

Caritas Denmark

Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy



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1. Introduction

Caritas Denmark (hereafter C-DK) recognizes the right of children and vulnerable adults to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexuality, culture and disability. C-DK is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and exploitation of all people. C-DK staff and associates are expected to uphold the dignity of all people with whom they come into contact by ensuring that their personal and professional conduct is always of the highest standards.

C-DK therefore strives to advocate for the rights of children and vulnerable adults, to protect them from harm as well as provide basic needs; to support them in developing their full potential.

C-DK's Safeguarding policy is built on our commitment to safeguard everyone connected with our work, while also recognising that individuals in some contexts may be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Safeguarding requires a systematic approach that considers both internal and external risks. This approach involves a 'Do no harm' attitude in relation to our work that is reflected throughout our policies and practices, some of which have a significant impact for safeguarding.

Scope

The scope of this policy document relates to the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable persons with whom Caritas Denmark may come into contact with while working on C-DK's international and national work and activities. This policy applies directly to the following categories:

1. All Caritas Denmark employees and associates (representatives working under a contractual arrangement with or on behalf of C-DK and private sector partners) in Denmark and when travelling to or visiting C-DK country programmes;
2. Any other official visitor to C-DK programmes e.g. supporters, donors, journalists, volunteers.

For the purpose of this policy, the term "C-DK staff and associates" will refer to both category 1 and 2.

In alignment with C-DK's partnership approach, this policy does not apply directly to C-DK's partners, but all Caritas Internationalis Member Organisations are required to abide by CI's safeguarding policy if they don't have their own. It is, a minimum requirement for funding that partner organisations share a commitment to implement child safeguarding standards and, if necessary, develop their own policies and procedures to prevent and respond to risks of exploitation and abuse of children in all their activities, including projects funded by C-DK.

Commitments to protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

C-DK strongly believes all children and vulnerable adults have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. C-DK's aim is to ensure that it operates best practice in terms of children and vulnerable adults safeguarding policies and recognises the legal guidelines governing protection in each jurisdiction in which it works.

C-DK has zero-tolerance towards the Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) of children or vulnerable adults committed by any C-DK staff and associates. Allegations of abuse will result in mandatory reporting of incidents to the relevant authorities and if well-founded will lead to disciplinary measures up to dismissal. All C-K staff and associates must comply with this policy and ensure all procedures regarding protection of children and vulnerable adults are implemented in full.

This policy is in line with the *UN convention on the Rights of the Child, CI's Protection of children and vulnerable adults policy, C-DK Codes of Conducts and Ethics*. Caritas Denmark prohibits all forms of exploitation and abuse, and has a zero tolerance towards any sexual exploitation and abuse namely:

- C-DK 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 justification.
- C-DK staff and associates are prohibited from causing any physical or emotional harm to children or vulnerable adults.
- C-DK staff and associates are prohibited from the exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours.
- C-DK staff and associates are prohibited from any form of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour towards human beings with an extra focus on children, women, and vulnerable adults.
- C-DK staff and associates are not to use their power or position to withhold assistance or services, or to give preferential treatment.
- C-DK staff and associates are prohibited from using their power or position to request or demand payment, privilege, or any other benefit.
- C-DK staff and associates are prohibited from engaging in trafficking in human beings, in all forms.
- C-DK staff and associates shall avoid to engage in sexual relationships with people they work with since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships are contrary to C-DK's principles and values and undermine the credibility and integrity of its work.

Responsibility to report

C-DK 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 Code of Conduct.

C-DK staff and associates should report concerns by a staff member from other non-member organization or body through established reporting mechanisms.¹

C-DK staff can make use of the complaints handling mechanism on the condition, that they prior to formally filing their complaint, more than once have raised the issue with the relevant Team Leader for their information and possible action.

¹ Caritas Denmark Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures

2. Prevention

C-DK is adhering to the highest human resource and recruitment standards to safeguard people we work with against exploitation and abuse.

