



# Goals of the German Caritas Association



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# Foreword

Mission statements aim to provide orientation; they show how an organization sees itself and formulate objectives for its further development. This mission statement of the German Caritas Association was preceded by intensive debate prior to its resolution on 6 May 1997 by the Central Council of that time. While some of the formulations may be dated, this compilation of responsibilities, objectives, challenges and perspectives points the way forward for the work of Caritas in Germany.

The concepts of the mission statement served as a basis that triggered developments and discussions about how the German Caritas Association sees itself. This resulted, for example, in the resolution of the *“Leitlinien für unternehmerisches Handeln in der Caritas”* (Guidelines for entrepreneurial action in Caritas) in 2008 and the *“Merkmale verbandlicher Caritasidentität für berufliche Mitarbeitende”* (Characteristics of Caritas’ identity as an association for professional employees) in 2015. The same applies to the challenges which need to be dealt with in Caritas’ work. In 2015 the structures of German Caritas Association’s *“Wegmarken des Zukunftsdialogs Caritas 2020”* (Milestones of Caritas future dialogue 2020) were recommended for the organization’s further development. This initiated a process towards a common vision for a differentiated Caritas as an attractive place of the church in today’s world. Thus, this mission statement got many developments underway and its content has remained relevant.

I hope you find the mission statement in its new layout makes for stimulating reading and is an ongoing source of new impulses that are necessary for one’s own examination of the nature of charitable work. A mission statement needs local input to fill it with life and develop it further.

Freiburg, November 2016



**Prelate Dr. Peter Neher**

*President of the German Caritas Association*



# 1 Introduction

- 2 This statement of goals of the German Caritas Association<sup>1</sup> formulates tasks and goals, challenges and perspectives.
- 3 It serves all branches of the German Caritas Association as a guiding principle and an instrument of orientation. It also provides them with the possibility to develop or to continue writing their own mission statements.
- 4 It is directed toward all volunteer and professional workers and should help them in identifying with Caritas' goals and tasks.
- 5 It aims to give the public and all those interested in the work of Caritas a clear and realistic picture of the Caritas Association.
- 6 The guiding principles put forth in the mission statement refer to current activities. At the same time, they show perspectives for further development.
- 7 The tension between the status quo and striving towards ultimate goals forces to review tasks constantly

<sup>1</sup> The following are joined together in the German Caritas Association:

- the Diocesan Caritas Associations and their respective branch organizations and corporate members
- the central specialized charity associations and their respective branch organizations
- the charity societies and religious orders
- the central office of the German Caritas Association in Freiburg and its principal agencies

# 1 Preamble

- 2 Caritas means real help for people in need. The guiding principles of Caritas' work are the teachings of and the example set by Jesus Christ.
- 3 Reaching out to the needy and showing solidarity with them is charity put into practice.
- 4 Caritas is the task and obligation of every Christian.
- 5 Caritas is, at the same time, the basic task of the Catholic Church.
- 6 Motivated by a Christian sense of responsibility, Caritas provides a variety of different kinds of aid together with people and for people.
- 7 As a social welfare organization of the Catholic Church, the German Caritas Association works to improve the quality of life in the Church and in society.
- 8 Criteria for the work of Caritas are the challenges found in the Bible and the faith of the Church.
- 9 Through its work, Caritas contributes to public testimony of the Church's teaching.
- 10 As a leading association in the field of private social work, the German Caritas Association feels in part responsible for the improvement of the social circumstances in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 11 Caritas is dedicated to a just and solidary society in which the poor and the weak can find their fair chance in life.

# 1 I. Objectives and Tasks

## 2 1. Objectives

### 3 **To protect each person in his and her dignity**

- 4 Each person is a unique individual and possesses an inviolable God-given dignity.
- 5 This results in the obligation to respect and protect human life from beginning to end, from conception to death, and to support and accompany where there is need.
- 6 The highest and most specific goal of all Caritas work is to protect particularly the disadvantaged and the weak from societal exploitation, exclusion and misuse and to show them how to help themselves.

### 7 **To live in solidarity with one another in a pluralistic world**

- 8 Human existence fulfills itself through a variety of interpersonal relationships in the family, at work, in the neighborhood, in political groups, and in the co-existence of different interest groups and opinions, cultures and religions.
- 9 The German Caritas Association supports this variety. It strives for a life of solidarity together with all people of good will: a life in which there is no need for prejudice, in which minorities are protected, and all take part in and contribute to the common good.

### 10 **To fulfill obligations across borders**

- 11 A life of dignity for all people is only possible if freedom, justice, and peace are guaranteed throughout the world, and if life is respected and preserved.
- 12 That is why the German Caritas Association commits itself in Europe and around the world to just living conditions, adherence to human rights, and the establishment of minimal social standards.
- 13 Caritas supports and promotes the work of its independent, autonomous local partner organizations.

