

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES AND MODUS OPERANDI



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1. Preamble

1.1.

God's word inspires us to build relationships based on integrity and justice, and testifies to the great value in God's eyes of every effort to create a more just and liveable world. The word of God unambiguously denounces injustices and promotes solidarity and equality (cf. Verbum Domini 100).

1.2.

We, members of the Caritas Confederation, commit ourselves to building and strengthening our working relationships on the values and principles in this **Caritas Internationalis Partnership Principles and Modus Operandi**. We acknowledge that working in a spirit of fraternal cooperation based on these values and principles is the best way to realise our full potential as a confederation of Catholic organisations, working for solidarity and social justice in the world.

1.3.

Individually and collectively, we recognise the necessity of being constantly challenged and encouraged by the word of God and the teachings of the Church to serve and be with the poor, to be the advocate of justice, to denounce situations contrary to human dignity, and to affirm the intrinsic value of each individual person (Cf. *Sacramentum Caritatis* 89).

1.4.

We uphold the common vision expressed in the Caritas Internationalis Statutes and reflected in our common Strategic Framework: A just world, transformed to reflect God's kingdom, where all people in our common home experience the love, compassion and fullness of life.

1.5.

We work in unity and commitment to fulfil the shared mission and vision of the Confederation:

Inspired by the Gospel, the teachings of Catholic Church, and the lived experiences of people living in poverty, we are part of the universal mission of the Catholic Church, working in a spirit of fraternal cooperation and partnership to:

- *Save lives and reduce risk by building resilient communities, and responding quickly and effectively to humanitarian crises*
- *Transform lives and communities through the promotion of integral human development, the care for creation, the restoration of peace and social justice*
- *Call for a better world by amplifying the voice of those we serve, and convening people to advocate and act.*

Caritas's vision is for a just world, transformed to reflect God's kingdom, where all people in our common home experience the love, compassion and fullness of life.

1.6.

We are building a stronger and more accountable Caritas to better serve those living in poverty and marginalisation. We commit to and invest in organisational development, by sharing capabilities and promoting a culture of learning within the Confederation, enhancing our knowledge, skills and processes for the fulfilment of our shared mission. In this regard, The Caritas Internationalis Management Standards provides a common tool to engage in the institutional development and capacity strengthening of Caritas organisations

at all levels. We strive to be compassionate, to work professionally in diverse cultural settings and in fraternal cooperation with each other and the people we serve, with respect for our common home.

'In families, everyone contributes to the common purpose; everyone works for the common good, not denying each person's individuality but encouraging and supporting it.'

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 230

2. About this document

Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of 162 Catholic national relief, development, and social service organisations, working in over 200 countries and territories across the world. The Confederation is made up of seven regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa (MONA), North America and Oceania. Within the country or territory in which they operate, the national Caritas plays a coordination, facilitation and representation role, including coordinating the Diocesan Caritas, who often play a key role in the implementation of programmes and projects.

Caritas organisations often work together to respond to the needs of local communities, by setting common actions and objectives, strengthening each other and contributing to global action. The purpose of this document is to explain, with reference to Catholic Social Teaching, the values and principles which guide Caritas's way of working in partnership, and to offer a practical framework for the application of these principles, via the *Modus Operandi*.

At the core of this document are the two pillars on which the work of charity is founded: Professionalism and formation of the heart.

'The Church's charitable organisations, beginning with those of Caritas (at diocesan, national and international levels), ought to do everything in their power to provide the resources and above all the personnel needed for this work. Individuals who care for those in need must first be professionally competent: they should be properly trained in what to do and how to do it, and committed to continuing care. Yet, while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient.

...Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a "formation of the heart. (*Deus Caritas Est*, 31a)

The first part of this document corresponds to Pope Benedict XVI's call for "formation of the heart" by explaining the values and principles, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, which inform our work, and presenting our core organisational values and way of working which are inspired by our vision and mission.

This is an updated version of the Caritas Partnership Handbook published in 2003, and of the Caritas Guiding Principles on Partnership and Fraternal Cooperation approved in 2019. The *Modus Operandi* is a new section, strongly requested by Members and Regions themselves, which has been created with the aim to enhance the application of the partnership principles, address areas of complexity which have arisen in partnership, and reinforce the professionalism of our work in partnership, in order that Caritas organisations can serve those in need to the best of their ability.

3. Caritas partnership and fraternal cooperation

3.1.

Caritas grounds its understanding of partnership in the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching. Partnership in a spirit of fraternal cooperation within the Caritas Confederation is an alliance that expresses solidarity between members of local Churches that recognises all women and men as part of one interdependent global community, and which demonstrates a commitment to social justice and an overriding preferential option for the poor.

3.2.

As stated in our mission statement above and in Caritas Internationalis's Statutes¹, the Caritas Confederation, inspired by Jesus's love and the example of the Good Samaritan, uses the term "fraternal cooperation" to emphasise the familial relationship between Member Organisations; indeed, Member Organisations refer to each other using the broad term "sister Caritas". "Fraternal cooperation" is a term which reflects the Catholic identity of Caritas and indicates the way in which Member Organisations should work together. The word "fraternal" is connected with the relationship that exists between people or groups that share the same ideas or interests, and historically has been used to indicate the relationship between siblings. Pope Francis's 2020 encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti", focuses on the Good Samaritan as a paradigm of how we, in today's society, should love our neighbour. The Italian word, "Fratelli", translates as "siblings", and so once again we see this term as something which is intended to create a link between all people as brothers and sisters in Christ.

3.3.

Caritas Internationalis is an international Confederation, and we strive to use terminology which reflects the vibrant diversity of our members and also ensures good communication and understanding both internally among our members and with external stakeholders and partners. All of our work is inspired by the example of Jesus and imbued with the Holy Spirit, and "fraternal cooperation" encompasses the character of our partnership. However, while this Modus Operandi will refer to "fraternal cooperation", we recognise that not everyone will employ this terminology, and may wish to use another term. In line with this, and in order to strengthen our commitment to inclusion and equality, this Modus Operandi will mostly talk about Caritas Partnership, in which this character is implied, while also being more inclusive of the full face of humanity and understandable for a lay audience with whom we also work in this spirit. Caritas's shared vision and mission affirms this and creates a firm foundation for Members to enact the Partnership Principles in a spirit of fraternal cooperation.

3.4.

Authentic partnership means a long-term commitment to agreed objectives, based on shared values, principles, strategies, resources and information. It is characterised by honest feedback, joint planning, accompaniment, transparency and accountability on all sides, and a genuine openness and sensitivity to the other's needs, feelings, expertise, experience, and wisdom. It is based on mutual respect, trust and goodwill, put into action through the continuous implementation of subsidiarity principles and the reinforcement of local leadership.

3.5.

Effective partnership and fraternal cooperation brings solidarity between Member Organisations, other organisations that share our vision, and the communities and people with whom we work, always with the aim to have a positive impact on the lives of the people we serve.

¹ <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/20230505-Statutes-of-Caritas-Internationalis.pdf>

4. Our commitment

4.1.

We, members of the Caritas Confederation, reaffirm our commitment to be guided in our understanding and practice of partnership and fraternal cooperation by the following values and principles drawn from the Gospel, Catholic Social Teaching and the experience of Caritas organisations. These values and principles shape both our vision and our way of working.

4.2.

We commit ourselves to integrating these partnership values and principles into all our plans and actions to the benefit of the marginalised and oppressed whom we strive to serve.

5. Core values and principles drawn from catholic social teaching

5.1. Dignity of the human person

We believe in the intrinsic dignity and worth of every person. Our identity and mission call us to serve all in need regardless of their ethnicity, sex, age, religion or beliefs to achieve transformation. We strive to enhance and uphold the dignity of the human person at all times. We seek to celebrate diversity, and the strength it gives us, as we come together and pursue justice for all. We are guided by what impact our actions have on the dignity of the human person. We also ask how the dignity of all persons is realised and expressed in political, social, legal and economic structures.

