associates<sup>2</sup> are expected to uphold the dignity of all people with whom they come into contact by ensuring that their personal and professional conduct is of the highest standards at all times. They are equally expected to serve with integrity and promote the right relationships while taking their responsibilities.

Caritas recognizes the unique needs of children and vulnerable adults and, therefore, commits itself to creating and maintaining an environment that protects these individuals.

#### **1.2. Scope**

This policy applies directly to the following categories:

1. All Caritas Internationalis General Secretariat staff and associates
2. Those deployed through Caritas Internationalis mandated support mechanisms
3. Member organizations staff and associates

The General Secretariat will support members when needed.

#### **1.3. Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Caritas Internationalis prohibits all forms of exploitation and abuse, namely:

- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from engaging in sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally). Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from causing any physical or emotional harm to children or vulnerable adults.

---

<sup>1</sup> Staff refers to all Caritas staff, volunteers, interns and governance members.

<sup>2</sup> Associates refers to consultants and contractors

- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from the exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors.
- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from any form of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior toward children, women, and vulnerable adults.
- Caritas staff and associates are not to use their power or position to withhold assistance or services, or to give preferential treatment.
- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from using their power or position to request or demand payment, privilege, or any other benefit.
- Caritas staff and associates are prohibited from engaging in trafficking in human beings, in all forms.

In the same spirit, Caritas staff and associates are strongly discouraged to engage in sexual relationships with people they work with since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships are contrary to Caritas principles and values and undermine the credibility and integrity of its work.

#### **1.4. Responsibility to report**

Caritas staff and associates are obliged to report any concern or suspicion of exploitation and abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. Failure to report may put the victim and Caritas at risk and is a breach of this Safeguarding Policy and of the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct.

Caritas staff and associates should report concerns by a staff from other non-member organization or body through established reporting mechanisms.

#### **1.5 Prevention**

Caritas is adhering to the highest human resource and recruitment standards to safeguard people we work with against exploitation and abuse. This includes:

- Safe recruitment – referencing and vetting prospective applicants with emphasis on impeccable track record in carrying out their work in conformity with the Code of Conduct. Caritas Internationalis is adhering to the sector-wide referencing scheme called “inter-agency misconduct disclosure scheme”.
- Induction – all staff have completed an induction on the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct, Complaints and Handling Policy and Procedures, Caritas Internationalis Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Standards of Behavior Toward Children and Glossary of Terms.
- Acknowledgment – all staff have read, understood and signed the Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and the CI Code of Conduct.

#### **1.6 Data protection**

Caritas Internationalis is committed to apply the highest levels of protection in the processing of personal data. Personal information acquired during investigations related to the breach of the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct and the Caritas Internationalis Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding

Policy will be treated in accordance to the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data.

Approved by the Executive Board on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Annexes:

Annex I - Glossary of Terms

Annex II - Standards of behavior towards children

Annex III - Acknowledgment form

Annex IV - Reporting form

## Annex I-Glossary of Terms

### **CHILD:**

Any person under the age of 18. National law or local customs may use different definition; however, Caritas' position is all persons under the age of 18 should receive equal protection regardless of local age limits.

### **VULNERABLE ADULT:**

Vulnerable adults are individuals aged 18 years and over who are at greater risk of significant harm due to factors such as gender, age, mental or physical health, or as a result of poverty, inequality or experience of displacement or crisis.

### **SAFEGUARDING:**

The responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff and programmes promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and do not expose them to the risk of harm and abuse. PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) and child protection come under this umbrella term.

### **PROTECTION:**

The responsibility and measures taken to prevent and respond to abuse and exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult. This includes building awareness, promoting training, identifying and responding to all complaints, monitoring and evaluating protection structures, and taking personal responsibility.

### **CHILD PROTECTION:**

Child protection is about preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices. It is part of the broader area of work known as Safeguarding.

### **PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse):**

All measures that protect people from crisis affected communities from sexual exploitation and abuse by staff (e.g. of NGOs, the UN and other actors).