*Protecting  
each person  
in his/her dignity*



14 **2. Tasks**

15 **The work of Caritas is help for people in need**

- 16 Human need – psychological, physical, spiritual, and material – requires interpersonal assistance.
- 17 The German Caritas gives priority to helping people who cannot find adequate help or any help at all through their personal contacts or through social security systems.
- 18 Caritas looks for a holistic approach to aid. An individual's psychological and spiritual situation and his/her entire environment are integrated into the type of support he/she receives. The needy are encouraged to take an active part in changing their life situation.
- 19 Caritas supports the needy on their way to fair opportunities and to a life of independence and responsibility.

20 **The German Caritas Association sees itself as advocate and partner of the disadvantaged**

- 21 Caritas commits itself to people who live on the fringes of society, who have no public voice, and who are not able to help themselves.
- 22 Caritas makes their needs and concerns public and supports them in securing their rights.
- 23 Caritas counteracts societal and political developments that lead to discrimination of individuals and families or to the exclusion of social groups.

24 **As an association, Caritas helps shape social and societal politics**

- 25 Therefore the German Caritas Association takes partial responsibility for the development of social infrastructures to meet the demands society makes.
- 26 Caritas makes the public aware of existing needs. It promotes solidarity in action on the basis of Christian values.



*Counteracting  
tendencies that  
destroy solidarity*

- 27 In doing so, Caritas contributes to peace in society and counteracts tendencies that destroy solidarity.
- 28 The German Caritas Association cooperates in assuring basic rights and conditions for all people in areas of health, social welfare, education, occupation and the raising of children. The basis for this work is the principle of subsidiarity.
- 29 The association helps sensitize people to the emergence of new needs.
- 30 Through its services and facilities, Caritas endeavors intensely to help the impoverished who do not qualify for sufficient social services.
- 31 The German Caritas Association contributes to the professionalization of social work**
- 32 Practical concepts for getting work done and qualified staff members are a prerequisite for effective aid.
- 33 The German Caritas Association continually improves the qualifications of its professional and volunteer staff members through goal-oriented training and continuing education.
- 34 With its scientific publications and its immediate exchange between theory and practice, the Association makes an independent contribution to the development of concepts and standards in the various fields of social work and the acts of charity.

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# 1 II. Theological Foundations

## 2 **1. A benevolent God: Caritas' source of energy**

3 Christians view the life of each individual as a gift from God.

4 God is a God of love; God enables us to love and calls us to help.

5 God cares about people even when they are morally weak;  
God gives them hope and a future.

6 It is from this faith that Caritas draws its strength.

## 7 **2. Jesus Christ and His message: goal and encouragement for Caritas**

8 God became man in Jesus Christ.

9 In His unique way, Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed the message of a God who cares for and suffers with His people. He exemplified this message and called for unconditional following of His ways.

10 The fruits of His healing miracles, His suffering, and His resurrection are the promise of a new creation in which peace prevails and suffering and death are overcome.

11 It is from this message that Caritas draws its vision and its encouragement.

## 12 **3. The Holy Spirit: Caritas' source of strength**

13 God's Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life: It creates life and gives us the courage to live.

14 It enables us to live together and to care for others.

15 It is a healing Spirit.



*Seeing others  
as a brother  
or a sister*

16 Its works are displayed in an array of colors and are reflected in the diversity of human talent.

17 Christians recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in everyone who sees others as their brothers and sisters and who is prepared to help in a selfless way.

#### 18 **4. The prophetic Spirit – Caritas' vision**

19 God is an advocate of the poor, the weak and those deprived of their rights.

20 Injustice to them is a rejection of God.

21 Prophetic women and men have testified to this hundreds of times throughout history, contrary to all prevailing circumstances.

22 As unpleasant admonishers, they were never afraid to denounce social injustice and its causes and to call for change.

23 A prophetic mind is a gift from God. It is necessary today. Prevailing disgraces must be brought to light and their origins revealed so that just solutions can be found.