5.2. The preferential option for the poor

We commit ourselves to combatting the dehumanising poverty that robs people of their dignity and humanity. We are guided by Christian teachings to work for the liberation of the oppressed and an equitable sharing of the gifts of the earth, helping the marginalised to be responsible for their own development. We take up the cause of the people experiencing poverty as our own, putting ourselves alongside them.

5.3. Solidarity

We believe in one human family. The fruits of solidarity are peace, justice and human development. Through our mission to enhance solidarity among peoples and communities, we express a firm determination and commitment to the common good. We seek to create a culture of encounter, and walking with the “other” in jointly committing to care for those most in need. We choose to think and act in terms of community (FT, 116) Solidarity is a universal value binding us together in the common vision of

establishing a world where all human beings receive what rightly belongs to them as sons and daughters of God. Solidarity is a value inherent in Church organisations, and also shared by many, including ecumenical, interreligious and all people of good will.

5.4. Subsidiarity

We seek to ensure that power, decisions and responsibility are exercised at the local level wherever possible, and that our efforts as a Confederation maximise and build upon local capabilities and resources. Enacting the principle of subsidiarity through the promotion and strengthening of national, diocesan and parish Caritas is central to the Confederation’s way of working, as emphasised by Pope Benedict XVI in the *Motu proprio Intima Ecclesiae natura* (Art. 9. - § 1). At the heart of this is ensuring the rightful ownership of projects and decision making processes by local communities. All Member Organisations, including the national Caritas and the diocesan Caritas, must abide by this key principle by engaging in collective actions and participation in decision making, through mutual support, synergy and collaboration, instead of competition and duplication.

5.5. The Common Good

The good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. Amplifying the voices of the community is essential to enable participation and access to and use of the goods of creation by everyone. This implies collaboration of all sectors of the community and not working in isolation. The Caritas approach is to listen to the needs and wishes of the community, especially those experiencing poverty and other vulnerable situations.

5.6. Equity between men and women

Women and men make their own unique contribution to our world, together giving full realisation to that which is fully human. Where there is an imbalance in participation of men and women, our work and our relationships suffer. The Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops states, ‘There is no reason or impediment that should prevent women from carrying out leadership roles in the Church: what comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped.’² In accordance with this, in our Caritas organisations, partnerships and all our work, including decision-making, we commit ourselves to ensuring the full participation of both men and women.

5.7. Social justice and care for creation

The Reign of God is built on justice and love. Caritas activities aims to promote integral ecology by serving, accompanying, defending and listening to people who are living in conditions of marginalisation and vulnerability, regardless of their socioeconomic status, whilst together caring for our common home and working to transform society into a civilisation of love. Catholic Social Teaching urges us to be promoters and facilitators of solidarity, peace and social justice by “hearing the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth”. (LS 49)

‘Only a gaze transformed by charity can enable the dignity of others to be recognized and, as a consequence, the poor to be acknowledged and valued in their dignity, respected in their identity and culture, and thus truly integrated into society.’

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 187

² https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf

6. Core organisational principles

6.1. A learning culture

To enable us to work effectively towards our goals, we want to be dynamic learning organisations, reading the signs of the times, acknowledging the constant need to mutually strengthen and share our own capacities. Thus, we can learn with life, respond to new challenges, and remain credible witnesses and actors, striving for the global common good in the contemporary and changing world.

6.2. Accountability, stewardship and professionalism

We ground our partnerships in transparency, mutual accountability, openness and honesty, recognising these as fundamental conditions for the growth of our relationships, through which we build trust.

We exercise stewardship of human, financial and natural resources that are entrusted to us for the accomplishment of our mission to serve, and in solidarity with the whole of creation. We commit ourselves to fighting corruption, nepotism, inefficiency and other forms of misuse of resources in an open and transparent way. We acknowledge that stewardship is intrinsic to our practice of partnership and intimately linked to building and strengthening competencies and capacities.

The CI Management Standards (CIMS) were introduced as a reference tool for all Members to increase the effectiveness of our Confederation through good governance, professionalism and accountability, with the ultimate goal of better serving those in need. They aim to be the translation of good stewardship in the life of our organisations and in the overall Confederation, and a concrete expression of the spirit in which we aspire to embody the Church's mission of charity.

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*: workers of charity should have “a heart that sees” where love is needed, and act accordingly. He said: “Individuals who care for those in need must first be professionally competent: they should be properly trained in what to do and how to do it, and committed to continuing care.” But Pope Benedict XVI also called for a “formation of the heart”: “We are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity.” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 31)

The CIMS are intended to guide our Members in using their resources in the most effective way, avoiding waste and mismanagement, and in full accountability of what we do and seek to accomplish. We also promote peer-to-peer learning and fraternal cooperation between the Member Organisations in order to share good practices and encourage mutual support and sharing.

‘As I said at your last General Assembly, I thank the Lord for Caritas and its valuable service in the world. I also congratulate the Governance bodies and the General Secretariat of Caritas Internationalis for developing and approving the Management Standards and Code of Conduct for the member organisations.

These instruments must now be applied to strengthen the transparency and credibility of Caritas. Let us remember that we are accountable to God, to the Church, to the donors and in particular, to the poor with whom the Lord identifies Himself. By serving them with humility, dedication, self-denial and professionalism, we promote the Church's mission of forming one human family, caring for creation.’ Pope Francis, 19 October 2015

Through partnerships, our Caritas Confederation can be even more effective and increasingly served by professionals committed to “the Christian's programme” – the programme of the Good Samaritan, the programme of Jesus, which is a “heart that sees” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 31.b).

6.3. Respect, equality and mutuality

We build our working relationships on goodwill and dialogue permeated with respect, equality and mutuality. Through fostering ‘a culture of encounter’ (*Fratelli Tutti* 30), we seek understanding about one another's specific context, historical background, constituency and relationships. We spend time together to learn and value the other's culture and experiences. We recognise that knowledge comes in many forms and that valuing different types of knowledge is essential for respecting subsidiarity and promoting local communities' self-reliance, autonomy, and self-determination (*Laudato Si'* 144).

7. Caritas's way of working

To achieve this vision, as we seek to strengthen relationships, build solidarity with and increase the effectiveness of every single Member, and the Confederation as a whole. Our ways of working are inspired by our values and principles, and directed towards ensuring that the Caritas vision can become a reality.

In all its actions, including partnership, Caritas adopts the method “See-Judge-Act”. This is a praxis oriented methodology that prioritises observation, listening to and assessment of reality, which should be done in coordination with the local organisation, through their leadership and guidance, and by reading the signs of the times, in order to establish effective partnerships. Caritas’s “See-Judge-Act” approach fosters a spirit of genuine solidarity by engaging in prayer and spiritual discernment, encouraging a culture of encounter, being with and listening to those at the grassroots. Through this, we see the synodal vocation of Caritas, which offers a concrete space for the recognition of others through listening, dialogue, participation and collaboration, by celebrating unity in our diversity.

7.1. Synodality

Synodality is the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelising mission. As Caritas, we live it in our daily service which is done with people who are in the most vulnerable and marginalised situations. Caritas’ commitment towards and its concrete proximity to the point of “touching the wounded flesh” of those who are marginalised and “discarded” by society represents a crucial

aspect for the realisation of an authentic synodal conversion of the Church. Three key aspects of our identity represents our synodal nature: listening to others and the signs of the times; collaboration among the members at all levels and with other organisations, and the encounter with those in need, which does not simply mean taking charge of their needs, but learning from them.

7.2. Integral ecology

For Caritas, integral ecology is based on a holistic Christian understanding of the person, and therefore embraces human, spiritual, cultural and economic elements. In its daily work, Caritas witnesses ‘the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet’ (*Laudato Si'*, 16). We therefore strive to develop the whole person and transform unjust social systems.

7.3. Local leadership, participation and joint responsibility

Caritas members are essential actors in the humanitarian and development community in which they are rooted. They are there before, during and after crises and are trusted by people in marginalised and vulnerable contexts.. This gives the Confederation a far-reaching structure of influence, which can range from the local level to the global stage. It also means that its national and local branches have the capacity to respond to humanitarian crises quickly and efficiently, in a culturally appropriate manner, addressing the concerns of those affected in a dignified way. These same organisations also accompany and support communities to prepare for crises and support them to recover and strengthen resilience after crises.

Participation is an expression of human dignity and implies shared responsibility for the human community. Caritas is committed to inclusive development processes that prioritise active participation as the foundation of a just society. Caritas staff and volunteers are members of the local communities who best understand local contexts and populations, represent different ethnic groups, belief systems, cultures, and recognise possible tension spots and the best ways to encourage community participation.

We recognise, celebrate, and promote local agency, voice and leadership. The agenda set out in The Grand Bargain Commitment to Localisation reflects many of the principles which inspire Caritas’s way of working³, as does the call for a fundamental shift in power and resources in the international aid system⁴. These agendas provide an opportunity for the Caritas Confederation to renew and improve our Localisation Commitments⁵, particularly by promoting local leadership as a concrete way of acting out our key principle of subsidiarity.

‘The local has to be eagerly embraced, for it possesses something that the global does not: it is capable of being a leaven, of bringing enrichment, of sparking mechanisms of subsidiarity. Universal fraternity and social friendship are thus two inseparable and equally vital poles in every society.’

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 142

³ Caritas Internationalis : A Faith-based Perspective for the World Humanitarian Summit, 2015, <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/WorldHumanitarianSummit16Position.pdf>

⁴ This is also known as the “decolonising aid movement” which addresses historic power imbalances between the global North and the global South.

⁵ Caritas Internationalis: Our Commitments to Strengthen Localisation and Partnership in Humanitarian Action (2019)

7. Caritas's way of working

In everything we do, we ask ourselves whether we are enabling greater local agency, voice, or leadership – within our organisation, or with our volunteers, partners, the communities we serve, or others. We amplify quieter voices where appropriate. We promote the participation of local communities at all levels and all stages of partnership and projects. We promote the leadership, proactive involvement, and influence of local actors, especially women, young people and other marginalised members of communities, in all levels of decision-making to achieve better community engagement and development outcomes.

Through partnership, we acknowledge one another's autonomy and ownership of our own processes and strategic planning. Each partner makes decisions about its working areas based on listening, dialogue, knowledge of the context and agreement with the local partner. In relationships of partnership and accompaniment, we are co-owners and have co-responsibility for the programmes and their results. When we have established mutual trust and accountability, we invite one another to positively influence the institutional decision-making and organisational behaviour of our agencies.

With this in mind, and making reference to the principles of accountability, transparency, equality, mutuality and trust, it is important to highlight that in a partnership it is key that all organisations concerned ensure that funding relationships are fair and equitable. It might happen that donors/partners readily finance direct project costs, but are reluctant to also shoulder 'their part' of indirect costs. Indirect costs (or structural or overhead costs) are those costs that are incurred for a common or joint purpose and therefore cannot (without making disproportionate efforts) be identified specifically with a particular

funded project, programme or special activity. Indirect costs represent activities that are necessary for successful project planning, management and execution, as well as for the long-term sustainability of the organisation. In light of this, funding organisations should be willing to include a fair allowance for full indirect cost recovery in the funding provided (typically between 5%-10%)⁶, while the recipient organisation should be willing to demonstrate that it makes best efforts to manage its indirect activities efficiently in order to keep the need for indirect cost recovery at a level that is in accordance with principles of responsible stewardship. At the heart of this is the need for all of the parties involved to listen to each other's concerns and understand each other's operating context, in order to reach an agreement about indirect cost recovery that both consider to be a fair reflection of Caritas values.

7.4. Accompaniment towards autonomy and sustainability

Our relations aim at mutually strengthening the autonomy and capacity of one another, and the relationship with our own constituency. One of the objectives of Caritas partnership is to reinforce Member Organisations and the wider Confederation through institutional development and capacity strengthening (IDCS). We focus special attention on support to and accompaniment of those Organisations in fragile situations and the emerging Caritas members, to strengthen their resilience and promote their long-term sustainability in order that they can better serve people in need.

The accompaniment process is a means of enacting partnership and fraternal cooperation to journey together with a partner towards long-term

sustainability. The accompaniment of Member Organisations should be intentional, strategic and based on a culture of encounter. The relationship has to be honest, transparent, and must be mutually agreed upon in order for there to be mutual enrichment and benefit.

7.5. Empowerment and self-reliance

Our goal is to help people develop and realise their full potential so that they can control and effectively use their resources to meet their own needs. Through integral human development and empowerment, we seek to promote active and self-reliant communities with members playing a significant role in society.

7.6. Cooperation with other actors to achieve impact

We believe that cooperation built upon partnership values and principles offers the best prospect of having a real impact on the root causes of poverty. Through cooperation, we act with the marginalised in their cry for justice, human rights, freedom and reconciliation, and we work together on long-term commitments, including care for creation and the promotion of peace. Through collaboration with other local and international organisations, including organisations rooted in another faith tradition, we create bonds of shared values, principles and actions that validate a vision of an inclusive and just society. We recognise the important role that the Church has as an actor in society. As such, Caritas does not work in isolation but operates in a system which aims to strengthen the network of civil society organisations, catalyse multiple actors to achieve a shared goal, and hold decision-makers to account.

⁶ CI Indirect Cost Recovery Policy (2019)

7. Caritas's way of working

7.7. Safeguarding

Caritas is committed to protect the safety and dignity of every person, including those whom our projects serve and every staff member, volunteer or supporter who carries out its work.⁷ Caritas considers safeguarding as a moral obligation and a legal imperative and has a zero tolerance stance to any form of abuse and exploitation, whoever the perpetrator, and wherever mistreatment occurs. Every child and adult who comes to us has the right to be received in a safe environment and be treated with dignity. Caritas has put policies, systems and actions in place to deliver on its commitments. It understands that where any weaknesses exist, they are addressed with strength and humanity. Caritas has a survivor-centred approach, prioritising the needs of victims and survivors.

Safeguarding is about our collective responsibility to make sure people are safe when they receive assistance from us or have any kind of contact with our work, staff, or organisation.

Caritas is committed to:

- Supporting survivors with humility and action.
- Honesty, transparency and accountability.
- Openness to engage with factual accuracy.
- Determination to reach the very highest standards in safeguarding.
- Embracing scrutiny and improvement of systems to prevent exploitation and abuse, including of a sexual nature.
- Determination to listen and to act where there are concerns and complaints and to support those who wish to speak up.

- Following Catholic Social Teaching in its safeguarding, protection and integrity work.
- Safe and rigorous recruitment of members of staff and volunteers.

In the framework of a partnership, and as per the requirements of the CI Management Standards⁸, Member Organisations are required to have robust and functional systems of safeguarding. This includes a clause in the Memorandum of Understanding clearly stating the mutual commitment of the parties to the protection from harm, including of a sexual nature, of staff and the people they serve.

