Strengthening Safeguarding Culture, Systems, and Practices:

The case of Catholic Sisters in the Legal Profession (CASILEP)

CASILEP
KENYA REGISTERED TRUSTEES

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What is CASILEP?

A network of Catholic sisters who are trained either as canon or civil law and already in practice

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Why Fund Safeguarding?

Hilton Foundation foresees a world in which improving the human condition is a shared and sustainable goal.

Love one another, for that, is the whole law."
The peoples of the world "deserve to be loved and encouraged—never to be abandoned to wander alone in poverty and darkness – *Conrad N. Hilton*

Building and Strengthening A Culture of Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to measures and interventions that protect people from abuse, harm, exploitation, or violence.

Creating and fostering safe conditions and raising awareness to promote abuse prevention, a safe environment, or abuse risk management.

Building *Networks* that work to enhance safeguarding practices with formation houses, congregations, sister ministries, and communities.

Support the creation of the Grievances Redressal Initiative as a mechanism for reporting, investigation, and support for survivors.

Catholic Sisters Initiative (CSI) Safeguarding Initiative: Grounded in Catholic Social Teachings

1

The Dignity of the Human Person

A healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected, the dignity of each person is respected and responsibilities are met.

2

Preferential Option for the Poor

A basic moral ethic is how the most vulnerable members are fairing, cared for, and supported in our communities. Prioritizing the needs of poor and vulnerable people first.

3

Solidarity

We are one human family regardless of our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.

"Love one another, for that is the whole law; so our fellow men deserve to be loved and encouraged – never to be abandoned to wander alone in poverty and darkness." - Conrad N. Hilton

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CSI Grantee Letter on Safeguarding

Safeguarding policies and protocols:

Grantee confirms the existence of, or intention to **create and implement, Safeguarding policies and protocols that promote and foster the safety of children and vulnerable adults** who may interact with Grantee's employees and volunteers.

Specifically, by the end of the grant period, the Foundation will **request confirmation of whether and to what extent Grantee has**:

- Clear written definitions of appropriate and inappropriate interactions or boundaries between employees/volunteers and children/vulnerable adults.
- Comprehensive employee and volunteer screening practices that specifically assess for abuse risk.
- Clear written procedures for individuals to report inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse, as well as support for mandated reporting requirements as required by Grantee's local jurisdiction.
- Regularly scheduled training for employees/volunteers on how to prevent and report inappropriate behaviors and suspected abuse.

Pillars of Our Safeguarding Work

- Promoting Awareness
- Safeguarding Policies Design and Implementation
- Training on Safeguarding
- Reporting Mechanisms
- Addressing Culture of Silence
- Accompanying Survivors
- Increased protections for the most vulnerable people
- Using accessible language

Pillars of Our Safeguarding Work

1	**Promoting Awareness**	Focuses on promoting awareness among sister organizations, volunteers, board members, staff, and program participants.
2	**Safeguarding Policies Design and Implementation**	Developing a written policy and communicating clearly the behavior expectations for all individuals serving
3	**Training on Safeguarding**	Integrate Safeguarding training requirements in the formation programs, congregation-wide, formation houses and ministries
4	**Reporting Mechanisms**	Creating Grievances Redressal Initiative (GRI), to promote reporting without stigmatization, publicizing clear and safe pathways for individuals to raise concerns and make reports, internally and externally.
5	**Addressing Culture of Silence**	promoting normalization of questions and dialogue about individual and organizational safety. Breaking the culture of silence
6	**Accompanying Survivors**	Supporting and accompanying survivors on the path to healing. Assuring justice for victims and survivors. Communicating and promoting zero tolerance.
7	**Increased Protections for the Most Vulnerable People**	Ministries/institutions/ with strong protocols and educated personnel signal to clients and the general public that safety is a priority.
8	**Using Accessible Language**	Use common or catchment language for ease in understanding

CASILEP Practical Grassroot Work

Survivor Support (accompanying survivors)

Justice (reporting mechanism and addressing the culture of silence)

Governance (safeguarding policies design and implementation)

Survivor Support

- People who are still vulnerable as a result of their experience
- Recently dismissed sisters
- Junior sisters
- Sisters in formation

Case of Sr. Susana

Her story brings about various the vulnerabilities of ex-religious.

- Who should hold their hands until they walk again especially where there families cannot?
- How can we be instruments of their safeguard without compromising the congregations' rules and constitutions?

KEY TAKEHOME SAFEGUARDING EXTENDS BEYOND DISMISSAL AND DEPARTURE

Justice

For Sisters facing difficulties with their congregations, CASILEP provides:

- negotiation and mediation to facilitate resolution of disputes between members and congregation
- cases include situations where members refuse appointments or other directives of the superior-
- the sisters' lawyers provide an avenue for the sister to be heard by listening .
- The vulnerability of sisters arises out of many situations

Story of Sr. Mercy

In this case the vulnerability that need safeguarding is age. How are aged religious treated, are they seen as productive? How can their decisions and initiatives be respected to make them feel safe after long service in the congregation

Justice

The story of Sr Caro-The need for an established grievance redress mechanism

- What happens to Sisters facing labor abuse?.
- Where they work should their contracts be governed by the ordinary law of the country?
- Whenever there is a dispute between the employer and the employee should there be special policies governing the religious in a cosmopolitan work environment?
- Both the congregation and the Sister need to be safeguarded while dealing with this situation.

Governance

What does safeguarding has to do with governance?

- The answer to this question is policy: this has already been outlined in slide 6
- Developing a written policy and communicating clearly the behavior expectations for all individuals serving
- Having standard operating procedures for administrators.
- Creating escalation mechanism - at what point should the matter move to external law enforcer?
- Review of constitution and rules to include contemporary issues such as employment contract for sisters, Child protection etc.
- Review of governance documents, contracts, MOUs to ensure contains language that protects all parties.

Education for Superiors (awareness raising)

- CASILEP train leader at the grassroot level on emerging legal issues (civil and canon law
- CASILEP empowers the sisters lawyers to become a source of information to the superiors at the grassroot levels.
- Help superiors review proposed decisions before making them.
- Assist in achieving win/win situations- we play an impartial role to enable everyone reach us, the members of congregations and the leaders
- We work with the established organisations such as the dioceses and Religious conferences to achieve this objective.

Other Beneficiaries

- ✓ Women and vulnerable persons struggling with economic, emotional, psychological , sexual and physical abuse.
- ✓ Persons working with church institutions – Reviewing the terms and conditions of work.