

Final Draft

**Code of Good Practice
For
Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA)**

(Approved by CASA National Board on 24th February 2011)



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1. Introduction

CASA is a specialised ministry of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches in India and mandated to carry out the Humanitarian Aid, Development & Advocacy work in favour of the poor, excluded and marginalised sections of the society. CASA's history dates back to 1947, when India got independence from the British. What followed was the trauma of 'partition' between India and Pakistan ! As a result of the riots , scores of people became stranded , homeless. In this hour of crisis CASA started its operations on behalf of the churches in India to provide charity and succour to the victims.

Over a period of time CASA has gone through many a changes in its understanding of development, as there has been rapid changes in the socio-economic-political situation in the country, which demanded different nature of response, as these changes also changed the scenario at the grassroots level.

CASA is a dynamic organisation, because we have always wanted to remain relevant to the changing context and at the same time expressing the Christian philosophy of love, justice. Peace and work towards restoring the dignity of life. In this context, after starting with charity, CASA shifted towards a need-based approach in the 80s, towards issue-based programmes in 90s and become more active in the first decade of the 21st century to work for the rights and entitlements through a framework of the Rights Based Approach to development.

Humanitarian Aid Response, Development & Advocacy related work within a framework of Rights Based Approach are the hallmarks of CASA. With a workforce of over 500 employees CASA has worked in 24 States and Union Territories across India. We are operational in more than 3,500 villages with above 200 partner organisations. Today CASA is responding to around 50-60 (major & minor) emergencies in a year through its Humanitarian Aid Response programme and also are engaged in long-term sustainable development work in about 3,500 villages through direct intervention or through partnership programmes. CASA strive towards a policy of 'Equal Opportunity for All' and therefore does not discriminate among its staff on the basis of caste, colour, religion and sex.

By virtue of its mammoth coverage and outreach with diverse background of its staff and partners, it becomes very important for the organisation and its partners to adhere to a 'Code of Good Practice' commonly agreed upon by all concerned in order to remain an efficient, accountable and transparent organisation in our work and our relationship with the communities.

CASA (Church's Auxiliary for Social Action) is committed to providing high-quality humanitarian, development and advocacy programmes and working in a transparent and accountable way. CASA expects that the performance of its staff and that of the partner organisations are value based and of a good standard.

CASA staff and partners are bound together by several core values that are grounded in our Christian faith and which guide our work. We have a responsibility to be accountable to those individuals and communities with whom we work, to those who support us and to each other.

2. Purpose and scope

The *CASA Code of Good Practice* is an organisational level commitment to continuous improvement and movement toward best practice principles. It complements the *CASA Code of Conduct*¹ which serves as a guide for individual CASA staff to make ethical decisions in their professional lives and at times in their private lives.

The Code of Good Practice for the CASA sets out common values, principles and commitments that will shape the humanitarian, development and advocacy work of CASA Partners. It outlines the minimum professional and ethical standards required from all CASA Partners.

The Code of Good Practice provides principles for all CASA staff focusing in four key areas:

- i. *Overarching principles* - the fundamental principles that guide our work as a Faith Based Voluntary Organisation .
- ii. *Organisational principles* – the principles that promote professional management, leadership and support in CASA and its partner organisations to guide how we work. They provide the foundations for effective and accountable programming.
- iii. *Programmatic principles*² – the principles that guide our actions in communities and programmes addressing capacities and promoting justice and equality in line with CASA policies and guidance.
- iv. *Relational Principles* – the principles that support CASA and Partners working together and promote collaboration, cooperation and partnership among the communities we work with.

3. CASA Principles of Good Practice

i. Overarching Principles

Each member of the CASA commits to...

¹ CASA Code of Conduct for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power:

² The programmatic principles will be reviewed every three-five years to embrace new developments and in some cases, new scientific evidence, so that the Code becomes established as a credible and accurate reflection of sound programmatic practice for the CASA .

1. Acting in ways that respect, empower and protect the dignity, uniqueness, and the intrinsic worth and human rights of every woman, man, girl and boy;
2. Working with needy communities and individuals from a Rights perspective without any form of discrimination, acknowledging the capacities and capabilities of communities, and targeting the excluded and most vulnerable;
3. Speaking out and acting against those conditions, structures and systems which increase vulnerability and perpetuate poverty, injustice, human rights violations and the destruction of the environment;
4. Working in ways that respect, strengthen and enable local and national-level capacity;
5. Not using humanitarian or development assistance to further a particular religious standpoint;
6. Upholding the highest professional, ethical and moral standards of accountability, recognising our accountability to those with whom we work, to those who support us, to each other, and ultimately to God;
7. Meeting the highest standards of truthfulness and integrity in all of our work;
8. Not to become an 'instrument' of official duty holders, but maintaining our capacity to speak or act independently upholding the rights of the poor, deprived, excluded and most marginalised.

ii. Organisational Principles

1. Commit to responsible and transparent governance and management including upholding the highest ethical standards and being accountable to all stakeholders
2. Develop and maintain the organisational capacity necessary to support development and humanitarian programmes in terms of mobilisation of resources³ and creating management conditions to achieve strategic objectives;
3. Commit to act in ways that will protect God's creation, restore the environment and respect human rights;
4. Promote gender equality as a common value and gender mainstreaming as a method of work;
5. Take responsibility and hold ourselves accountable for ensuring the safety, dignity and security of our staff and volunteers;
6. Make a 'core commitment' to mainstream protection in all work, at a minimum, ensuring mechanisms are in place at different levels to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of gender-based violence;
7. Make a concerted effort to engage with churches and their local ministries, recognizing their role in providing religious and spiritual care as well as essential humanitarian and development assistance to local communities;

³ Such as: staffing, infrastructure, technology, and finances.