### **ABUSE:**

Any action or inaction that causes harm to another person. It can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. It also includes abuse online and/or through mobile technology. There are various types of abuse including:

1. **Sexual abuse:** Any actual or threatened sexual act of violence perpetrated against a child or adult, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Examples of sexual abuse include rape, abusive sexual contact like unwanted touching and non-contact sexual abuse such as sexting and verbal or behavioral sexual harassment.
2. **Physical abuse:** The actual or likely physical injury to a child or adult, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
3. **Emotional abuse:** Harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, bullying, and not giving care and affection.
4. **Neglect:** When basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is a failure to prevent exposure to any kind of danger.

## Annex II - Caritas Internationalis Standards of Behaviour towards Children

Caritas staff<sup>1</sup> and associates<sup>2</sup> must remain aware of perceptions and appearances in their language, actions, and relationships to children and safeguard them from harm. Staff and associates should be aware at all times to uphold the dignity of each child and treat all children with respect.

The following outline provides behavioural expectations of all Staff and Associates when interacting with children (any person under 18 years of age).

Caritas staff and associates:

MUST	MUST NOT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct themselves in manner consistent with values of Caritas, including complying with the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics</li> <li>2. Treat all children and their families with respect, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status</li> <li>3. Listen to children</li> <li>4. Provide welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for children that prevents all forms of abuse and exploitation.</li> <li>5. Be sensitive when they are around children (i.e. language, conversations, touch, gestures)</li> <li>6. Respect cultural differences which do not harm children</li> <li>7. Be transparent in actions and whereabouts</li> <li>8. Have at least one other adult present when they are with a child. Care and discretion must be used on all one-on-one situations</li> <li>9. Ensure that an adult caretaker is present when transporting a child; and if not possible, obtain appropriate permission</li> <li>10. Report any concerns of child abuse or exploitation</li> <li>11. Disclose all charges or convictions if they relate to child exploitation</li> <li>12. Comply with relevant country legislation</li> <li>13. Ensure contact with children is supervised, accompanied or at least in sight of other adults.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hit and physically abuse children (even if culturally acceptable)</li> <li>2. Emotionally or verbally abuse a child</li> <li>3. Be harsh toward a child. If a child expresses discomfort, stop the behaviour</li> <li>4. Have sex or engage in any sexual activity with a child including inappropriate touch</li> <li>5. Send degrading or harmful written or verbal messages to a child, such as sex-texting, pornography</li> <li>6. Use any computers, mobiles, video cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access, download or share child exploitation material</li> <li>7. Hire a child</li> <li>8. Encourage a child to meet with them outside of work-related activities</li> <li>9. Take a child to their homes</li> <li>10. Find themselves alone with a child (there may be exceptions)</li> <li>11. Do things for child of a personal nature that they are able to do for themselves</li> <li>12. Show favouritism</li> <li>13. Be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs when with children</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> Staff refers staff, volunteers, interns and governance members.

<sup>2</sup> Associates refers to consultants and contractors

# Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

## Annex III-Acknowledgment Form

### Acknowledgement

All Caritas staff<sup>1</sup> and associates<sup>2</sup> must read, sign, and abide by the Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy which prohibits abuse and exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult.

.....

I understand Caritas commitment to protect the rights and dignity of children and vulnerable adults and to safeguard them from abuse and exploitation as defined in the Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy.

