



**Section 2 – CARE
International Codes of
Conduct**

Code of Ethics

INTRODUCTION

CARE's aim is to provide long-term developmental assistance to people and communities striving for social well being, and to offer relief in times of crisis. Our purpose is to relieve poverty and to achieve sustainable development, leaving lasting benefits to the communities we serve. In times of humanitarian crisis, our objective is to relieve suffering, to save lives, whenever it is within our power to do so.

As one of the world's foremost private aid and relief organisations, CARE International has a responsibility to achieve the highest standards of ethical practice. CARE is committed to transparent, ethical and professional management of all its operations and resources.

Members abide by the confederation's statutes, codes and ethics and are responsible for conducting activities in accordance with accepted professional standards of accuracy, truth, integrity and good faith.

At all times and in all circumstances, CARE Members are expected to perform their roles in the best interests of the people and communities they are aiming to serve, respecting their cultures and values, assisting them to help themselves, and avoiding the creation of institutionalised dependence.

STATUTES

The CARE International Statutes require Members:

- A.** to act in accord with the statutory requirements of their respective countries;
- B.** to work to help combat hunger, sickness and poverty; provide emergency assistance; and contribute to sustainable ecological, social and economical development in developing countries and other geographical areas of need;
- C.** to ensure full independence from any political, religious or other considerations not related to aid and relief;
- D.** to exercise all due and proper responsibility in all financial matters, including accuracy of fundraising literature, application of funds only in pursuance of the organisation's stated objectives, and the practising of complete and accurate, public financial disclosure.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- A. In responding to needs, Members will give consideration to the human rights record of recipient nations and structure their response accordingly.
- B. Cooperation and assistance with organisations whose principles and practices are compatible with the standards of CARE International is encouraged.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Accounts must be audited in accordance with nationally recognised accounting principles and practices.
- B. Members fully acknowledge the necessity of timely, accurate and relevant reports required under agreement with donor agencies.

FUNDRAISING AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

- A. Fundraising and administrative costs will be consistent with respective National codes.
- B. Members shall seek to maximise the proportion of donated funds used in support of projects and programmes, and to ensure that all expenditure on fundraising and administration is cost effective.

RESTRICTED DONOR FUNDS

Designated funds, raised by specific appeals for particular objectives, will be allocated and spent in accordance with the stated purpose of the appeal and consistent with CARE International policy on minimal charges. Any unavoidable adjustments, resulting from changing circumstances, will be advised to the donors.

ADVERTISING

Members will employ responsible media and marketing techniques; promotion and advertising must be truthful and accurate and meet applicable advertising standards within their respective countries.

SCRUTINY

All aspects of CARE Members' governance, the nature of cooperation among the distinctive national CARE organisations, and the relationships and responsibilities within the CARE International Confederation, will be open and accessible to scrutiny.



Code of Conduct

*Based on The International Red Cross and Red Crescent
Movement Code of Conduct*

The CARE International Board of Directors agreed, at the May 12 1996 Board meeting held in Paris, to adopt this Code of Conduct with the addition of the following clarification:

“CARE International, in adopting the Red Cross Code of Conduct, makes note that the language under provision No 5 we shall respect Culture and Custom, will be interpreted and applied in conformity with Internationally recognised human rights, particularly in regards to the rights of women”.

The Code of Conduct

Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1: The humanitarian imperative comes first

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognise our obligations to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations, which is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility.

The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster.

When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

2: Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone

Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs.

Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate.

In implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes.

The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

3: Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint

Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Notwithstanding the right of NGHAs to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

4: We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy

NGHAs are agencies which act independently from governments. We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy.

We will never knowingly - or through negligence - allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments.

We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor.

We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

5: We shall respect culture and custom

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6: We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities

All people and communities - even in disaster - possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation and cooperate with local government structures where appropriate.

We will place a high priority on the proper coordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

7: Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

8: Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs

All relief actions affect the prospects for long-term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognising this, we will strive to implement relief programmes which actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimise the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeing to avoid long-term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

9: We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources

We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies.

All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.

We recognise the need to report on our activities, from both a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness.

We recognise the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance.

We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact.

Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

10: In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not objects of pity

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears.

While we will cooperate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance.

We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.

The Working Environment

Having agreed unilaterally to strive to abide by the Code laid out above, we present below some indicative guidelines which describe the working environment we would like to see created by donor governments, host governments and the intergovernmental organisations - principally the agencies of the United Nations - in order to facilitate the effective participation of NGHAs in disaster response.

These guidelines are presented for guidance. They are not legally binding, nor do we expect governments and IGOs to indicate their acceptance of the guidelines through the signature of any document, although this may be a goal to work towards in the future. They are presented in a spirit of openness and cooperation so that our partners will become aware of the ideal relationship we would seek with them.