



CHARIS
Caritas Humanitarian Aid &
Relief Initiatives Singapore



MEMBER ORGANISATION HANDBOOK



About CHARIS

Caritas Humanitarian Aid and Relief Initiatives (Singapore) Ltd (or CHARIS) is the umbrella body for overseas humanitarian aid and disaster response of the Archdiocese of Singapore. CHARIS was first launched as an archdiocesan body on 19 August 2010 by Emeritus Archbishop Nicholas Chia. CHARIS is part of Caritas Internationalis, which is made up of over 160 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working together to build a better world for the poor and marginalised in over 200 countries.

Inspired by the Catholic faith, CHARIS is the helping hand of the Church – reaching out to the poor, regardless of race or religion, to build a world based on justice and fraternal love.

Purpose

As one Body in Christ, to inspire, unite and enable the Catholic Community in Singapore, to love and serve our neighbours in the region through humanitarian aid and disaster response.

The stylized cross signifies CHARIS as a Catholic organisation. The cross forming an “umbrella” depicts CHARIS’ role as the umbrella body for Catholic organisations and groups within the Archdiocese of Singapore who serves our neighbours outside of Singapore. The colour purple represents both the colour of suffering (used during Lent) and the “coming” of hope which we seek to bring to those suffering overseas.



Strategic Pillars

Inspire

To inspire the Catholic community towards Catholic Social Mission, grounded in compassion, empathy, and fraternal love.

Unite

To unite the Catholic community, parishes, and member organisations for action towards answering the call of the poor, and to be in unity with the Caritas and other regional networks.

Enable

To enable Catholic individuals, communities, and organisations undertaking overseas humanitarian work through empowerment and capacity building.

Our Partners

As the umbrella body for overseas humanitarian work of the Archdiocese of Singapore, CHARIS works closely with our Member Organisations, as well as members of the Caritas Internationalis Confederation, in fulfilling its mission outreach for those in need overseas.

CHARIS and Caritas Singapore are separate legal entities, with the latter focusing on serving the local community in Singapore. Both CHARIS and Caritas Singapore are members of Caritas Internationalis. Below table elaborates on the roles of Caritas Internationalis (CI), Caritas Asia (CA) and Caritas Singapore:



Caritas Internationalis (CI) is a confederation of over 160 members who are working at the grassroots in almost every country of the world. When a crisis hits, Caritas is already on the ground.

CI has its headquarters in Rome, co-ordinating emergency operations, formulating development policies, and advocating for a better world for everyone.

CHARIS had a shared membership to CI with Caritas Singapore since its launch in 2010, and became a full-fledged member of the Confederation at the CI 21st General Assembly held in Rome in May 2019.



Caritas Asia (CA) is one of the seven Regional Offices under the Confederation of Caritas Internationalis (CI). It was established by the Asian MOs, with the endorsement and approval of the confederation, during the General Assembly of CI in 1999 in Rome. It currently has 25 member organisations in 24 countries in Asia, including CHARIS.

The primary role of Caritas Asia is to serve and support the member organisations in the region in the achievement of their mission, and has the responsibility to intensify interchange and mutual aid among the member organisations for the promotion and harmonisation of their work and to achieve the goals pursued in the region by the Confederation.



Caritas Singapore is the official social mission arm of the Catholic Church in Singapore, and the umbrella body for 28 Catholic member organisations whose work touches the lives of many regardless of race or religion. Caritas Singapore aims to be the manifestation of God's Love in Action. Through their programmes, they journey with people in need in the community toward empowerment and a better future. The Caritas Singapore family's work supports the poor and destitute; families, children and youth; people with physical or mental challenges; those with terminal illnesses or HIV/Aids; the incarcerated; and migrants in Singapore.

Caritas Singapore is a member of Caritas Internationalis, and the sister organisation to CHARIS.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Directors of CHARIS is an elected governing body. The Board of Directors is supported by the Secretariat Office comprising full-time executive staff led by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is appointed by the Board and reports to the Board for the operational management of CHARIS. The Executive Director is responsible for the welfare and management of the staff as well as for operating and managing the programmes and activities of CHARIS to achieve the objectives of CHARIS.

In CHARIS, there are different committees, each led by a board member who is supported by committed volunteers who serve as committee members. All committees work closely with the Secretariat Office that takes part in the decision-making and planning processes.

A full-time executive staff in the Secretariat Office is appointed as the **Membership Secretariat**. The Membership Secretariat is responsible for the management and engagement of CHARIS Member Organisations, comprising mainly of Catholic volunteers in Singapore, who offer their time and effort serve the marginalized and disadvantaged overseas. Member Organisations may contact the Membership Secretariat for any enquiries or activities.



