



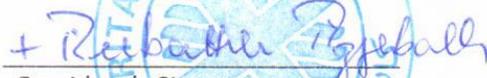
Caritas Jerusalem

Policy on Handling Complaints and Feedback

Approval Statement

This manual has undergone comprehensive review by the Caritas Jerusalem Executive Committee on February 13, 2024, and has been officially approved by the President of Caritas Jerusalem his Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa on February 19, 2024.

The effective date of this manual is the 1st of April 2024.


President's Signature:



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Introduction

Caritas Jerusalem is a humanitarian and development organization that represents the socio-pastoral services of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. It was founded in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six Day War. Caritas Jerusalem helps individuals from all religious backgrounds in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Caritas Jerusalem is a member of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 162 Caritas organizations operating in more than 200 countries.

At Caritas Jerusalem, our commitment to serving the marginalized and vulnerable extends beyond our direct programs and services. We recognize that open communication, feedback, and the effective resolution of concerns are essential components of maintaining trust and fostering continuous improvement in our organization.

This Complaints/Feedback Handling Policy is designed to provide a structured framework for addressing and resolving complaints and feedback. It reflects our dedication to transparency, accountability, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our work.

Our Commitment

As an organization guided by principles of compassion and solidarity, we understand the importance of actively listening to the voices of those we serve. This policy outlines the procedures and channels available for individuals to express their concerns, share feedback, and contribute to the enhancement of our services.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is threefold:

1. **Empowerment:** To empower individuals, whether they are beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or partners, to voice their concerns and contribute to the improvement of our programs and services.
2. **Transparency:** To provide a clear and transparent process for the submission, acknowledgment, investigation, and resolution of complaints and feedback.
3. **Continuous Improvement:** To foster a culture of continuous improvement within Caritas Jerusalem, where feedback is valued, and lessons learned contribute to the enhancement of our operations.

Scope and Applicability

1. Scope

This Complaints/Feedback Handling Policy applies exclusively to external complaints made by the organization's beneficiaries, partners, donors, and relevant stakeholders. External complaints, including both complaints and feedback, are those raised by individuals or entities external to Caritas Jerusalem who are directly impacted by our programs, services, or collaborative efforts.

The scope of this policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Programs and Services:** Any concerns or feedback related to the delivery of programs, projects, or services offered by Caritas Jerusalem, as experienced by beneficiaries.
- **Staff and Volunteer Conduct:** Complaints or feedback related to the conduct or behavior of Caritas Jerusalem staff, volunteers, or representatives, as perceived by external stakeholders.
- **Organizational Processes:** Feedback on the effectiveness of internal processes and procedures that impact external stakeholders, such as partners and donors.

2. Understanding Across the Organization

This policy needs to be thoroughly understood by senior management, all staff, and volunteers. Adequate training and awareness initiatives will be conducted to ensure that everyone within Caritas Jerusalem is familiar with the processes outlined in this policy. This inclusive approach aims to cultivate a culture of responsiveness and continuous improvement throughout the organization.

It is imperative that all internal stakeholders recognize the significance of external feedback, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness and impact of Caritas Jerusalem's mission.

3. Anonymous Complaints

Recognizing that it may be difficult in some circumstances to openly express concerns, Caritas Jerusalem will cautiously accept and address anonymous complaints. This is contingent upon the availability of *sufficient information* to elucidate the issues, substantiate claims, and conduct a thorough investigation.

4. Key Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistency in understanding the terms used in this Complaints/Feedback Handling Policy, the following key definitions are provided:

