



Safeguarding at CRS

FY24 ANNUAL REPORT

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is deeply committed to safeguarding those in their care, emphasizing the protection and dignity of every person as fundamental to their mission. As a Catholic organization, CRS addresses global poverty and injustice with a zero-tolerance approach for inaction related to safeguarding. CRS recognizes the importance of transparency in reporting safeguarding cases to maintain trust and confidence among their partners and supporters. This commitment is reflected in their fourth annual report on Safeguarding.

CRS' commitment to Safeguarding is further outlined in the [InterAction CEO Pledge](#), of which CRS is a signatory

CRS Approach to Safeguarding

CRS's Safeguarding policy ensures that staff and programs protect the rights and dignity of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, from abuse and harm. This policy sets clear standards for everyone involved with CRS including staff, Board Members, affiliates, and those with whom we work – partners, suppliers, and service providers – to prevent harassment, abuse, exploitation, and all forms of misconduct.

CRS' approach to Safeguarding is characterized by:



Zero-tolerance for inaction All allegations of harassment, abuse, and exploitation are taken seriously, assessed, and addressed as appropriate.



Survivor-centered meaning CRS strives to be responsive to a survivor's needs and preferences first and foremost, seeking to protect survivors from further harm, stigma, retaliation, or other harmful consequences.

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FY24 Safeguarding Statistics

October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024

83 countries | 7,000 staff | 1,978 partners

131 reports of potential Safeguarding Policy violations | 92 closed | 39 open

TABLE 1: 131 SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS BY TYPE

Allegation Type	Prohibited Behaviors	Allegations
Workplace harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sexual HarassmentNon-sexual Harassment and Bullying	69
Exploitation and abuse of program participants or community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sexual Exploitation and AbuseNon-sexual Exploitation and Abuse	59
Other safeguarding violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Failure to reportRetaliation	3

Of the 92 cases closed by the end of the fiscal year:

- 25 (27%) cases were substantiated and resulted in -
 - 13 employment/contract terminations or resignations.
 - 11 other disciplinary measures, such as initial and final warnings.
 - Four cases were addressed through corrective action (training and coaching).
- 12 (13%) allegations were unsubstantiated or inconclusive.
- 37 (40%) allegations were not credible for a safeguarding policy violation but resulted in other workplace policy violations.
- 18 (20%) were referred to other organizations or did not pertain to Safeguarding.

Consistent with industry trends, reports increased in FY24 and CRS expects an increasing case load as staff, partners, suppliers, and project participants become more aware of CRS' safeguarding policy and channels through which they can report violations and concerns.

Continued Strategic Investments

In FY24, CRS built upon strategic investments in areas critical to operationalizing the Safeguarding Policy. This included:

- Collaborated with the Safe and Dignified Programming (Protection) team to identify and train country program focal points on concepts and tools for integrating protection and safeguarding into project design, start-up and implementation.
- Completed 536 sub-recipient safeguarding assessments against the seven Partner Safeguarding Minimum Standards that took effect in September 2022. For partners who did not meet one or more of the standards, an action plan was created. To date, 84 partners (16%) are fully compliant.
- Completed the *Communicating with Communities* tool kit with 12 standard safeguarding messages in four languages. These messages are shared with communities to strengthen understanding of unacceptable behavior and how to report.
- Rolled out a comprehensive safeguarding risk assessment and mitigation planning tool for country programs and projects with a dollar value of \$500,000 or greater.

To report a concern of harassment, abuse or exploitation, including trafficking of humans, visit [EthicsPoint™](#).

Commented [CGC1]: To update- include Partner SG, SSDP, Communicating with Communities, and ??

Commented [CC2R1]: @Bates, Jasmine I've added what I can here. Over to you.