I have read the Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy in its entirety and understand the following:

- The definitions of abuse and exploitation;
- That I am required to report abuse and exploitation of a child or a vulnerable adult;
- How to report, in accordance with Caritas reporting procedures, maintaining confidentiality;
- That I am required to uphold the standards of behaviour described in the Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct;
- That I am required to complete an induction on the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct, Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy, the Caritas Internationalis Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures and familiarize myself with related documents including:
  - Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct
  - Caritas Internationalis Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
  - Member organisation Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure (if applicable)
  - Annex I- Glossary of Terms
  - Annex II- Standards of behaviour towards children
- That if I have any questions, it is my responsibility to ask my supervisor or designated staff at Human Resources;
- That breach of the Policy and failure to report may lead to disciplinary action including termination or dismissal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

<sup>1</sup> Staff refers to staff, volunteers, interns and governance members

<sup>2</sup> Associates refers to consultants and contractors

# Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

## Annex IV-Report Form

### Suspicion of Abuse or Exploitation of a Child or Vulnerable Adult

#### Instructions

Any suspicion or concern of abuse or exploitation of a child or an adult involving Caritas staff<sup>3</sup> and associates<sup>4</sup> must be reported as required in the Caritas Internationalis Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure and Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy. If you are unable to complete all of the sections, fill in what you do know. If there is more than one victim, please complete a separate report for each victim. The reporter's identity will not be disclosed except on a "need-to-know" basis. If the reporter believes danger is imminent to themselves or anyone involved, you should alert the Caritas Internationalis Secretary General at once. Caritas Internationalis is committed to addressing and responding to all reports.

If an immediate threat to life exists or if emergency assistance is needed, please contact your local authorities and alert local senior management at once. The purpose of this Report Form is to report any suspicious activity of abuse or exploitation for Caritas Internationalis to assess and determine next course.

#### REPORTED BY:

Does the **Reporter** wish to be identified?

Yes  No

#### If yes, Reporter name and contact information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ M.I.: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number *Include the area code or country code (Preferred):* \_\_\_\_\_ *(Alternative):* \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

#### VICTIM:

Is the victim a child or an adult?

Child  Adult

#### Victim Identity:

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nick Name \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> Staff refers to all Caritas staff, volunteers, interns and governance members.

<sup>4</sup> Associates refers to consultants and contractors.

Unknown

*(If you are unable to provide the victim's identity, check Unknown.)*

Approximate age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

*Child refers to all persons under the age of 18*

Provide any additional information

**Caregiver/Guardian/Relative:**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unknown

*(If you are unable to provide the caregiver/Guardian/Relative's identity, check Unknown.)*

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Examples include: name of village, street name, city, house, building)*

Phone Number *Include the area code or country code (Preferred)* \_\_\_\_\_ *(Alternative)* \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

**INCIDENT DETAILS**

**Type of Incident:**

*(Check all that apply)*

Sexual Abuse *(e.g., fondling, kissing, non-contact sexual activity, rape)*

Exploitation *(e.g. sex trafficking, forced prostitution, survival sex, child labor)*

Emotional Abuse *(e.g. intimidation, threats, humiliation, bullying)*

Physical Abuse *(e.g. hitting, kicking, shaking)*

Other (Define other)

**Location:**

Address/Physical location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Country

*(Examples include: name of village, street name, city, house, building)*

**Dates:**



Approximate Date of Incident: Month \_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_

Date Reported: Month \_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_

**Physical and Emotional State:**

Physical and Emotional state of victim (*Check all that apply*)

Cuts, bruises, welts, scratches

Behavioral changes (*e.g., angry, crying, acting out, withdrawn, sudden illness*)

Other

Please further describe the physical and emotional state of the victim.

**Impairment or Disability:**

Does the victim have a physical impairment or disability?

Yes  No  Do Not Know

If yes, describe the impairment or disability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
—

**Become Aware:**

How did the reporter become aware of this incident?

Witnessed it  Other (Define other) \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety of Victim:**

Was the victim in immediate danger prior to completing this form?

Yes  No

Were the proper authorities and senior management contacted (as appropriate)?

Yes  No

Please provide any additional information.

**SUSPECT:**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unknown  (*If you are unable to provide the suspect's identity, check Unknown.*)

Phone Number (*Include the area code or country code (Preferred)*) \_\_\_\_\_ (*Alternative*) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Description of Suspect:

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown

*(Examples include: name of village, street name, city, house, building)*

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Are there any other persons with more information?

Yes  No

If yes, provide details: