



## Safeguarding at CRS

### FY22 ANNUAL REPORT

At Catholic Relief Services (CRS), we take seriously the safeguarding of those in our care. As a Catholic organization, our mission is rooted in protecting and upholding the dignity of every person – a cornerstone of just and thriving communities. Our faith knows no bounds when it comes to addressing poverty and injustice around the world and it requires a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding those who put their trust in us.

We also recognize that increased transparency around the reporting of such cases is important to maintain the trust and confidence of those with whom we work and those who support our mission so generously and resolutely. It is in this spirit that CRS presents its third annual report on Safeguarding.

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## What is Safeguarding?

CRS defines Safeguarding as its responsibility to ensure that our staff and programs honor and protect the rights and dignity of all people – especially children and vulnerable adults – to live free from abuse and harm. This responsibility is codified in our Policy on Safeguarding, which sets clear standards for CRS staff, Board Members, affiliates, and those with whom we work – partners, suppliers, and service providers – regarding their obligations to respect all people and to actively prevent harassment, abuse, and exploitation, including sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation, and human trafficking. The persons included in the scope of this policy are obligated to protect those who work for us, those with whom we work, and those whom we serve.

CRS' approach to Safeguarding is characterized by:

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



Zero-tolerance of inaction, which means that all allegations of harassment, abuse, and exploitation are taken seriously, assessed, and addressed as appropriate. Credible allegations of safeguarding policy violations are investigated, and appropriate and proportionate action is taken when violations have occurred.



Being 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, discrimination, retaliation, or other harmful consequences.

## FY22 Safeguarding Statistics

CRS works in 116 countries with more than 8,000 staff and 1,705 partners around the world. During fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022), CRS received 112 reports of potential Safeguarding Policy violations of which 68 were assessed as credible and investigated (17 other allegations were still under assessment at the end of the fiscal year).

**TABLE 1: INVESTIGATED SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS**

Allegation Type	Prohibited Behaviors	No. of Allegations
<b>Workplace harassment</b>	■ Sexual Harassment	22
	■ Non-sexual Harassment and Bullying	
<b>Exploitation and abuse of program participants or other relatively vulnerable persons</b>	■ Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	44
	■ Non-sexual Exploitation and Abuse	
<b>Other safeguarding violations</b>	■ Failure to report	2
	■ Retaliation	

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

Of the 68 allegations investigated, 66 were closed at the end of the fiscal year of which 49 (72%) were substantiated. Substantiated allegations resulted in thirteen (13) employment/contract terminations or resignations, and twenty-two (22) other disciplinary measures, including but not limited to verbal and written warnings. Six (6) cases were addressed through corrective action (training and coaching).<sup>1</sup> The outcomes of the remaining seventeen (17) investigations were unsubstantiated or inconclusive, resulting in one or more corrective actions to strengthen safeguarding knowledge and address behaviors.

Consistent with industry trends, CRS expects a continued rise in reports as staff, partners, suppliers, and program participants become more aware of CRS’ Safeguarding Policy and channels through which they can report violations and concerns.

## Continued Strategic Investments

In FY22, CRS continued to build upon its strategic investments in priority areas identified as critical to operationalizing the Safeguarding Policy. This included ongoing diversification and training of Safeguarding Focal Points in country programs; additional Focal Points were trained on policy orientation and investigations. In addition, CRS developed minimum safeguarding standards, training materials and templates for implementing partners that took effect in September 2022. This includes investigation standards and related training and tools. CRS will continue its efforts to prevent harassment, abuse, and exploitation in FY23 by continuing to bolster safeguards within its programs and operating systems.

<sup>1</sup> Employment action only captured once where multiple allegations substantiated for same SoC