

*Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC*



## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY



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# **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

## **Table of Contents**

### **1. Introduction**

- **Goal and Objectives**

### **2. Principles of Good Communication Practice**

### **3. Types and Methods of Communication**

- a). Internal Communication**
- b). External Communication**

### **4. General Guidelines**

### **5. Crisis Communication**

- a). Crisis Response**
- b). Releasing Information to the Media**

### **6. Branding**

### **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **8. Review**

## **1. Introduction:**

The role of Communication is critical in promoting effective inter-agency work and in generating the necessary partnerships and resources to accelerate humanitarian services, projects and priorities of Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL).

This document sets out the communication policy of Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) on internal and external communication. The aims and objectives of this communication policy can be summarised as follows.

- **Goal and Objectives:**

The goal of this communication policy is to support the Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) aspirations and mandates as spelt out in the organization's vision, mission and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan 2015 -2018.

### Objectives of Caritas Sri Lanka Communication Policy

1. Provide efficient and effective communication mechanisms among management, staff, development partners and other stakeholders in a sustainable manner to enhance relations and organization visibility,
2. Promote the coherence and consistency of information flow, internally and externally,
3. Provide a coordinated, overarching communication framework to improve Caritas Sri Lanka efficiency of its development action and humanitarian response,
4. Minimize communication breakdown and delays,
5. Promote the use of appropriate channels of communication,
6. Promote partnerships, show how Sri Lanka Caritas delivers results, inspire positive action, and advocate for specific issues and standards that will help the organization to achieve success with equity,
7. Correct lapses in the flow of information,

## **2. Principles of Good Communication Practice**

Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) endeavours to provide its stakeholders with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, projects, and initiatives. Consequently, to realize the organization's communication goal, this policy outlines core principles of good communication practice as a guide to its stakeholders. It is appropriate to adapt these principles to suit the working environment, however.

- Effectiveness

Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) shall ensure that all communication is effective and appropriate and shall convey information and respond to requests by stakeholders through appropriate communication channels.

- Clarity

Caritas Sri Lanka undertakes to transmit clear, uniform and easily understood information, using the appropriate Caritas Sri Lanka Brand (logo/colours) and publications to reinforce, clarify or authenticate communication.

- Pro-activity

Caritas Sri Lanka shall continue to demonstrate leadership by proactively seeking and engaging external contacts in areas of mutual interest in line with its vision and mission.

- Transparency

Caritas Sri Lanka shall continue to be as transparent and accountable as far as possible, disclosing reasons for decisions made.

- Efficiency

Caritas Sri Lanka shall endeavour to ensure that all information duly reaches the intended recipients in the stipulated time frame.

- Cultural awareness

As a national institution that is international in character, Caritas Sri Lanka shall continue to respect cultural diversity of all stakeholders in its communication.

- Responsibility

Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) shall endeavour to ensure the authenticity of facts and information in the communications which constitute an integral part of the organization's communication process, reflect a high level of accountability and responsibility. All staff is duty bound to make known the good name and reputation of CSL, and all employees have a responsibility to demonstrate the institutional standards in communication.

- Integrity

Internal and external communication, like all other organization activities shall continue to be guided by high levels of integrity.

- Best practices

Best communication practices call for clarity. All our communication processes in the organization must therefore be guided by the same values that characterize the best communication practices worldwide.

### **3. Types and Methods of Communication**

#### **a) . Internal Communication:**

To maintain a good working environment for the realization of its vision and mission, Caritas Sri Lanka aims at facilitating efficient and effective internal communication to directors, staff as well as to all its stakeholders. In this respect, it will utilize, but not limited to utilizing, these three communication channels:

1. Print media: annual report, quarterly newspaper articles and supplements, fliers and ad-hoc publications; this written communication policy and other policies of CSL will remain as vital components of communication at Caritas Sri Lanka.
2. Broadcast: documentaries, podcasts, advertorials, interviews, and spots.
3. New media: web-based communication; controls on these will be professional at the level of content.

All communication should be easy to understand and devoid of slang, obscene, offensive or discriminatory remarks, ethnic slurs, or sexist innuendoes.

### **b) . External Communication (electronic communication):**

E-mail and the web are the primary modes of electronic communication and constitute a key platform for external communication. Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) Communication Officers shall have the overall editorial responsibility for the Caritas Sri Lanka website. The content of the web pages should always be up-to-date, user-friendly and regulated to conform to the objectives of the organization. The content must meet the set standard for web publishing.

Further, Caritas Sri Lanka shall encourage the use of email—guided by the organization ICT Policy—as a way of engaging with external stakeholders. At the same time, CSL shall encourage the generation of video clips for enhancing its organizational image and visibility; these must be authorized by the National Director or Senior Executive Manager (SEM) of Caritas Sri Lanka.

## **4. General Guidelines**

All the aspect of communication among local and international Caritas network, inter-agency, stakeholders and financial institution are to be done with approval of National Director/Senior Executive Manager (SEM) of Caritas Sri Lanka in line with Unit managers, responsible officers and staff.

All the sensitive data and information entailed in the communications should be handled with utmost care and using the best discretion, and in consultation with the National Director/Senior Executive Manager (SEM) of Caritas Sri Lanka.

All messages sent on email systems or via the internet should demonstrate the same professionalism as when writing a letter or a fax.

If you are in doubt about a course of action related to any communication processes or activities, make sure to take advice from your immediate supervisor /unit manager/departmental head/partner etc.

In every instance, file a hard copy of any email (including any attachments) sent to or received from any stakeholder before filing or deleting the electronic copy.

You are strongly discouraged from providing Caritas Sri Lanka email address when using public websites for any purposes, including online shopping. Exceptions could be made for the CSL procurement officer on the advice of National Director/ Senior Executive Manager (SEM) of CSL.

Posting any photographs which reflect the project activities, events, organisation symbols, logo with any other sources or clients, friends through social communication modes are strongly discouraged at CSL.

## **5. Crisis Communication**

Caritas Sri Lanka shall continue to proactively prevent events that are likely to lead to loss of stakeholder confidence and to take care of events stemming from rumours, speculation and insider lack of confidence that give CSL negative publicity.

In these cases, appropriate crisis communication should enable CSL to respond rapidly and effectively to potentially negative situations.

Given the importance of crisis communication:

- a. The National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka will be the official Spokesperson for the organization and may authorize the Senior Executive Manager to play this role in his absence. Only the National Director or as authorized the Senior Executive Manager shall give information to the media.
- b. CSL Communication Officer shall maintain regular contact with stakeholders and give advice where issues or developments appear to cause problems.
- c. CSL Communication Office shall monitor local and international news and events and advise National Director or Senior Executive Manager on issues or events relevant to CSL.

### **a). Crisis Response**

When a crisis occurs, National Director and SEM of CSL shall develop and advise on appropriate strategies to deal with the situation and communicate appropriate information to relevant stakeholders.

## **b). Releasing Information to the Media**

National Director and SEM of CSL will release relevant, appropriate and verifiable information to the media regarding any crisis. National Director and SEM of CSL shall institute mechanisms to continually monitor media coverage and respond to crisis situations accordingly.

## **6. Branding**

As it is the case of Caritas Sri Lanka, branding is a powerful identity tool for any organization and should be clear to all its stakeholders. To maintain its strong brand, CSL will use the correct logo, name and staff uniforms as well as the right fonts and colour at all times to reflect the true identity to its stakeholders.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**


The CSL Communication Office shall:


- i. develop appropriate strategies for monitoring and evaluation of the Communication Policy,
- ii. carry out annual evaluation on the implementation of the policy, and
- iii. define the short-term, mid-term and long-term interventions based on the outcomes of the evaluation reports,

## **Review**

To enhance uniformity with national and international humanitarian organizational aims, this policy shall be reviewed every three years in line with emerging global trends in communication to facilitate an effective communication mechanism.

Approved.

  
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