In this regard, the RepCo emphasises the importance of CI Member Organisations complying with donors' agreements, particularly those pertaining to Safeguarding and Financial obligations. This includes abiding by the Safeguarding policies, terms, and conditions for notification of allegations, collaboration on Investigation and Inspection, the procurement process, financial transparency, auditing and accountability. Not doing so jeopardises the individual Member's good standing with the donor in question and other humanitarian donors, and may expose the entire Confederation to a high risk of suspension of funds and partnerships.⁹

⁷ Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Caritas-Internationalis-Children-and-Vulnerable-Adults-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf>

⁸ CIMS Good Practices 4.1.1-4.1.4

⁹ RepCo Resolution 443

8. Modus Operandi

8.1. Introduction

Partnership and fraternal cooperation is a fundamental aspect of Caritas's identity which must be properly understood and respected by all Caritas Member Organisations and employees, at all levels. We, Caritas Member Organisations, committed to our vision and mission, strive to manifest these values and principles in the way we work together in partnership.

Background

The experience of partnership across the Confederation led to the development of partnership principles in order to guide the relationship between the Member Organisations according to Caritas' founding values and principles. In 2003 the Caritas Partnership Guiding Principles were approved and published in the Caritas Partnership Handbook, but were neither prescriptive nor binding. Inspired by the Encyclical Letters *Deus Caritas Est* and *Laudato Si'*, and by the *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura*, and taking into consideration the changing international context, in 2019 Caritas Internationalis adopted the Fraternal Cooperation and Partnership Guiding Principles. In 2022, following the request of several MOs and of the Regional Secretariats, a decision was made to formulate a Modus Operandi for Caritas Partnership to complement these Guiding Principles, with a particular focus on improving internal mechanisms as a means to strengthening local leadership, prioritised by the international community and local actors.

Scope and purpose

The Modus Operandi provides a clear framework to concretely guide Member Organisations in building and strengthening partnerships.

This Modus Operandi is intended to guide Caritas Member Organisations in partnership within the Caritas Confederation as well as a guide to working in partnership and relationships with other Catholic and other organisations more widely. The tool indicates the requirements and procedures for the development of different kinds of partnership relationships, programmes and financial accountability, organisational development and capacity strengthening, and advocacy. The Modus Operandi has been designed in order to be used in both long-term partnerships as well as those which are the necessary result of an emergency or rapid response situation.

Caritas Partnership is intended to be designed and implemented according to local contexts and needs. The purpose of the Modus Operandi is therefore to provide a systematic methodology for partnership in the Confederation, which can then be adapted to specific contexts or situations. By following a shared and common Modus Operandi for partnership, we can more effectively limit potential conflict and enhance professional and trusting partnership.

In order to have the most effective partnerships, it is highly recommended that users of the Modus Operandi tool closely read and make use of the Reference Documents listed in each section, which give more detailed information and explanations about technical aspects of partnership procedures.

This Modus Operandi will be accompanied by examples of "Caritas Good Partnership Practices" to guide and inspire Members in working in unity towards achieving the vision and mission of Caritas.

For each section, the Modus Operandi tool will cover:

- Main actions
- Procedures
- Roles and responsibilities
- Communications
- Reporting
- Technical aspects
- Risk management (including safeguarding)
- Reference documents (included at the beginning of each chapter)

The complex nature of the contexts in which Caritas is working across the world means that partnership can be challenging, and disagreements and conflicts may arise. The Modus Operandi also includes a Conflict Resolution Tool with a mediation and arbitration mechanism to be followed in the case of conflict or disagreement between Members experiencing challenges in partnership.

A Caritas induction programme will be a key resource to accompany the Modus Operandi. The induction programme will aim to ensure that employees at all levels gain a concrete understanding of what it means to work in Caritas, that they are prepared for the challenges, and that they can work in a spirit of enhancing co-responsibility, accountability and transparency, always putting the dignity and needs of people experiencing poverty and vulnerability at the centre of decision making and action.

8. Modus Operandi

8.2 Modus Operandi Tool

8.2.1 Relationships

Caritas members strive to balance their own autonomy and local leadership with the obligations that arise from belonging to the Caritas Confederation. This balance is expressed in the working relationships and practices each member adopts, both to suit their own organisations and partners, while recognising the implications of belonging to a universal network with broader goals.

There are several different kinds of partnership relationships which may be established in the Confederation, ranging from bilateral partnership between two national Caritas organisations, to multilateral partnership involving several parties and levels (national, diocesan, Regional Secretariat, local Bishops' Conference, etc.). Additionally, many Caritas members, while valuing the Caritas family as priority partners, also work with external organisations, including other charisms of the Church (e.g. religious orders), ecumenical, other faith-based and secular organisations, in this same spirit of partnership.

The scope and purpose of this Modus Operandi is a tool primarily intended to accompany the establishment of partnerships between Caritas organisations. However, this document can also provide clear criteria and a suggested framework for collaboration and partnership beyond the scope of Caritas partnerships. The steps outlined here can therefore also be used as a guideline to accompany the establishment of partnerships with non-Caritas entities, where parties are free to adapt the actions and procedures according to the local context and needs, ensuring and maintaining transparency, accountability, respect for Caritas's identity, values, principles and mission.

The table below describes in three steps the process for establishing and implementing a partnership relationship:

- **Step 1** outlines the types of partnership relationships and how they may be formed;
- **Step 2** explains the procedure for developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
- **Step 3** outlines the key elements of successful partnership implementation.

No matter the kind of relationship or at which level, when a Caritas Internationalis Member establishes a partnership with another member, and particularly when they jointly agree that the partner should establish presence in another country, the development of relationships and partnerships must always enhance partnership and not diminish it. In honouring the principle of subsidiarity, partners are committed to listening, accompanying and working with the local Church and national and diocesan Caritas. A key part of achieving this is through the listening sessions, which are required to take place before the establishment of partnership, and also regularly during the agreed period of the partnership.

The nature of our work is that partnerships sometimes are formed as part of an emergency or rapid response situation. In these situations, it may not always be possible to undertake all of the steps of the usual procedure, and provisions for this have been given in the table below.

Clarification on terminology

Explanations of the terminology used to describe partnership relationships can be found in the Glossary. In this section, while we recognise that all parties are collaborators in a partnership, for clarity when

distinguishing between the parties it is important to note that the term "Partner Caritas" refers always to the Caritas coming from outside the country in which the partnership is being established. The terms "National Caritas" and "Diocesan Caritas" refer to the Caritas organisation(s) of the country itself. The term "Sister Caritas" does not specifically relate to partnership relationships, but is a general term used to describe the collaborative relationship between all Caritas Member Organisations of the Confederation.

A note on in-country presence of partners

There are various ways in which partnership between Caritas may be established, which are outlined in the table below. In all of these, there is a question regarding the in-country presence of the partner Caritas, which may also take various forms, and should be taken into consideration when establishing partnership relationships.

1. *Partnership not in-country: The partner does not have a presence of any kind in the country itself.*
2. *Partnership in-country: The partner has some presence in the country (e.g. staff members or a local office). A partner should never establish an in-country presence without jointly assessing need with the national Caritas and receiving the approval of the national Caritas and the local Bishops' Conference.*
3. *Partnership in-country where partner registers with local government: This should be an exception; but under limited circumstances, a partner may consider the need to be officially registered in the country. However, a partner should never register in the country without jointly assessing need with the national Caritas and receiving the approval of the national Caritas and at the invitation of the local Bishops' Conference.*

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4. *Country forum (of all partners - in-country or not) - to provide a support and coordination structure to guarantee synergy and more regular coordination of efforts and resources among Partner Caritas organisations (present in country or not) and National Caritas. Partner Caritas with partnerships (but no in-country presence) should be invited. The country forum is at the service of the national Caritas, which should lead its coordination.*

Country Forums / A note on coordination

National Caritas work in a given country contributes to the social-pastoral ministry of the Church under the orientations given by the Bishops' conference and transformed through a strategic planning process into an operational plan. This plan is implemented by the National Caritas together with the diocesan Caritas offices, with the support of Partner Caritas members, whether present or supportive from abroad. The Caritas Country Forum is the default coordination structure that all Caritas Members present or not in the country should use to coordinate closely and jointly plan their development, advocacy and humanitarian work, and prepare for foreseeable emergencies, based on shared analysis of the external and internal context and needs. This differs from annual partnership meetings, the main purpose of which is to monitor the partnership. The national Caritas animates and coordinates the Country Forum, with support from one of the forum members if necessary and consistent engagement from partners (for more specific details see the Country Forum guidelines).

A note on fundraising

The evolving global landscape of funding within the humanitarian and development sector is an important factor in the establishment of partnerships,

as well as in the general approach which Caritas organisations take fundraising and donor relationships. The changing availability of resources and sources of funding call for transparency and accountability in fundraising practices, which should always be informed by the values, principles and ways of working outlined in the Caritas Partnership Principles above. In particular, if a partner or sister Caritas intends to seek funding from sources outside of its own jurisdiction, including in a territory where there is no national Caritas, explicit agreement, coordination and cooperation must first be sought with the national and/or regional Caritas (as appropriate, for example, in the case where there is no national Caritas) before any fundraising efforts begin. The national and/or regional Caritas should subsequently be kept regularly informed about fundraising occurring in the country or region by partner/sister Caritas. This applies to all fundraising efforts, including private and institutional donors (e.g. through governments).

Reference documents

1. CI Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/9959/35451/>
2. Coordination Mechanism - CI Emergency Guidelines and Toolkit <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/2694/24295/>
3. CI Memorandum of Understanding Template
4. Caritas Country Forum Guidelines
5. CIMS - article related to recruitment (Staff policies and procedures respect the dignity of staff, promote equity, staff retention and are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with the local labour law. Gp 2.4.4) <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>

6. Caritas Internationalis Commitments to Strengthen Localisation and Partnership in Humanitarian Action <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CIPositionOnLocalisation.pdf>
7. Caritas Europa Grassroots Participation Handbook <https://www.caritas.eu/grassroots-participation-handbook/>
8. Caritas Europa Grassroots Participation Roadmap <https://grassroots.caritas.eu/>
9. Secours Catholique – Principles and Practices of Partnership within the SCCF International Management (2023)
10. CRS Partnership Reflection Module <https://ics.crs.org/resource/partnership-reflection-guide-facilitators>
11. Grand Bargain Commitment to Localisation, More support and tools to national and local actors <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>
12. Caritas Egypt Partnership Policy
13. Trocaire Accompaniment Manual

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Actions and procedures related to relationships

Step 1: Types of partnership relationship

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects
Partnership between Caritas organisations					
Bilateral partnership (National + Partner Caritas)	National Caritas and partner Caritas to jointly assess need, in order to take a joint decision about partnership modalities, objectives and mechanisms.	National Caritas to be the first point of contact for partner Caritas. Parties involved to jointly carry out listening session(s), allowing the potential partners to present their contexts, needs and expectations.	Partner Caritas and national Caritas to communicate in a transparent and timely way. Local Church (Bishops' Conference, Nuncio, etc.) to be included in key communications.	Decision to be reported by the national Caritas to Bishops' Conference, Regional Secretariat and relevant employees of related parties.	Determine accountability mechanism(s), including the importance and need to establish a Memorandum of Understanding
Partnership where there is no national Caritas	Partner Caritas, local Church and Regional Secretariat (as appropriate) to jointly assess need and agree a decision about partnership modalities, objectives and mechanisms.	Local Church and Regional Secretariat to be the first point of contact for partner Caritas. All parties to jointly carry out first listening session.	All parties to communicate in a transparent and timely way. Local Church (Bishops' Conference, Nuncio, etc.) to be included in communications	Decision to be reported by the partner Caritas to Bishops' Conference, Regional Secretariat and relevant employees of related parties.	Determine accountability mechanism.

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<p>Engagement of Caritas partners with diocesan Caritas (in countries where there is a national Caritas)</p>	<p>The role of a national Caritas is coordination, facilitation and representation. In the case where a partner (national or diocesan) Caritas and a diocesan Caritas wish to establish a partnership, it is a minimum requirement that information about the partnership is shared from the beginning with the national Caritas (This is also a requirement for already-existing partnerships at the time of this Modus Operandi's entry into force). It is recommended that, in addition to basic information-sharing, the national Caritas should play an active coordination role.</p>				
	<p>Where there is a need or willingness to establish a partnership between a partner Caritas and a Diocesan Caritas, the diocesan Caritas and partner Caritas should jointly assess the needs, in order to agree a decision about partnership modalities, objectives and mechanisms, including if it is necessary for the partner Caritas to have an in-country presence, and at what level the MoU (see below) should be established (national/ diocesan).</p> <p>The parties involved in the partnership should share all relevant information with the national Caritas.</p>	<p>Diocesan Caritas and Partner Caritas to jointly carry out listening session. The national Caritas may be invited to participate by the diocesan Caritas. The local Diocesan bishop may also participate, as needed. Outcomes of the listening session should be shared with the national Caritas.</p>	<p>All parties to communicate in a transparent and timely way.</p> <p>National Caritas, local Church (Diocesan bishop, Bishops' Conference as appropriate) to be actively involved in key communications (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding, project agreements, relevant staff and governance changes, etc.).</p>	<p>Decision to be jointly reported by the national and diocesan Caritas to local Diocesan Bishop, Bishops' Conference, Regional Secretariat and relevant employees of related parties.</p>	<p>Determine accountability mechanism.</p>

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<p>Multilateral partnership (national Caritas with multiple partners)</p>	<p>Multiple partner Caritas and national Caritas to assess needs in order to take a decision about partnership modalities, objectives and mechanisms, including coordination.</p>	<p>National Caritas to be the first point of contact for all partners. National Caritas to convene listening session(s) with parties involved in the partnership. It is recommended that the national Caritas takes the initiative to convene regular joint meetings with all parties concerned. The national Caritas may request support from partners (e.g. facilitating partner, or Regional Secretariat and/or CI General Secretariat) to ensure coordination. . National Caritas to ensure regular information and updates are shared with all partners concerned.</p>	<p>All parties to communicate in a transparent and timely way.</p>	<p>Decision to be communicated by the national Caritas to Bishops' Conference, Regional Secretariats and relevant employees of all parties.</p>	<p>Determine accountability mechanism.</p>
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<p>Risk management (applicable at all stages)</p>	<p>Identify entities, contact channels and focal points related to risk management and safeguarding. Safeguarding checks to be carried out for all parties, in line with international standards.</p>
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Partnership between Caritas and Non-Caritas organisations (Catholic, Faith-based and Secular)

In the case of an MoU signed between a Caritas organisation and another entity of the Catholic Church (or other partner), the MoU, signed by all partners, should state whether the guidelines in this Modus Operandi are to be applied to the partnership.

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Establishing partnership relationships in the case of an emergency

Partnership (of any kind) in the case of a rapid onset crisis

For all aspects, revert to the preparedness plan and/or country forum mechanisms, where this exists.

In the case of no preparedness plan or events not covered by the existing plan, the national Caritas should lead the needs assessment and establish modalities, objectives and mechanisms with the support of partners as needed, as well as the Regional Secretariat or CI General Secretariat upon request of support. Make use of templates or adapt previous MoUs and agreements, where these exist.

National Caritas to be the first point of contact for all partners.

All parties to communicate in a transparent and timely way.

Decision to be reported by the national Caritas to Bishops' Conference, Regional Secretariat and relevant employees of related parties as soon as possible.

Determine accountability mechanism.

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Step 2: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

NB. The MoU is a statement of the general relationships and mutual intent to which the organisations commit themselves. Within the framework of the MoU, it is possible that specific projects will be designed and implemented. In such cases, separate agreements will also be developed that stipulate the particulars of those projects, including roles and responsibilities, targets, allocation of funding, management and reporting standards, deadlines, etc. The parties to the MoU will work together to ensure that any such agreements will be developed in keeping with the spirit and principles articulated in the MoU.

