

Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC



Information Disclosure Policy



Working Draft

Implementation Date: January 2017

Revision Date: January 2018

Abbreviations

- CSL - Caritas Sri Lanka
- BOM - Board of Management
- DC - Diocesan Centre
- SEM - Senior Executive Manager

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Information Disclosure Policy

1. Introduction

Sharing of information is required for any organization which aims achieving the goal of delivering better and more efficient service. Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) board of management considers that public access to CSL information further facilitates CSL's transparency and accountability.

Therefore Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) takes this policy as an important document that will enhance the knowledge and visibility of the organization among the general public and other stakeholders.

This policy is expected to strengthen the public and stakeholder support for the efforts, to improve the lives of the marginalized and the vulnerable propel in our society, as sets out in the vision and mission of the organization.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy document is to demonstrate and set out the standard, scope and regulations for the information disclosure policy of CSL. By doing so, Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) would be able to clearly portray its stand and clearly define the organizational boundaries and limitations in disclosing information related to, or produced by the organization.

Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) is committed to making information about its programmes and operations available to the public. CSL considers public access to information a key component of effective participation of all stakeholders, including the public, in the achievement of its mandate. CSL recognises that there is a positive correlation between transparency, including through information-sharing and public trust in CSL-supported development work and humanitarian response.

This Information Disclosure Policy (this 'Policy') is intended to ensure that information concerning CSL programmes and operations is available to the public, subject to the limitations set out in this Policy. CSL will make available reliable and timely information about existing conditions, decisions and actions relating to the activities of the organisation, in an accessible, visible and understandable fashion, unless the information is deemed confidential.'

3. Definition of 'Information'

The concept of 'information' outlined in this policy document will entail all the content produced, of different mediums (paper, electronic or sound, visual or audio-visual recording), concerning a matter relating to the policies, activities, projects and decisions of Caritas Sri Lanka.

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy will apply to all the information held by Caritas Sri Lanka.

5. General Principle of Access to Information

Information will be accessible and disclosed to anyone, however subject to the limitations set forth in this policy

6. Accessibility of Information

Caritas Sri Lanka will make available the information required to the general public and other stakeholders as much as possible through the mediums listed below.

- Caritas Sri Lanka website
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual Report

- Caritas Sri Lanka Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018
- Unit Publications
- Project Publications
- Books
- Pamphlets
- Brochures
- Notice Board

7. Restricted Access to Information / Limitations

While every effort is made to keep constraints to a minimum, the effective functioning of the organization necessarily requires some derogation from complete openness. The following constraints apply to all information referred to in this statement.

Confidential Information is not subject to disclosure. The definition of 'Confidential Information' should be understood in a way that favours disclosure as much as possible without contravening this Policy. Caritas Sri Lanka, requires the following categories of information to be classified as 'Confidential Information':

- Information received from or sent to third parties, with an expectation of confidentiality;
- Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violate his or her rights, or invade his or her privacy;
- Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of the State or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of the organisation;
- Information covered by legal privilege or regulatory proceedings, or that subjects the organisation to an undue risk of litigation, or is related to internal audits and investigations;
- Internal inter-office or intra-office documents, including e-mails and draft documents;

- Commercial information, if disclosure would harm either the financial interests of the organisation or those of other parties involved;
- Information which the organisation believes would, if disclosed, seriously undermine a policy dialogue with the stakeholders or an implementing partner;
- Other kinds of Information which, because of its content or the circumstances of its creation or communication, must be deemed confidential.
- Proceedings of the Board of Management committees thereof are, under the Board's Rules of Procedure, confidential. Thus, unless disclosure is approved by the Board, documents prepared for the consideration or review and approval of the Directors (other than those specifically made publicly available as provided for in this statement) are not publicly available.
- The Policy excludes data that exist in raw form, either physically or electronically. CSL is not in a position to respond to requests that require the selection and/or manipulation of data to produce content.
- However, in an unprecedented situation, event or request, Caritas Sri Lanka may decide, at its discretion.

8. Privileges and Immunities of Caritas Sri Lanka

While every effort is made to keep constraints to a minimum, Caritas Sri Lanka enjoys certain privileges and immunities as outlined in the "Restricted Access" above. This applies to all information referred to in this policy.

9. Processing of Information Requests

- a. Any person or organisation may request the disclosure of CSL's non-confidential information which is not virtually available on its website.

- b. When an information request arises, CSL National Director/ SEM will handle the request. All the media enquiries should be handled by the CSL communication officer in consultation with the National Director/ SEM.
- c. In an instance when a request comes which is deemed to be confidential in CSL administrative context, the person handling the information request may seek the legal advice from the CSL legal officer.
- d. Make sure to have all the information requests in written format for the future reference and as evidence.
- e. All the information requests should be acknowledged and handled promptly. CSL will endeavour to handle all requests within 30 days after the acknowledgement of receipt is sent. If CSL has to reproduce material for information requests, CSL may charge a fee for material and labour cost. The person who makes the request should be notified about the fee and that has to be paid in advance.
- f. If a request is denied, the requestor may seek review in writing to the CSL National Director/ SEM. The review should normally be completed within 60 day period and the outcome of the review should be communicated to the requestor.

10. Reproduction of Information

Any manipulation of information of CSL is not allowed at all.

11. Languages

The documents containing information should be available in working language with the requestor. This document may also be available in other official languages of the country at a later time.


12. Disclaimer


No representation is made or warranty given, express or implied, as to the completeness or accuracy of Information made available by CSL. The requestor shall apply discretion when using the Information made available by CSL. CSL will not be liable for any direct or indirect loss arising from the use of the Information.

13. Report and Review

Every three years, Caritas Sri Lanka management committee will present reports to the Board of Management on issues related to the implementation of this policy along with any recommendations for changes to it. Such report will take into account new information access standards or policies developed and implemented by peer institutions and partners regarding the range of their activities.

Approved.


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Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Weliwita
National Director
Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC


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+Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando
Chairman
Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC

Date: November 30, 2016