



We are  
**Caritas**

Caritas Internationalis has 165 member organisations, working with the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race or religion



Supporting agriculture in Darfur.  
Paul Jeffrey/Caritas

# We are Caritas

**Caritas Internationalis is a global confederation of 165 Catholic organisations working in humanitarian emergencies and international development.**

Caritas has a permanent presence in most of the world's countries. Inspired by Christian faith and gospel values, we work with the poor, vulnerable and the excluded, regardless of race or religion.

Our great strength is the diversity of our membership, which ranges from small groups of volunteers to some of the world's largest humanitarian and development organisations. Although many of our members operate under the Caritas brand, some are known by other names, such as Catholic Relief Services in the USA, CAFOD in England and Wales, Secours Catholique in France, Cordaid in the Netherlands and Trócaire in Ireland.

Through the unrivalled outreach of the Catholic Church we are able to bring together local knowledge at the grassroots level with the combined expertise and resources of a global network.

Between them, Caritas members have more than a million staff and volunteers, drawn from many different walks of life, ethnic backgrounds and religions.

Caritas Internationalis has its headquarters in Rome, from where it coordinates the confederation's response to major humanitarian emergencies, formulates policy and advocates for a better world based on justice and compassion. We also have offices in New York and Geneva representing the Caritas confederation at the United Nations and working with other international institutions. The Caritas confederation is made up of seven regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and

the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa (MONA), North America, and Oceania.

Caritas participates with other faith-based, secular and United Nations organisations in efforts to improve cooperation and coordination in emergency situations and to uphold the highest international standards in our work.



A safe place for girls to learn in Afghanistan.  
Jenny Wells /Caritas Australia





Caritas strives to develop the whole person, helping people to realise their full potential

# The right to dignity and hope

**Caritas sees the world as one united human family. We are profoundly moved by the suffering of others and have a moral duty to respond to that suffering.**

We have a preferential option for the poor, marginalised and oppressed and are committed to combating the dehumanising poverty that robs people of their dignity. We are guided by Christian Scripture to work for the liberation of the oppressed and an equitable sharing of the gifts of the earth, helping the marginalised to be agents of their own liberation and development.

Caritas maintains that life means more than survival. We believe that everyone has a right to

live with dignity and hope. The dignity of the human person is central to everything that we do.

We work in solidarity and partnership, ensuring the people we serve participate in the management and execution of our projects. Participation is an expression of human dignity and the foundation of democratic and inclusive societies.

For Caritas, development should be based on a complete understanding of what the human person is, embracing spiritual, psychological, emotional, physical, material and economic elements. We strive to develop the whole person, helping people to realise their full

potential so that they can effectively use their local resources to meet their own needs.

We ensure strong and consistent links between the relief, rehabilitation and development components of our work, taking a long-term view of people's needs, vulnerabilities and livelihoods.

Safe drinking water in  
Sudan.  
Zanetti/Caritas Switzerland

Care for the elderly in  
Vienna.  
Aleksandra Pawloff/Caritas  
Austria





Caritas responds quickly with compassion and professionalism



# Compassion in action

**With a permanent presence in most of the disaster prone regions of the world, Caritas Internationalis is able to respond swiftly when disaster strikes. Our local teams are able to call upon the entire confederation for assistance. Bringing together local knowledge and infrastructure with specialist expertise and financial resources, we can launch an effective response within hours.**

Caritas responds with compassion and professionalism, working with local communities to provide water, food, shelter and medical assistance in emergency situations. Our continued presence on the ground means that we are there to help people

rebuild their lives when the immediate emergency has passed. And we are able to help them become better prepared for future disasters, building stronger, more durable homes, schools and purpose-built shelters that provide a safe refuge from floods and cyclones.

Caritas Internationalis has coordinated emergency relief operations in all of the major disasters of recent times, including the 2004 Asian tsunami and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. But we also respond to many smaller crises. In a typical year we may provide assistance in as many as 30 different emergencies.

We also run long-term programmes for many chronic humanitarian crises that do not receive

regular media attention. For instance, we work in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing clean water, schools and healthcare, as well as helping to rebuild livelihoods and bring peace to divided communities.

Search and rescue in  
Haiti.  
Katie Orlinsky/Caritas

School feeding  
programmes in  
Zimbabwe.  
David Snyder/Caritas







Caritas works to promote reconciliation and healing among conflict-ridden communities



# Transforming lives

**Caritas is present in the poorest countries of our planet, but we work alongside the poor wherever they may be – even in the world's richest countries. Caritas organisations may therefore be providing a safe environment for girls to learn in Afghanistan while helping the homeless in Japan; distributing food aid in Zimbabwe and handing out clothing for the unemployed in the United States; building wells in Sudan and providing legal protection for migrants in Italy.**

Caritas organisations are involved in many aspects of integral human development, providing education and healthcare, financing the development of small businesses, supporting agricultural projects, strengthening civil society, improving access to clean water and sanitation, to name but a few.

Violent conflict, however, can wipe out years of development progress at a stroke. Caritas therefore also works to promote reconciliation and healing among conflict-ridden communities, employing effective peacebuilding programmes. Based on its extensive presence at the grassroots level, it is also able to provide early warnings of potential conflicts and contribute towards international peace initiatives.

Believing in the principle of subsidiarity, Caritas Internationalis promotes and supports the development of local Caritas organisations, providing resources, infrastructure and training for staff, as well as supporting regional networks.

The confederation also provides a forum for member organisations to share learning and

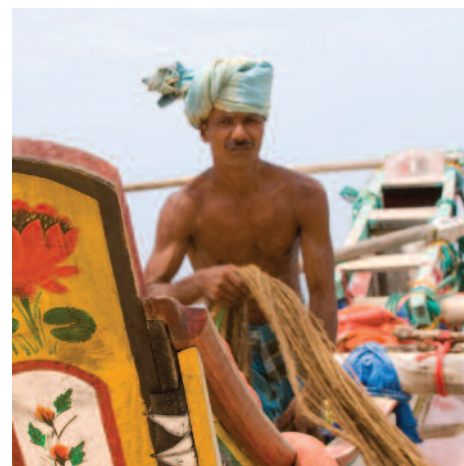
best practice on the many activities they undertake. We are committed to improving the quality of our work – what we do and how we do it – through continual reflection, evaluation and evolution.

Post war reconciliation  
in Uganda.  
Nicholson/Caritas

Earning a living in Sri  
Lanka.  
David Snyder/Caritas



A fun day out for  
children in the West  
Bank.  
Amir Sabbagh/Caritas  
Jerusalem





Caritas works to protect the rights of migrants forced from their homes by conflict, poverty or climate change



# Calling for a better world

**The unity of the Caritas confederation and its strong roots in the poor communities of the world, give it an authentic and respected voice on the world stage. Caritas Internationalis campaigns on key issues such as climate change, migration, food security and access to healthcare.**

Caritas seeks to transform unjust systems and promote the common good, addressing the structural causes of poverty, whether economic, political or cultural. We believe that economic structures should put people before profit; we support fairer trade, further debt cancellation and increased aid, more wisely spent. We hold governments to account to ensure that they live up to their aid commitments and deliver them effectively.

On climate change, Caritas calls on richer countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions and to provide poorer countries with additional

finance to stimulate sustainable development and mitigate the effects of climate change.

As poverty, conflict and climate change force ever more people from their homes each year, Caritas is working to protect the rights of migrants and to end the trafficking of people. Caritas is particularly concerned with the plight of women, who are increasingly becoming victims of trafficking and forced migration. In addition to providing help and counselling for migrants, Caritas campaigns for more legal channels of migration and works to promote better integration.

More than a billion people do not get enough food to eat. The problem is not that we cannot produce sufficient food, it is that too many people do not have access to it. As a result, almost 10 million children die every year before their fifth birthday. Food security threatens to become an increasingly urgent issue in the

current decade and Caritas is campaigning for universal recognition of the 'Right to Food'. We are calling for more aid and greater investment in agriculture, aimed at small farms and women producers, who are the backbone of rural economies and crucial players in ensuring household food security.

Caritas also campaigns on behalf of those at risk from devastating pandemics such as HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In particular, Caritas calls for greater access to 'child friendly' antiretroviral drugs for children with HIV, many of whom will die before their second birthday. More than 100 Caritas member organisations are working with people affected by HIV.

Shelter for young mothers and babies fleeing war. Swat Valley, Pakistan.  
Kim Haughton/Trócaire

Bringing hope to Tonga after a ferry disaster and a tsunami.  
Tara D'Sousa/Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand



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Volunteers prepare food kits for earthquake survivors in Chile.  
Andreas Lexer/Caritas



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## TOWARDS A CIVILISATION OF LOVE

As a part of the Catholic Church, Caritas Internationalis reflects the social mission of the Church and the following core values:

**Dignity:** We see the poor as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects of pity, and we work with them to build a better future for themselves.

**Justice:** We believe you cannot make a gift of something a person should already have by right. We challenge economic, social, political and cultural structures opposed to a just society.

**Solidarity:** We work to enhance solidarity with the poor, seeing the world through their eyes, and recognising the interdependence of humanity.

**Stewardship:** We believe the planet and all its resources are entrusted to humankind and seek to act in an environmentally responsible way as true stewards of creation.

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