1. **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction, submitted by an external stakeholder, including beneficiaries, partners, donors, or other relevant parties, regarding any aspect of Caritas Jerusalem's programs, services, staff conduct, or organizational processes.
2. **Feedback:** An informal or formal expression of opinion, suggestion, or information provided by external stakeholders, including beneficiaries, partners, donors, or other relevant parties, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of Caritas Jerusalem's programs, services, or overall operations.
3. **Beneficiary:** An individual or group directly receiving assistance, services, or benefits from Caritas Jerusalem's programs and initiatives.
4. **Stakeholder:** Any individual or entity, internal or external, directly or indirectly affected by or affecting the activities, programs, or services of Caritas Jerusalem. This includes, but is not limited to, beneficiaries, partners, donors, staff, volunteers, and community members.
5. **Resolution:** The process of addressing and resolving a complaint or feedback, resulting in an outcome that is satisfactory to the complainant or aligns with the feedback received.
6. **Confidentiality:** The protection of sensitive information related to complaints or feedback, ensuring that only authorized individuals have access to such information and that the privacy of involved parties is maintained.
7. **Continuous Improvement:** An ongoing, systematic effort to enhance Caritas Jerusalem's programs, services, and internal processes based on the insights gained from feedback, complaints, and evaluation processes.
8. **Senior Management:** The highest levels of management within Caritas Jerusalem, responsible for decision-making, policy development, and overseeing the organization's strategic direction.

5. Types of Complaints

Complaints received by Caritas Jerusalem may fall into different categories, reflecting the diverse nature of concerns expressed by stakeholders. The types of complaints include, but are not limited to:

- **Information and feedback Requests:** Inquiries related to ways of working, targeting and selection criteria, and details about how, when, and where services are provided.
- **Non-Sensitive Complaints:** Complaints regarding the quality of implementation, unsafe work conditions, and substantial issues affecting the overall service delivery are classified under this category. These concerns encompass issues that impact the effectiveness of activities and decisions, ranging from shortcomings in implementation quality to hazards in work conditions.
- **Sensitive Complaints:** Complaints about staff, visitors, or contractors that involve a grave violation of the organization's code of conduct, safeguarding, abuse of power, fraudulent behavior, non-ethical conduct, or misappropriation of assets. This category also includes complaints related to fraudulent communication.

6. Submission Channels

Caritas Jerusalem provides multiple channels through which stakeholders can submit complaints and feedback:

- **Email:** Caritas Jerusalem invites complainants to email their complaints to caritas@caritasjr.org / safeguarding@caritasjr.org.
- **Phone:** Caritas Jerusalem provides a dedicated hotline for individuals to verbally express their concerns. The helpline operates from Monday through Friday, between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Please note that the mobile phone will be switched off during weekends and on holidays. To ensure seamless communication, Caritas Jerusalem commits to responding to missed calls promptly. Additionally, stakeholders can also submit their concerns via SMS, which will be duly acknowledged and registered for further processing.
- **In-person:** CJ invites complainants to drop in at CJ premises and meet the Monitoring and Evaluation officer who will care to listen to the complaint and advise the complainants accordingly. In-person consultations are available during regular working days and hours, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Complaints/Feedback Handling Process

The Complaints/Feedback Handling Process at Caritas Jerusalem is designed to ensure a fair, transparent, and efficient resolution of external complaints and feedback. This process is guided by our commitment to accountability, continuous improvement, and the well-being of the communities we serve.

1. Receiving

Stakeholders have the option to submit complaints and feedback through the mentioned channels. The complaints form, accessible to all, will be available at CJ's front desk (See Annex 1) and official website. This form will be provided in both Arabic and English, designed for easy completion. The designated officer will document all received complaints, whether verbal or written, on the Complaints Record Form. If a complaint is received through a different channel and is addressed to an employee other than the designated person, the employee will forward it, unless the complaint pertains to the designated person.

- a. If the complaint pertains to the designated person, the employee reports it promptly to the Secretary General. From that point forward, the Secretary General will assume responsibility for handling the complaint.
- b. The assigned individual assesses whether the complaint falls under the safeguarding policy. If so, they forward it to the relevant employee to initiate the application of the safeguarding policy.

Acknowledgment

Upon receiving a complaint or feedback, Caritas Jerusalem promptly acknowledges the submission, providing confirmation that the organization has received the communication. All complaints will receive acknowledgment within 5 working days from the date of receipt.

A preliminary assessment is conducted to determine the nature, severity, and urgency of the complaint or feedback.

2. Registration

All complaints and feedback are logged into the Complaints/ Feedback Database (See Annex 2), capturing essential details such as date, time, nature of the concern, and contact information of the complainant or feedback provider. The Complaints Register is kept in accordance with the relevant privacy regulations. Failure to adhere to these guidelines and inadequately considering the privacy and safety of those involved may pose additional risks.

3. Investigation

The designated person, responsible for conducting a preliminary assessment to identify the type and nature of the complaint and recommending the most suitable course of action, is supported by the Complaints Handling Committee. This committee, comprising the Secretary General, the MEAL Officer, and the Compliance Manager, collaborates to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to handling complaints. In instances of non-sensitive complaints, the designated person can independently decide on their processing. However, for sensitive complaints, a decision must be made by the Complaints Handling Committee.

The assigned personnel systematically gather information from the complainant, relevant stakeholders, and any involved parties to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue's context and details. Subsequently, a meticulous analysis is conducted to evaluate the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint or feedback.

Following the analysis, the designated person or the Complaints Handling Committee considers various resolution options, taking into careful consideration organizational policies, ethical considerations, and the best interests of all parties involved.

4. Decision and Closure

A determination is reached concerning the appropriate course of action, be it corrective measures, process improvements, or alternative remedies. It is imperative that all complainants receive a response outlining the outcomes of the complaint at the earliest convenience, with a target of sixty working days from the date of receipt. In instances where the complaint is intricate, the complainant will be provided with updates on the progress and an estimated timeline for resolution.

The response to the complainant should encompass details on the actions taken, the rationale behind the decision, and identification of the committee responsible for addressing the complaint.

The agreed-upon actions are promptly put into effect, with ongoing monitoring to ensure an effective resolution. Following the implementation, the complainant or feedback provider is contacted to confirm their perception of whether the matter has been resolved and to gauge their satisfaction with the outcome.



Confidentiality

Caritas Jerusalem is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all complaints and feedback received through its handling mechanisms. Recognizing the sensitive nature of many concerns, the organization acknowledges the importance of protecting the privacy and identity of those involved in the complaints and feedback process.

1. Confidentiality Measures

1.1. Limited Access

Access to complaint records and related information is restricted to individuals directly involved in the resolution process. This includes the designated person, members of the Complaints Handling Committee, and other authorized personnel essential for the investigation and resolution.

1.2. Non-Disclosure Agreement

All staff, volunteers, and individuals involved in the complaints handling process are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. This agreement emphasizes their commitment to maintaining the confidentiality of complainants, respondents, and the details of each case.

1.3. Secure Storage

Complaint records are securely stored in a designated and password-protected system. Physical documents are kept in a locked and restricted-access area to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

2. Exceptions to Confidentiality

While every effort is made to maintain confidentiality, there are circumstances where disclosure may be necessary. Such instances include:

- **Legal Obligations:** Compliance with relevant legal requirements that mandate disclosure.
- **Imminent Harm:** When there is a credible threat of imminent harm to individuals, disclosure may be necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.

3. Communicating Confidentiality to Stakeholders

Caritas Jerusalem communicates its commitment to confidentiality to all stakeholders, including complainants, respondents, staff, and volunteers. This ensures that those engaging in the complaints and feedback process are aware of the organization's dedication to protecting their privacy.

Policy and Procedures Review

The Complaints Handling Committee assumes the critical role of overseeing the implementation of the Complaints/Feedback Handling Policy. Charged with continuous improvement, the Committee regularly evaluates the Policy and its procedures, modifying them as needed to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Stakeholder input is valued, and any changes are communicated transparently to maintain a responsive and adaptive framework.



Annexes:

Annex (1): Complaint Record Form

Complaint Record Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Details of the Complaint

Have you taken any action to resolve the issue?

Yes No

If yes, please describe the action taken

What are you expecting Caritas Jerusalem to do regarding your complaint?

I hereby declare that the information furnished above is correct. In case any of the above information is found to be false or misleading or misrepresenting, I am aware that I may be held liable for it.

Signature: _____