24 God's kingdom is not of this world, but its justice must take shape in this world.

#### 25 **5. The diaconal Church: Caritas' sphere of activity and life**

26 Jesus Christ's church is a diaconal church.

27 The diaconal work of Caritas is as much a part of the life of the Church as its liturgy and its preaching.

28 People must repeatedly be made aware of this fact and fill it with life.

- 29 Therefore, as an association and in agreement with the bishop, Caritas supports, promotes and complements the work of individuals, groups, clubs, and parishes in the various dioceses, and adds strength to their initiative.
- 30 In carrying out its work, Caritas counts on all Christians to show social awareness and a willingness to help.
- 31 Caritas work at the parish level is the starting point and the foundation. It is essential for both parish life and for Caritas work at the association level.
- 32 Therefore, the Association fosters various forms of cooperation with parishes and with various Christian groups and associations.
- 33 6. A great tradition: commitment to constant renewal**
- 34 Christ's church is a church which has evolved out of the power of the Spirit. It is a church of freedom. The Church thrives on the diversity of individual abilities and talents which are able to unfold within it.
- 35 Throughout the history of the Church and of Christianity, countless men and women and many organizations and religious charity orders have repeatedly taken up the cause of people in need.
- 36 Thanks to their inventive spirit and their commitment, the conditions of many people have improved.
- 37 The ideas, concepts and spirituality of caring christians throughout history are a great treasure for the work of Caritas today.
- 38 This inheritance must be "translated", renewed, and further developed to fit today's world. It is through this process that the work of Caritas gets new incentives, and current tasks are continually evaluated.

# 1 III. Organizational Profile

## 2 1. The German Caritas Association is variety within unity

- 3 Economic turmoil and social deprivation of the past have led to organized Caritas work.
- 4 Particularly in the 19th century, many groups, associations and religious orders created relief organisations and facilities for charitable work.
- 5 Lorenz Werthmann founded the “Caritasverband für das katholische Deutschland” (“Charity Association for Catholic Germany”) on November 9, 1897, in order to coordinate relief efforts more effectively and strengthen Caritas` influence on society and socio-political decisions.
- 6 Since 1916, the German Caritas Association has been, as acknowledged by the bishops, the organizational form of the associated Caritas in Germany.

## 7 2. The German Caritas Association is an umbrella organization as well as a local organization

- 8 As such, the German Caritas Association supports and promotes the work of its branch and member organizations.
- 9 As one of the leading private social welfare organizations, the German Caritas Association represents the interests of member organizations at the federal level.
- 10 Caritas branch organizations fulfill the functions of a leading organization at their respective levels.
- 11 The tasks and responsibilities of the German Caritas Association and its branch and member organizations are divided according to which group can do the most competent job in a small, local setting.
- 12 Associational and organizational structures are laid out for further development. They are flexible to meet the changing demands. The people who are affected by change participate in the development of new structures.
- 13 The German Caritas Association has personal, corporate, and associated corporate members.



Promoting  
social  
involvement

- 14 The German Caritas Association strengthens and promotes its members' possibilities for self-representation and participation.
- 15 The German Caritas Association supports association work as an instrument of societal influence and political involvement.
- 16 **3. The German Caritas Association is a part of the social movement**
- 17 It offers all those interested in social work the opportunity to participate, either voluntarily or professionally, in the attainment of its goals and fulfillment of its tasks.
- 18 The Association develops opportunities for participation and decision-making and promotes involvement through counseling and continuing education.
- 19 It supports the commitment of voluntary charity work in parishes, societies, groups, and initiatives.
- 20 It stands up for improved conditions in the field of volunteer social work. Better conditions could make volunteer work more attractive and improve cooperation between volunteers and professionals.
- 21 The Association promotes the concept of social movement and cooperates with socially involved people, initiatives, and organizations in efforts to create a society of true solidarity.
- 22 **4. The German Caritas Association as an employer**
- 23 It is dependent on committed and qualified staff members who are willing to uphold the goals and tasks formulated in this statement and to realize them through their work.
- 24 Expertise, a willingness to commit oneself, flexibility and loyalty build the foundation of professional services.
- 25 The German Caritas Association, as an employer, is responsible for each staff member's social situation.

- 26 The Association looks for possibilities for its staff to easily combine job and family. Men and women are assured equal opportunities to develop professionally.
- 27 The Association supports staff members in their professional, personal, and religious development.
  
- 28 **5. The German Caritas Association practises a participative style of management**
- 29 It allows staff members to participate in setting objectives and making decisions which influence their own work.
- 30 Clear job descriptions and the delegation of competencies and responsibilities make it possible for staff to show initiative and to work independently.
- 31 The Association promotes the training and activities of the elected representatives of Caritas' employees.
  
- 32 **6. The German Caritas Association is a caring community**
- 33 The work of Caritas is ecclesiastical work.
- 34 Caritas' work follows the rules and guidelines of the Church.
- 35 Both employees and employers are obliged to contribute to an atmosphere of trust within the caring community.
- 36 This type of atmosphere is characterized by respect for individual personalities, by cooperation based on partnership, and by constructive conflict solving.

# 1 IV. Performance Profile



- 2 **1. In its actions the German Caritas Association follows the basic principles of Christian social ethics and the social teachings of the Church**
- 3 Its work respects the dignity of all people and speaks up for their rights.
- 4 It encourages the independence and self-determination of individuals, families and groups.
- 5 It helps people help themselves. Those who are being helped should remain active during the assistance process.
- 6 It supports, for the good of all, actions and behavior based on solidarity.
- 7 **2. The German Caritas Association performs its work according to the needs and demands**
- 8 As an association within the field of private social welfare, the German Caritas Association carries out social services.
- 9 The criteria for its work are the needs and problems of the deprived. Caritas help is given unconditionally and independently of religion, nationality and political opinion.
- 10 The German Caritas Association takes special care of those who would otherwise receive inadequate or no help at all, who feel excluded and lonely, and who suffer because others have rejected them.
- 11 It strives to recognize new situations of need in their early stages and to find solutions when they are needed.
- 12 In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, the Association must cooperate together with the parishes.
- 13 The Association regularly evaluates its range of services and changes them to suit current needs.

**14 3. The German Caritas Association provides services in a professional manner**

15 It works according to social welfare standards and participates in adjusting standards based on scientific knowledge and practical experience.

16 The quality of its work is assured through regular controls.

17 The Association gives preference to preventative measures in all areas of social work.

**18 4. The German Caritas Association carries out its work with concern for the environmentally-friendly manner**

19 It lives up to its responsibility for preserving the whole creation.

20 The work processes in its services and facilities are determined with regard to the environment.

**21 5. The German Caritas Association works as an effective business**

22 Its actions as a provider of social welfare services are determined by its goals and tasks.

23 The Association performs its services based on the principles of effectiveness, feasibility and efficiency.

24 The public is openly informed about the Association's business status.

25 Funds that are not designated for specific use are preferably used for financing projects which have been given priority and have not already been secured through other means.

26 As a part of the service industry, the German Caritas Association feels responsible for employee-oriented politics. In such matters, the Association works within the realm of the existing labour-laws.





**27 6. The German Caritas Association relies on cooperation**

- 28 It acknowledges the diverse, independent accomplishments of parishes, organizations, private initiatives and self-help groups. It seeks to cooperate with them.
- 29 It especially supports initiatives founded on the concept of self-help.
- 30 The German Caritas Association at the federal level and its branches at the state and community level work together with other privately funded organizations and with public social welfare groups.
- 31 As a member of Caritas Internationalis it takes on responsibility for emergency and catastrophe situations around the world and seeks opportunities for cooperation with other Church relief organizations.
- 32 It promotes ecumenical cooperation in the Church's social work. It is open to working together with non-Christian religious communities.

**33 7. The German Caritas Association supports openness and renewal**

- 34 It reacts flexibly and creatively to new challenges, for example, through development and implementation of pilot projects.
- 35 The association shares its first-hand experience within the framework of social welfare, ethical and political discussions. Thus it contributes to innovation in the social arena.

# 1 Conclusion

- 2 Together and in their respective fields, Caritas supporters, management, and staff members implement the objectives, basic principles and rules of conduct put forth in this statement of goals.

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# Statement of goals of the German Caritas Association at a Glance

## Introduction

## Preamble

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### I. Objectives and Tasks

#### 1. Objectives

- To protect each person in his dignity
- To live in solidarity with one another in a pluralistic world
- To fulfill obligations across borders

#### 2. Tasks

- The work of Caritas is help for people in need
  - The German Caritas Association sees itself as advocate and partner of the disadvantaged
  - As an association, Caritas helps shape social and societal politics
  - The German Caritas Association contributes to the professionalization of social work
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### II. Theological Foundations

1. A benevolent God: Caritas' source of energy
  2. Jesus Christ and His message: vision and encouragement for Caritas
  3. The Holy Spirit: Caritas' source of strength
  4. The prophetic Spirit: Caritas' vision
  5. The diaconal Church: Caritas' sphere of activity and life
  6. A great tradition: commitment to constant renewal
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### III. Organizational Profile

The German Caritas Association

1. is variety within unity
  2. is an umbrella organization as well as a local organization
  3. is a part of the social movement
  4. as an employer
  5. practices a participative style of management
  6. is a caring community
- 

### IV. Performance Profile

The German Caritas Association

1. follows the basic principles of Christian social ethics and the social teachings of the Church
  2. performs its work according to needs and demands
  3. provides services in a professional manner
  4. carries out its work in an environmentally-friendly manner
  5. works as an effective business organisation
  6. relies on cooperation
  7. declares its support for openness and renewal
- Conclusion
- 

## Conclusion

This Statement of goals was ratified by the Central Advisory Board of the German Caritas Association in Limburg on May 6, 1997. Ratification was based on a recommendation by the Council of Representatives in Schwäbisch Gmünd on October 16, 1996.



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