CHARIS Board and Staff with Cardinal William Goh at Social Mission Mass 2024

What we do

Amongst other work that CHARIS undertakes as a Catholic organisation, we are engaged in the following three core activities:



Mission Trips

CHARIS and its Member Organisations organize mission trips that provide overseas opportunities for Catholics to put our faith into action. These mission trips also support and encourage the formation and growth of CHARIS' Member Organisations in overseas mission work.

Disaster Relief

CHARIS' operational role is to coordinate the Singapore archdiocesan response to natural disasters in the region. Activities for disaster response are viewed in three stages: Preparation, Relief and Reconstruction.



Humanitarian Aid

Beyond responding to natural disasters, CHARIS also seeks to alleviate human suffering caused by adverse circumstances such as war, civil strife, crisis and poverty.

Our Member Organisations

CHARIS Member Organisations are Catholic organisations and groups within the Archdiocese of Singapore that are involved in overseas humanitarian work. Our Member Organisations operate in various geographies throughout the region and serves different causes that resonates with their calling. CHARIS aspires to continue reaching out to all who are engaged or planning to engage in overseas humanitarian and mission work.

Criteria to become a Member Organisation

1. Only organisations and not individuals can qualify as Member Organisation (MO). The organisation need not be legally registered but should have a proper constitution or terms of reference.
2. The objectives or work of the organisation must encompass overseas humanitarian aid in fulfilment of the Church's social mission.
3. The organisation should conduct at least one overseas mission annually.
4. The application, and continuation of membership, must be supported by the Board of CHARIS.
5. The organisation must be a Catholic organisation, in that:
 - a. Its governing body must include a Spiritual Director;
 - b. The organisation must be approved by Chancery and the Consultors.
6. The organisation's beneficiaries need not be restricted only to Catholics, but should also reach the wider community. The organisation should be open and inclusive in its outreach.

MO Onboarding Process

1. The organisation must fill up "MO Profile form" and Chancery's "Application for Approval of Existence" form together with all the requisite documents stated in the application form, and submit to CHARIS. The organisation will be provided with the Member Organisation Handbook and the MO is expected to be familiar with its contents.
2. As part of the onboarding process, and to ensure due diligence on the part of CHARIS, the following measures, apart from any other measures which may be incorporated at the discretion of CHARIS, will be undertaken:
 - a. The organisation and its key appointment holders will be screened for any adverse public media comment;
 - b. A recommendation letter from the organisation's Spiritual Director to be provided;
 - c. The opinion of CHARIS Board of Advisors will be sought.

3. Approval will then be sought at the next quarterly meeting of the Board or via written resolution in writing if necessary.
4. Once approved by the CHARIS Board of Directors, CHARIS will submit the forms to the Chancery for final approval by the Consultors.
5. On approval by the Consultors, the organisation will be formally accepted as a Member Organisation of CHARIS.
6. All newly appointed MOs will be required to attend an orientation conducted by CHARIS.

Benefits for Member Organisation

Member Organisations of CHARIS will be provided with necessary support to enable and further enhance their capability in executing their missions overseas. Some of these benefits include (please also refer to CHARIS Website under the Resources section for additional information and necessary documentation):

1. Provision of grants for MOs' projects and beneficiaries overseas. This will be through CHARIS Grants process, which is managed through our Grants Committee. Grants applications from MO will be given priority.
2. Allowed to raise funds using CHARIS fundraising permit. As CHARIS is the only Catholic Organisation that has a renewable fundraising permit issued by the Commissioner of Charities, including the waiver of "80:20 rule", conduct of MO fundraising is possible only upon the execution of CHARIS' Fundraising Agency Agreement.
3. Software services:
 - a. Self-serviced microsite for the organisation on makehopehappen.charis-singapore.org;
 - b. Microsoft Office 365 E1 license per MO with dedicated email address that includes enterprise-level, web-based apps like Excel and Outlook integrated with cloud services like OneDrive and Teams;
 - c. Access to MO Canva Pro account for design work;
 - d. Usage of CHARIS' Zoom Pro account that can hold meetings for up to 30 hours and 100 attendees;
 - e. Access to non-profit discounts for selected software.
4. Loan of Hardware:
 - a. Portable video camera for capturing events or missions;
 - b. Laptop or desktop.
5. Usage of CHARIS office address as a mailing address for official correspondence.
6. Booking of facilities on behalf of MO in any Archdiocesan building (e.g. Catholic Centre, Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre, Agape Village).