8. Manage financial resources in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner; and
9. Reflect in communication and fundraising materials, the dignity, resilience and initiatives of affected communities.

iii. Programmatic Principles

1. Uphold high ethical, human rights and programmatic standards in all of our work (as relevant) such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴, Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief⁵, Sphere Standards⁶, the CASA Code of Conduct⁷, and all other CASA policies and codes.
2. Listen to, and incorporate into all stages of programmatic work, the perspectives of those women and men whose lives are affected by crises, poverty, exclusion, rights deprivation and injustice and support them as they claim their human rights and work to improve their situation and overall wellbeing.
3. Address the root causes of poverty, rights deprivation, injustice, and exclusion in appropriate ways, including working for relevant changes within both formal and informal institutions.
4. Work to ensure that appropriate and timely support reaches the most deprived & excluded men and women within communities.
5. Proactively seek equal and meaningful participation of women and men from the communities with whom we work in initiatives and decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods, making a concerted effort to include those who are disproportionately excluded in their society.
6. Promote an integrated, community-based approach to our work, creating a link between development and humanitarian assistance and related advocacy work, recovery, reconstruction, and disaster risk reduction, within a Rights Based Framework.
7. Use work approaches that develop community capacity, strengthening existing community capacity and prioritise the use of local resources (human, material, cultural etc).
8. Enable the active participation of communities in determining appropriate self-protection and risk reduction measures.
9. Work to foresee and understand the impact of our work on existing and potential conflicts and inequalities, incorporating “Do no harm” principles in our work and where appropriate, grasping opportunities to support peace.

⁴ See: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

⁶ See Sphere Standards 2011 version <http://www.sphereproject.org/>

⁷ See the “CASA Code of Conduct for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power”

10. Ensure the people that we work with have access to information about CASA, our programmes, our resources to support the programme and , how they can give feedback or complain, and participate in our work.
11. Ensure rigorous, high quality standards in all our work, having effective systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating.
12. Use moral and ethical business practices when relating and cooperating within CASA and with external actors such as other NGO, UN agencies, the private sector and the military.
13. Work in a complementary and collaborative manner with other national and international development and humanitarian institutions and agencies.

iv. Relational Principles

1. Nurture and sustain partnerships to support more effective, fair and satisfying ways of working together with an emphasis on greater sharing of power, learning, and knowledge;
2. Commit ourselves to being transparent with, listening to, learning from, and sharing experiences with other members in order to improve the quality of our work and draw on the rich diversity of our networks.
3. Build relationships, strengthen effectiveness and work collaboratively, adopting complementary strategies in our work.
4. Recognise and value the unique gifts that each of us has been given.
5. Build and sustain transparent and accountability-based relationships to support coordinated and effective humanitarian, development and advocacy responses.
6. Strengthen the capacity of churches who are responding to the humanitarian and developmental needs of their communities, paying particular attention to enhancing the capacity of ecumenical organisations and to support programmes undertaken by multi-faith groups.

4. Implementation

All CASA staff must accept this code of Good practice by signing on this document . Implementation of the principles is the responsibility of each CASA staff signatory and as such, CASA will institute a system to self-evaluate its efforts and progress towards each principle.

A Peer Review system will be facilitated by CASA to assess the level of implementation of the principles and to serve as a shared learning experience for staff and partner organisations. CASA will provide assistance to help implement parts of the Code where possible and as appropriate, through a mechanism.

5. Compliance and sanctions

All CASA staff must adhere to the Code of Good Practice. It is expected that all CASA Partners will see the mutual benefits of following the good practices set out in this Code, and will attempt to resolve any compliance issues among and between each other especially if organisations are working in a partnership mode. Alternatively, such complaints can be addressed at CASA's redressal mechanism, in place.

If the issue cannot be resolved at the local level, formal complaints from one (or more) CASA partner organization(s) about the conduct of CASA staff or other CASA partner organization(s) can be submitted to the Chair of Complaints Redressal Committee of CASA. The committee will then reports to the Director of CASA with the findings of the investigation. The Director will then decide on the necessary disciplinary action (if any) based on the defined CASA disciplinary procedures outlined in the CASA Human Resource Policy.

6. Organisational commitment

It is mandatory for all CASA staff (regular and contractual) to accept this document by signing on it.

The staff and representative of CASA, whose signature appears below, has read, understood and is in agreement with the content of this Code of Good Practice. The staff also accepts the consequences of non-adherence of any of the above provisions under this Code.

Full name of Organisation: **Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA)**

Name of Signatory: _____

Position: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____

(Adapted from the ACT Alliance Code of Good Practice)