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects	Risk management
<p>Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</p> <p>(See Template MoU)</p>	<p>MoU to be formulated and agreed by all of the parties involved in the partnership (and applies to all relationship-types above). Caritas organisations establishing a partnership are encouraged to use the template MoU as a basic framework. For Emergency Appeals, MOs in a partnership should use the CI Single Grant Agreement (with the possibility to adapt this where needed).</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities of relevant staff (at all levels) of all parties to be clearly specified in MoU.</p> <p>MoU must include processes in the case where contracts are broken or not respected.</p>	<p>Conditions, frequency and content (what, when, to whom) to be clearly specified in the MoU.</p>	<p>Conditions, frequency and content (what, when, to whom) to be specified in the MoU.</p>	<p>Obligatory aspects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditions, objectives and expected outcomes - Timeline and reporting - Capacity strengthening of the national and diocesan Caritas - Recruitment, roles and responsibilities of relevant staff <p>N.B. At least 2% of each emergency appeal will be earmarked for capacity investment of the national member responding to a humanitarian crisis.</p>	<p>All parties to agree and relevant authorities to sign MoU.</p> <p>National Caritas (and diocesan, where appropriate) to inform and share MoU with local Bishops' Conference (which may also be a signatory, as appropriate).</p> <p>Relevant stakeholder staff at all levels of all parties to be informed about the MoU.</p> <p>For transparency, national / diocesan Caritas should inform the partner Caritas about other existing / new partnerships and related MoUs.</p>

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Step 3: Partnership Implementation

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects	Risk management
<p>Recruitment of in-country staff for the purposes of the partnership (applies also to the case of a rapid-onset emergency)</p>	<p>All parties involved to engage in dialogue and jointly assess need for recruitment of new staff with regard to the partnership and related programmes.</p> <p>Recruitment must be conducted in line with the principle of strengthening the national/diocesan Caritas.</p> <p>Staff to be recruited in a safe, transparent and fair way according to the CIMS and CI Safeguarding systems and policies.</p>	<p>Preference to be given to the recruitment of local staff (at all levels of the organisation).</p> <p>Where it is not possible to recruit local staff or there is a request/need to recruit international staff, there must be a clear reasoning given, and all parties must agree.</p>	<p>Parties to agree communication modalities related to partnership-related recruitment.</p>	<p>Parties to inform each other about relevant staff changes in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Ensure transparency related to salary scales.</p>	<p>Modalities of recruitment to be included in the MoU. The principle of sustainable recruitment should be considered during recruitment processes. Recruitment processes should aim to strengthen the national Caritas. Mutual sensitisation of Bishops, Caritas and relevant authorities regarding transparency and fairness related to salary scales.</p>

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<p>Staff induction</p>	<p>All relevant staff (local and partner) to be inducted (and undertake refresher sessions).</p>	<p>All parties to ensure new staff are inducted within one month of employment.</p>	<p>All parties inform each other in a timely manner and Regional Secretariat(s) when staff induction related to the partnership takes place.</p>	<p>All parties to keep record of staff induction.</p>	<p>Modalities of induction may be included in the MoU. Induction must include aspects on Caritas identity, fraternal cooperation and partnership principles.</p>	<p>Induction programme to include safeguarding elements. Refresher induction to take place for all staff at intervals agreed by the parties involved</p>
<p>Ongoing partnership listening sessions and/or country fora</p>	<p>Establish mechanisms for regular listening sessions and/or country fora throughout the duration of the partnership. Action plans shall be developed, monitored and reviewed based on the ongoing reflection and listening sessions, in order to strengthen mutual accountability.</p>	<p>National Caritas to lead the process. All parties involved to attend and engage in listening sessions and/or country fora.</p>	<p>All parties to communicate in a transparent and timely way.</p>	<p>Outcomes of listening sessions and/or country fora to be reported as per the agreed MoU.</p>	<p>Listening sessions and/or country fora to include reflection on funding and financial plans.</p>	<p>Modalities of listening sessions and/or country fora to be included in the MoU.</p>

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8.2.2. Programmes and Accountability

The MoU established at the beginning of a partnership relationship encompasses programme development, funding and resources mobilisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting. Programme involvement in the country should be in accordance with and enhance national social pastoral plans and the local Church. Coordination structures must therefore be involved in all processes to avoid duplication of activities, and CI Member Organisations must contribute to the mapping of activities, programmes, funding and other relevant information as a way to ensure transparency and coordination in a given country or region. Members commit to being accountable to the local community and local Church, donors and partner(s).

The principles of subsidiarity, local leadership and ownership must be enacted from the very beginning of any partnership relationship, and so it is vital that the national / diocesan Caritas plays an active role in the design and planning of all programmes and projects, before their active implementation begins.

Following the design of a project, in order to ensure trust, mutual respect and effective partnership, all Caritas Member Organisations wanting to implement or support projects or programmes in a country other than their own, shall follow the actions and procedures below.

An important point in this regard is related to admin/indirect costs. It is essential that MOs agree on the percentage of admin/indirect costs, while respecting the requirements of the back donor (if any), and ensure that local Caritas can properly manage funds through adequate human, financial and material

resources. It would be recommended that this is jointly agreed upon and stated in individual project agreements by identifying a clear percentage (or at least a range, or a minimum percentage), or otherwise defined more generally in the Partnership MoU. The CI policy on indirect costs can be a framework of reference in this regard.

Reference documents

1. Indirect Cost Recovery Policy (Decision 3.5.2. RepCo 19 May 2021)
2. Caritas Internationalis Commitments to Strengthen Localisation and Partnership in Humanitarian Action <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CIPositionOnLocalisation.pdf>
3. CIMS: <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>
 - Article 3.1 - Project Management
 - Article 4.2; GP 4.2.2 - Transparency and accountability (prioritisation of needs)
 - Article 3.2 - Project quality (direct / indirect costs)
 - Article 1.3 + 4.1 - Safeguarding
 - Article 2.7 - Risk management
 - Article 3.7; GP 3.7.1, 3.7.2. - Fund management
 - CIMS article on Modus Operandi (to be included after CIMS revision)
4. Secours Catholique – Principles and Practices of Partnership within the SCCF International Management (2023)
5. Due Diligence Passporting - CRS/Cordaid/Trocaire/CAFOD/Caritas Australia/SCIAF example

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Actions and procedures related to programmes and accountability

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects	Risk management (incl. safeguarding)
Project agreements between Caritas partners						
<p>Establishment and implementation of project agreements within a partnership.</p> <p><i>This procedure applies also in the case of a rapid-onset emergency, and may be adapted accordingly and in line with existing CI humanitarian response mechanisms.</i></p>	<p>All parties to jointly carry out listening session(s) and assess need related to project agreements.</p> <p>All elements of project cycle management (as defined in the CIMS) to be jointly agreed upon by all parties involved, specified in a project agreement, and aligned with MoU.</p> <p>In the case where a diocesan Caritas is leading on project implementation, the national Caritas must be informed at all stages.</p>	<p>To be specified in project agreement (and MoU, if desired) before the start of the project.</p> <p>Diocesan Caritas is responsible for informing national Caritas about projects / programmes.</p>	<p>Frequency and content to be specified in project agreement.</p> <p>The project proposal should be shared with relevant staff in the national, diocesan (as appropriate) and partner Caritas, Bishops' Conference and Diocesan bishop (as appropriate) to ensure alignment, avoid duplication of activities and enhance transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>General reporting and monitoring (MEAL) requirements for project agreements to be agreed at the beginning of partnership (in MoU). As much as possible, a standardised reporting format should be used (especially in the case where several partners fund the national Caritas for the same programme). Reporting frequency and content for specific projects to be specified project agreement, with reference to the conditions of the original MoU.</p>	<p>Objectives, expected outcomes, budget and financial considerations to be specified in project agreement.</p>	<p>Staff to be trained in safeguarding and risk management / mitigation. Risk register should be part of the project design.</p>

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8.2.3. Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening

The collective commitment of the Confederation is to strengthen and promote the capacity and sustainability of national and diocesan Caritas organisations so that they can serve communities in need while striving to live up to international standards. The aim of capacity strengthening through partnership is therefore always to empower the national Caritas in its coordination, representation and facilitation role, including its support to diocesan Caritas.

The Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS) are a requirement for the Confederation's membership, and are the reference standard for ensuring accountability, professionalism and good practices. It is a requirement for members to undertake the CIMS assessment process, and to apply the CI Management Standards, Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. The CIMS are a tool and support for meaningful partnership in a spirit of cooperation. The stage of the CIMS assessment process which involves the development and implementation of the improvement plan can be an opportunity for the national Caritas to discuss with Caritas and non-Caritas partners what contributions they can make or support they can offer to strengthen the organisation through a common approach. It is good practice that the national Caritas invites and encourages the diocesan Caritas organisations to implement the CIMS, as stated in Article 1.8 of the CIMS. It is recommended that CIMS assessment results are mutually shared between partners.

Other sectoral standards assessments and audit recommendations can be used in conjunction with the CIMS, and/or as part of the organisation's improvement plan. These do not replace the CIMS process, which is required for Caritas membership. In relationships of partnership, the partner Caritas commits themselves to strengthening the capacity of the national (and/or diocesan, where appropriate) Caritas organisation according to the improvement plan of the national/diocesan entity, in order to enable them to effectively fulfil their mission, to coordinate their efforts and ensure transparency and accountability to the communities they serve and to the donors. The CI Organisational Development Solidarity Fund is one possible mechanism through which this can be enhanced. In line with this, Caritas organisations working in partnership should evidence and demonstrate the outcomes of capacity strengthening initiatives.

A commitment to capacity strengthening must feature in every Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, at least 2% of each emergency appeal will be earmarked for capacity investment of the national and/or diocesan Caritas responding to a humanitarian crisis.

Reference documents

1. Handbook / Manual for CIMS Coordinators and Assessors <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>
2. E-learning on self-assessment <https://community.caritas.org/learning/courses/12>
3. Solidarity Fund Reference Guide <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/12354/62115/>
4. Baobab - good practices file (CIMS) <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>

5. CIMS: <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>
 - Article 1.3
 - Article 1.8 – Implementation
 - Article 1.7 – Risk
 - Article 4.1 – Safeguarding (see especially Good Practice 4.1.4)
6. Caritas Internationalis Learning Paper on Accompaniment <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/8103/24527/>
7. Caritas Internationalis Commitments to Strengthen Localisation and Partnership in Humanitarian Action <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CIPositionOnLocalisation.pdf>
8. CRS ICS Website

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Actions and procedures related to institutional development and capacity strengthening

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects	Risk management (incl. safeguarding)
CIMS assessment is undertaken by the national Caritas every four years (with support as appropriate from partner Caritas, Regional Secretariat and/or CI CIMS reference persons.)	National Caritas to follow all stages of the CIMS assessment process and produce an improvement plan (IP).	National Caritas to encourage Diocesan Caritas to undertake CIMS assessment. Partner Caritas, Regional Secretariat and/or CI CIMS reference persons to support as requested / appropriate.	Aligned with CIMS process according to local context. National/Diocesan Caritas to share CIMS results and IP with all partners in order that a common plan for IDCS can be followed.	Aligned with CIMS process according to local context.	Aligned with CIMS process according to local context.	Safeguarding and other risk related areas are addressed according to CIMS process.
Improvement plan is used as a basis for a single, common plan of capacity strengthening.	Improvement plan is followed. Follow up and evaluation is undertaken.	<p>National Caritas ownership of improvement plan and leadership and coordination for the implementation of the improvement plan. Relevant National/Diocesan Caritas staff to coordinate support coming from different Partner Caritas, ensuring efficiency and complementarity. National/Diocesan Caritas to be transparent about needs, desires and expectations regarding capacity strengthening via support from Partner Caritas.</p> <p>Role of Caritas and non-Caritas partners, Regional Secretariat and Bishops' Conference in relation to capacity strengthening to be specified in MoU as appropriate.</p> <p>All relevant staff are briefed on the local context and improvement plan of the national Caritas.</p>	To be specified in MoU as appropriate., and in line with the improvement plan. Partners should mutually share their CIMS assessments and/or improvement plans with each other, in a spirit of transparency.	To be specified in MoU as appropriate.	To be specified in MoU as appropriate.	Safeguarding and other risk related areas are addressed according to the assessment results and improvement plan.

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8.2.4. Advocacy

We encourage and support advocacy, influence and engagement with decision-makers which is participatory, evidence-based, informed and led by the voice and experiences of the most vulnerable people. By amplifying the voice of local actors and the communities they serve and by strengthening advocacy capacities and resources of Member Organisations, we build awareness, mobilise and support local communities to influence, challenge and propose innovative solutions to decision makers from the local to international levels.

Fraternal cooperation and partnership therefore aim to enhance locally-led advocacy, whereby Caritas Members are supported to realise their potential to actively participate in and influence local, regional and international fora and processes by providing their expertise on policy development and relevant advocacy issues.

Our commitment to subsidiarity and partnership means that the national Caritas has the primary role in engaging in domestic advocacy at the national level. External support from the CI Secretariat, the regions and the Caritas network at large, can be instrumental in amplifying their voice. However, it is crucial that such support is coordinated and aligned with the priorities and strategies set by the national Caritas.

'Do No Harm'. All advocacy actions must be undertaken in respect of local context, sensitivities, norms and laws to mitigate the risks and ensure security of participants. Precautions must be taken to avoid retaliations and/or any kind of political repression.

Caritas promotes responsible, supportive and inclusive cooperation among members surrounding advocacy at all levels. While local advocacy should, as far as possible, be carried out by the national Caritas, in some complex contexts, a national Caritas may not be able to lead publicly on advocacy. In this case, advocacy may be done by partner Caritas on their behalf, but this must always take place in close collaboration and agreement with the national Caritas (and other relevant parties, including the local Catholic Bishops Conference) in order to align the priorities and strategies set by the national Caritas.

It is not appropriate for a partner to advocate against the wishes of the national Caritas.

It may also be the case that some advocacy may be more effectively carried out or complemented at regional or global levels where partnership can be used to challenge injustices at a higher level. Where this is the case, it should always be approached through the lens of local leadership and lived experience, and carried out through mutual exchange and transparent dialogue.

There may be opportunities to bring the collective voice of Caritas at the global level, in relevant international fora and policy processes, such as COP, UNGA and the Human Rights Council. These platforms provide a crucial stage to advocate for our mission and priorities and engage with relevant stakeholders on issues that align with our mandate. When engaging in these global settings, especially when several partners are involved, it is important to agree on a clear line and protocols to ensure coordination and safety of members involved, in compliance with Caritas Internationalis' statutory mandate to promote cooperation among

its members, coordinate, develop competences and represent the Confederation in international relations.¹⁰ In this way, the added value of advocacy in partnership is the ability to bring together different players and work on different scales, according to the specific local context and needs.

Reference documents:

1. Caritas Internationalis Statutes: <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/16035>
2. Caritas Europa Advocacy Handbook (2016) <https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/160327-PU-Advocacy-handbook-EN.pdf>
3. SCIAF Advocacy Manual (2018) https://www.sciaf.org.uk/assets/000/001/327/SCIAF_Advocacy_Manual_2018_Web_original_original.pdf?1670407265
4. CRS Advocacy Handbook
5. CIMS: <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/2781>
 - CIMS Article 4.3 – Advocacy: GP 4.3.1
The Organisation's positions and advocacy activities are based on a solid analysis of the problem, context and risk, and clear evidence, are rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, developed and undertaken in collaboration with others without compromising its principles, and whenever needed incorporate the competent ecclesial authority's input and guidance.
 - Caritas Internationalis Commitments to Strengthen Localisation and Partnership in Humanitarian Action <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CIPositionOnLocalisation.pdf>

¹⁰ Caritas Internationalis Statutes art. 1.4, 1.5, 6.1d

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Actions and procedures related to advocacy

Action	Procedure	Roles and responsibilities	Communications	Reporting	Technical aspects	Risk management (incl. safeguarding)
Enhance the advocacy efforts and capacity of national Caritas.	National and partner Caritas to jointly agree an accompaniment plan in order to strengthen the advocacy capacity of the national Caritas.	National Caritas ownership with support and accompanying role as appropriate from the partner and other relevant stakeholders.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	Capacity strengthening in advocacy should be undertaken in accordance with the CIMS improvement plan and capacity strengthening cycle of the national Caritas.
Joint, locally-led advocacy	National Caritas to lead on advocacy positioning and protocols, as per the agreed MoU. All parties should jointly monitor and evaluate advocacy needs during the course of the partnership.	National Caritas to provide advocacy guidelines for partner. Partner Caritas to support and strengthen national Caritas to lead on advocacy. Role of the Regional Secretariat(s) to be specified in MoU / project agreement(s) as appropriate.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.	Modalities of advocacy processes to be included in the MoU.

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<p>Advocacy in complex contexts (e.g. Where a national Caritas cannot lead publicly on advocacy)</p>	<p>National and partner Caritas to jointly undertake an assessment of the context and agree an advocacy plan. All parties should jointly monitor and evaluate advocacy needs during the course of the partnership.</p>	<p>National/Diocesan Caritas to provide advocacy guidelines, protocols and briefing on local context for partner.</p> <p>CI and/or Regional Secretariats may play a coordination and support role in advocacy in complex contexts.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders to be specified in MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.</p>	<p>To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.</p>	<p>To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.</p>	<p>To be specified in the MoU or other relevant documentation as appropriate.</p>	<p>Modalities of advocacy processes to be included in the MoU.</p>
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8.3. Conflict Resolution Tool

The Conflict Resolution Tool provides a best practice system in case of non-respect of the Caritas Partnership Principles and Modus Operandi. The tool includes clear steps, procedures, and roles and responsibilities of all levels of the Confederation (MOs concerned, Regional Secretariats, General Secretariat, governing body) related to conflict resolution which arises in partnership relationships. This mechanism does not apply to other forms of conflict or issues, such as safeguarding or fraud, for which there are other mechanisms already established.

This tool can apply to:

1. Conflict related to partnership / relational issues between two Caritas entities
2. Conflict related to partnership / relational issues between a Caritas entity and another entity of the Catholic Church

In the case of an MoU signed between a Caritas organisation and another entity of the Catholic Church (or other partner), the MoU, signed by all partners, should state whether the mechanism below is to be used in the event of a conflict between the partners.

Step 0: Conflict prevention – Following the first four elements of the Modus Operandi tool should prevent the need to implement conflict resolution mechanisms. However, Caritas Member Organisations and actors work in a complex environment, and difficult situations inside Caritas are normal because the external environment, unavoidably, has repercussions internally. Even under perfect circumstances, organisational conflicts may occur and have to be dealt with in an effective, efficient and culturally appropriate way.

- *Level 1 - Negotiation*
- *Level 2 - Mediation*
- *Level 3 - Arbitration*
- *Level 4 - Governance decision*

Partner Caritas is present in a country at the invitation of the local Bishops' Conference, and this is expressed in the MoU. The Bishops' Conference has the right to rescind the right to work in the country and this must be respected by Partner Caritas organisations. In the event of a conflict between two partner Caritas MOs, the Bishops' Conference may be invited to play a role in the negotiation and mediation process. Should the case escalate beyond mediation, the Bishops' Conference must be involved if it has not already been so.

If Member Organisations are unable to resolve a dispute that negatively affects their working relationships and partnerships, the following mediation and arbitration mechanism should be followed in order to find a mutually acceptable solution, in accordance with the Caritas Internationalis Statutes and Rules. In any MoU and/or partnership agreement, there should be a clause which states that the parties involved accept this mediation and arbitration mechanism.

Reference documents

1. Caritas Internationalis Statutes <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/16035>
2. Caritas Internationalis Internal Rules <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/16035>
3. Handbook: <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/8102/24524/>
 - Guidelines for mediation (p.61)
 - Self-assessment

4. Complaints Handling Procedures <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/8472/26216/>
5. CRS Job Aid: Relationship Emergency! <https://ics.crs.org/resource/relationship-emergency>

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Conflict resolution mechanism

Level	People involved	Mediation process	Type of agreement	Follow up procedure	In case of no agreement
1. Bilateral negotiation	Director / SG / President of the involved parties, Bishops' Conference(s) as appropriate Refer to agreement made in MoU, as appropriate.	Internal dialogue between affected parties. Bishops' Conference(s) to be informed and/or involved, if appropriate. Refer to agreement made in MoU, as appropriate.	Internal	Internal Establish new/revised MoU, as appropriate.	Document mediation process and proceed to Third Party level.
2. Third party mediation	Director / SG / President of the involved parties, Bishop responsible for Caritas + Third party (e.g. another MO, Regional Secretariat(s) (RS), CI General Secretariat or an external stakeholder agreed by the involved organisations)	Jointly notify Regional Secretariat(s) in writing that the mediation process is taking place (even when the RS is not the third party mediator). Other parties may be informed as appropriate. Third Party Mediator to be chosen and agreed by the parties concerned. RS to be notified of the Third Party Mediator chosen. Mediation to take place.	Outcome shared with the Regional Secretariat(s) and other parties as appropriate.	To be agreed by all three parties (+ RS when it is not the Third Party Mediator).	Document the mediation process. If mediation is unsuccessful, additional rounds of mediation may be initiated. If the mediation process has been exhausted, the conflict may be referred to the CI General Secretariat, Legal Affairs Commission, the RepCo or another relevant authority.

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<p>3. Arbitration</p>	<p>Director / SG / President of the involved parties + Regional Secretariat + CI General Secretariat - Secretary General (or delegate) + Additional people for arbitration team as decided by CI SG</p>	<p>Refer to agreement made in MoU, as appropriate.</p> <p>Any of the parties involved to notify CI and request arbitration. The involved parties must agree to enter into the arbitration process.</p> <p>Decision about additional people needed for the arbitration team / process.</p> <p>Arbitration to take place.</p> <p>(If the CI SG evaluates the issue and considers it necessary, the arbitration process can be skipped and the conflict will be reported to the appropriate CI Statutory Commissions and / or directly to the RepCo)</p>	<p>Outcome documented at CI level.</p> <p>Outcome shared with all parties concerned.</p>	<p>Timeline of evaluation to be agreed by all parties during the arbitration process.</p> <p>Within one year, all parties involved should produce a follow up report and evaluation of the arbitration process to the arbitration team.</p>	<p>Document the arbitration process and proceed to the next level.</p> <p>RepCo to be informed</p>
<p>4. Governance decision</p>	<p>Director / SG / President of the involved parties + Regional Secretariat(s) + CI General Secretariat + LAC / RepCo / other relevant authority</p>	<p>The relevant authority will review the case and give recommendations for next steps for the parties involved or directly take a decision regarding the case.</p>	<p>Outcome documented at RepCo level.</p> <p>Outcome shared with all parties concerned.</p>	<p>All parties involved should produce a follow up report and evaluation of the conflict resolution process which should be shared with the RepCo and any other relevant authority</p>	<p>Decision to be taken by the RepCo regarding the organisation(s)'s membership of the Confederation.</p>

‘Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.’

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 8