7. CHARIS can also provide publicity support for MOs on its website, social media, and MakeHopeHappen digital engagement platform for:
 - a. Posting and updating of MO Profile;
 - b. Posting activities and events;
 - c. Posting of volunteer sign-up opportunities;
 - d. Posting of fund-raising campaign.
8. CHARIS regularly organises the following networking and capacity building activities for MOs
 - a. MO Connect – regular networking and update sessions about activities, new projects, regulatory updates, etc.;
 - b. MO-Volunteer Connect – opportunities for MOs to showcase their work overseas to CHARIS' pool of volunteers for recruitment or other support;
 - c. MO-Board Connect – leadership meetings on strategic issues and strategy planning;
 - d. Formation – Spiritual retreats, workshops, seminars;
 - e. Training – covering both hard-skills like first aid or construction and soft-skills like photography and journalism;
 - f. Networking sessions and yearly appreciation lunch;
 - g. Biennial Humanitarian Forum & Fair.
9. CHARIS also can connect MO to relevant experts to provide the following mission trip advisory:
 - a. Risk Report;
 - b. Accommodation;
 - c. Airfares;
 - d. Local Contact;
 - e. Health Advisory eg. Vaccinations;
 - f. Local Government Regulations.

What CHARIS expects from MO

1. MOs can and should work with CHARIS to provide information and updates to Catholics in Singapore about the humanitarian work that they do. This not only will allow CHARIS to support MOs more, it will also bring about more awareness and understanding about the needs around the region.
2. Information that MOs are encouraged to regularly provide to CHARIS include:
 - a. Regular quarterly update;

- b. Seminars and other events organised by MOs;
 - c. Organisational information including personnel change updates.
3. MOs should participate in CHARIS activities including MO Connects, MO-Volunteer Connects, retreats and workshops, MO Board Connect, bi-annual Humanitarian Forum and Fair (HFF).
4. MOs may be asked to provide photos, videos, and content that may be featured in CHARIS' social media, website, annual report or any other media.
5. MOs are required to seek CHARIS consent to use our logo for any publicity materials locally or overseas.
6. MOs are expected to abide by the following guidelines set out by Caritas Internationalis (CI):
 - a. Caritas Internationalis (CI) Code of Ethics & Conduct
 - b. CI Children & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy
 - c. CI Anti-Harassment Policy
 - d. CI Feedback and Complaints Handling Mechanism (FCHM) Guidance

Specifically, MOs shall have in place mechanisms for internal and external stakeholders to provide feedback and complaints, and also documented process and procedure to handle any complaints. Alternatively, MO agrees to make known to its volunteers and beneficiaries and adopt CHARIS' Whistle Blowing Policy and procedures as outlines on CHARIS website: <https://charis-singapore.org/whistleblowing-policy/>
 - e. Caritas Partnership Guiding Principles
7. MOs are expected to comply with the laws and regulations of Singapore, and further abide by the operating procedures and guidelines stipulated by CHARIS at any time; in particular, safeguarding personal data in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act, procedures and guidelines relating to fundraising activities and the remittance of funds to overseas beneficiaries, including taking best efforts to combat money-laundering and terrorism financing, and (where necessary) the signing of the Agency Agreement (or any other document prepared by CHARIS).

Termination of Membership

1. An MO's membership may be terminated when CHARIS is of the view that it has not been actively participating in CHARIS organised activities (e.g., HFF, Chillout-hour, retreats or workshops) or providing a response to CHARIS' correspondence as to its activities, membership and other related matters.
2. MO membership may also be terminated if CHARIS has been instructed by the Archbishop's Office, the Chancery, or any committee or individual which the Archbishop of Singapore has delegated this authority to.
3. CHARIS will give the MO at least three (3) months' notice before it decides to terminate the MO's membership with CHARIS.

4. The MO may apply for re-instatement as a member and that re-instatement is at the sole discretion of CHARIS.
5. The MO may also be deemed to have terminated its membership with CHARIS when it disbands or ceases to exist in accordance with its own constitution.
6. The MO can also terminate its membership with CHARIS by giving at least three (3) months' notice to CHARIS, stating the reason it wishes to terminate its membership.
7. In the event that an MO's membership is terminated, it must account for any funds raised through CHARIS and funds disbursed. This shall include providing CHARIS with documents, photographs, receipts and invoices where relevant and necessary in order to provide CHARIS with a clear account of the funds raised and/or disbursed. In the event there may be excess funds remaining with CHARIS, the MO shall provide CHARIS with written instructions on where the monies should be transferred, and the MO shall be solely responsible for ensuring that the usage of any donation monies must be utilized or returned in accordance with prevailing regulations and laws of Singapore.

Other Information

Email for enquiries:	ryan.awyong@charis-singapore.org
Telephone:	+65 6337 4119
Office and office hours:	CHARIS Caritas Humanitarian Aid and Relief Initiatives, Singapore 55 Waterloo Street #07-02, Catholic Centre Singapore 187954 Office Opening Hours: Monday – Friday (9am-6pm)
Social Media:	Website - charis-singapore.org Facebook - @CHARISingapore Instagram - @charis_singapore Telegram - t.me/CharisSG
More resources:	https://charis-singapore.org/resources/

Entity Status

The Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives (Singapore) Ltd is a Company Limited by Guarantee with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) UEN: 201715440W and a registered charity.