Safe recruitment

Prior to employment of new staff, Caritas Denmark management will have used CI's Safe recruitment checklist and, if necessary, the Inter-Agency misconduct disclosure scheme

All staff have completed an introduction on the *C-DK Code of Conduct*, *C-DK Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures*, *C-DK Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Annexes*.

All staff have read, understood and signed the *Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy* and the *C-DK Code of Ethics* attached to all contracts of C-DK paid and unpaid staff.

Risks assessment and mitigation in our International Engagements

While planning a programme, assessment will be made under the form of the mandatory risks mitigation table (Annex II) in the *Country Programme Theory of Changes* and the project documents. Risks mitigation strategies are incorporated in the design and the evaluation of programmes every year. When applicable, safeguarding activities will be integrated into programmes and projects.

It is important to identify the key Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment risks that can appear during a programme and the mitigation proposed, including expected behaviours from C-DK staff to deal with these risks.

Data protection

C-DK 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 *C-DK Code of Conduct* and the *C-DK Children 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.

Communications and Social Media

C-DK has a clear set of guidelines on ethical standards on the usage of communication materials for reporting purposes, internal and external communication. In our use of information and visual images, both photo and video, our principle is to maintain respect and dignity of children, families and communities.

3. Reporting and Consequences

C-DK has a zero-tolerance policy regarding safeguarding concerns. All C-DK personnel have an obligation to immediately report all safeguarding concerns. Failure of a staff member or volunteer to report on such concerns will be regarded as a breach of the C-DK Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct. All reports of allegations and suspicions are safely filed and monitored.

How to report?

Contact and inform the most relevant Team Leader, or the Secretary General as chair of the C-DK Complaint Committee

Write to Caritas Denmark's secretariat: caritas@caritas.dk, use the reporting form in Annex IV if relevant

Call Caritas Denmark's secretariat: +45 38180000

Contact any employee through mail, phone or personal encounter

Through C-Dk website : <https://caritas.dk/complaint-form-eng/?lang=en>

Reporting

- Clear reporting procedures are in place through the *C-DK Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures* and communicated to C-DK personnel for informed action when confronted with safeguarding related concerns.
- All reports will be treated seriously, with confidentiality and sensitivity. The priority will always be the safety and best interests of the child and/or vulnerable adult.
- The subject of complaint and all witnesses must cooperate fully and openly with investigations and hearing. Their confidentiality will be protected.
- Any staff that raises concerns of serious malpractice (“whistle-blower”) will be protected as far as possible from victimization or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with serious concerns, provided that concerns are raised in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offense and will be investigated.
- When receiving a complaint, the Caritas Complaints Committee (CCC) convenes as soon as possible to classify the complaint. In case of the absence of a member, communication can be by email or phone. The members present can decide to prepare a proposal for handling of the case to the absent member for his/her approval.²
- In case of disqualification of a member of the complaints committee in relation to a specific complaint, the committee can decide: to process the complaint without participation of the disqualified member, to call upon a third person as ad hoc member, or to submit the complaint to the Board. In all cases of disqualification, the Board Chairman will be notified. The Board of Caritas Denmark will always process complaints concerning the Secretary General. Complaints against the Board of Caritas Denmark or individual Board Members will be processed by the Board of Caritas Norway³.

How to respond to a person bringing a report on possible abuse or exploitation

Receive: Listen, believe

Reassure: Make no promises but communicate that what is being reported is not the fault of the survivor/victim. Communicate no judgement.

React: Be non-intrusive, ask open questions, remain calm

Record: Contemporaneous notes (observable / verifiable facts)

Remember: This Safeguarding policy

² As stated in C-DK Complaint Handling policy and Procedures

³ As stated in C-DK Complaint Handling policy and Procedures

Consequences

- A prompt and appropriate response will ensure that the situation is not perpetuated and that all individuals involved are clear on issues and actions to be taken.
- Allegations against a staff member will result in suspension of their employment immediately and subject to investigation of the issue. If the allegation is of criminal character, this will be reported to the relevant Danish authorities, as required by the Danish law and jurisdictional system.
- Appropriate disciplinary and legal measures will be taken in the event that the concern is found to be true. Internal investigations related to allegations of criminal behaviour will be discussed with the appropriate formal authorities prior to embarking on this course of action to ensure that C-DK doesn't compromise the formal investigation. Serious concerns will be reported to the authorities as required by law.
- If the concern is found to be without base, appropriate steps will be taken to minimize damage to the reputation of the subject of concern.
- If the offending person is an employee of a partner organisation which is not supporting termination of the employment of an offender, the continuation of the partnership must be considered.
- False accusations against an individual or organisation can have severe implications for those involved. If the complainant is a staff member of Caritas Denmark, the management will decide an appropriate reprimand towards the complainant and assess the need for compensation to the falsely accused individual or organisation. In case the complainant is a staff member of a partner organisation, Caritas Denmark will recommend the partner organisation to take similar action.

Should the complainant not feel satisfied with the outcome despite having had the opportunity to request further clarification or feedback, they can submit a formal appeal directly to Caritas Denmark's Board Chairman. This can be done in writing, by letter or e-mail, to the following addresses:

Caritas Denmark
Attn.Board Chairman Christa Bonde
Gammel kongevej 15,3.
1610 Copenhagen V
c.bonde@mail.dk
Mark: Confidential

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy review

Review of this policy at hand will take place on an annual basis and is under the responsibility of the Accountability Coordinator.

Steps when starting a partnership

C-DK takes appropriate steps when selecting and working with partners to ensure that there is a shared commitment to implement minimum safeguarding standards and that the organisation takes appropriate measures to uphold these standards.

As a minimum Partner Organisations are expected to have the following:

- 1) **Code of Conduct** – which supports the Commitment Statement.
- 2) **Complaints Policy** – which includes internal (also called whistle blowing) and external reporting of sensitive complaints.
- 3) **Anti-corruption Policy**
- 4) **Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding (also called Protection) Policy** (based on legal, funding and other donor requirements).
- 5) **Safe Recruitment Practices** – which includes screening through CI’s safe recruitment checklist c (and police checks when implemented in country) of all potential staff.
- 6) **Annual Audit** demonstrating safeguarding practices, identifying gaps and improvement plans

Monitoring the implementation of Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in C-DK work and activities

- Set precise safeguarding targets each year during the project planning
- Ensure to set a sufficient budget for this purpose
- Ensure that target groups are informed about the content of this policy and the Code of Conduct
- Follow and be aware of sensitive complaints addressed to the local partner

Statement of Commitment

I, have read this policy and all its annexes and understood the values.

5. Annexes:

Annex I - Glossary of Terms

Annex II - Template of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment risk mitigation matrix

Annex II - Standards of behaviour towards children

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, C-DK' 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.

EXPLOITATION:

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust to profit monetarily, socially or politically. There are various types of exploitation including:

1. **Sexual Exploitation:** The actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

2. **Child Labour:** The term “child labour” generally refers to any economic activity performed by a person under the age of 15.

3. **Trafficking:** The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children or vulnerable adults for the purpose of exploitation such as for labor, prostitution or sexual exploitation.

4. **Survival Sex:** Occurs when a child or vulnerable adult living in poverty or in an emergency situation chooses to engage in or is coerced into sex as a last resort for survival. It is transactional sex in exchange for food, water, drugs, shelter, money and any other essential needs for integral human survival.

SUSPECT:

An individual, who is suspected of having abused, exploited or knowingly allowed the ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Such abuse or exploitation may cause physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or other harm to an individual. Investigation would determine whether the suspect is guilty or not.

REPORTER:

An individual who identifies and reports suspected incidents of abuse or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult. All C-DK staff are required to report whenever a suspicion of abuse or exploitation involving C-DK staff or other humanitarian workers is raised, even when they may not have all the facts at hand.

HARRASMENT:

Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature. It is commonly understood as behaviour that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person, and it is characteristically identified by its unlikelihood in terms of social and moral reasonableness. In the legal sense, these are behaviours that appear to be disturbing, upsetting or threatening. They evolve from discriminatory grounds, and have an effect of nullifying or impairing a person from benefiting their rights

Annex II: Template of risks assessment and mitigation table for Programmes

Risk Type	Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk mitigation
Contextual	<i>Expl of risk: Escalation of tension between Forcibly Displaced and Host communities due to increasing economic burden of refugee population on host communities</i>	<i>Choose btw: Low Medium High</i>	<i>Low Medium High</i>	<i>PROPOSED MITIGATION SOLUTION/ACTIVITY/ACTIO N</i>
	Add ranks as relevant			
Programmatic	<i>Expl of risk: Insufficient ownership of the project by administrative, political, customary and community authorities</i>	...	...	<i>PROPOSED MITIGATION SOLUTION/ACTIVITY/ACTIO N</i>

Institutional (including financial and juridical)	<i>Expl of risk: Weak control systems in place and weak financial management capacity of the local partner</i>	...	...	<i>PROPOSED MITIGATION SOLUTION/ACTIVITY/ACTIO N</i>

Environmental	<i>Expl of risk: The project has a negative impact on the environment in case of too frequent use of pesticides, misuse of compartmentalized waste recycling centres</i>	...	...	<i>PROPOSED MITIGATION SOLUTION/ACTIVITY/ACTIO N</i>
Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment	<i>Expl of risk: Staff in contact with communities is unknown to Local Partner and hasn't been introduced to safeguarding policy</i>	...	...	<i>PROPOSED MITIGATION SOLUTION/ACTIVITY/ACTIO N</i>
	<i>Expl of risk: Content of the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy isn't presented to communities in an accessible, permanent and clear way</i>	...	...	...
	<i>Expl of risk: There is no PSEA training of the Local Partner Staff or C-DK Staff</i>	...	...	...

Annex III - Caritas Internationalis Standards of Behaviour towards Children

Caritas staff and associates must remain aware of perceptions and appearances in their language, actions, and relationships to children and safeguard them from harm. Staff and associates should always be aware 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"> 1. Conduct themselves in manner consistent with values of Caritas, including complying with the Caritas Internationalis Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics 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 3. Listen to children 4. Provide welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for children that prevents all forms of abuse and exploitation. 5. Be sensitive when they are around children (i.e. language, conversations, touch, gestures) 6. Respect cultural differences which do not harm children 7. Be transparent in actions and whereabouts 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 9. Ensure that an adult caretaker is present when transporting a child; and if not possible, obtain appropriate permission 10. Report any concerns of child abuse or exploitation 11. Disclose all charges or convictions if they relate to child exploitation 12. Comply with relevant country legislation 13. Ensure contact with children is supervised, accompanied or at least in sight of other adults. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hit and physically abuse children (even if culturally acceptable) 2. Emotionally or verbally abuse a child 3. Be harsh toward a child. If a child expresses discomfort, stop the behaviour 4. Have sex or engage in any sexual activity with a child including inappropriate touch 5. Send degrading or harmful written or verbal messages to a child, such as sextexting, pornography 6. Use any computers, mobiles, video cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access, download or share child exploitation material 7. Hire a child 8. Encourage a child to meet with them outside of work-related activities 9. Take a child to their homes 10. Find themselves alone with a child (there may be exceptions) 11. Do things for child of a personal nature that they are able to do for themselves 12. Show favouritism 14. 13. Be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs when with children

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 Denmark (C-DK) staff or associates⁴ must be reported as required in the *C-DK Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure* and *C-DK 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, one 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 C-DK Secretary General at once. C-DK is committed to addressing and responding to all reports.

If an immediate threat to life exists or if emergency assistance is needed, please contact the 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 Denmark 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 _____

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)

⁴ Staff refers to all C-DK staff members, volunteers, Board members.

Associates refers to consultants and private sector partners.

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 labour)
- 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
- Behavioural 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 _____ Gender _____

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: