

Code of Conduct PR

1. Purpose and Role of Public Relations at CADUS

The public relations work of CADUS aims to inform, raise awareness, and motivate support for our work without relying on simplistic narratives or disempowering portrayals. Our goal is not only to report on humanitarian missions, but also to highlight their broader social and political contexts.

We know that not every publication inspires people to actively shape social processes. Still, we see our communication as an invitation to think critically, act in solidarity, and support a different kind of humanitarian work.

2. Commitments

Our public relations strive to report clearly and transparently about our missions, to name structural causes where possible, to avoid portraying people as passive victims, and to encourage others to take responsibility within their own means – whether through donations, sharing, critique, or engagement.

In short: we aim to inform, not persuade, and to take a stance without moralizing.

2.1 Commitment to CADUS's Mission and Goals

Our public relations are aligned with CADUS's core objectives. This includes providing medical support and technical infrastructure to people in crisis zones – especially in places with limited access.

We also aim to share knowledge, learn from each other, and build strong networks, particularly with those directly affected. Our communication should support these goals and clearly show what we stand for and why our work matters.

2.1.1 Content must reflect the core of our work

Communication should show where and how CADUS provides support. This includes medical care in hard-to-reach areas, climate emergency response, technical solutions like water filters, the Makerspace, and rescue systems.

2.1.2 Make technical and medical knowledge accessible

Since knowledge-sharing is a key goal, public communication must explain why we use specific approaches and what they achieve.

2.1.3 Highlight networks and emphasize partnership

If building networks is a goal, our communication should reflect that we do not work alone. This supports credibility and challenges "white savior" narratives.

2.1.4 Stand for values, not just promotion

Public relations are not just about fundraising. They convey our values. CADUS does not operate from a position of neutrality but from a values-driven and solidarity-based stance.

2.1.5 Link programmatic work with storytelling

Public communication should not only show results ("We helped X people") but also share the journey and the challenges along the way.

2.2 Commitment to Human Dignity

In CADUS's public communication, all individuals are portrayed as active and self-determined – not as helpless victims. This applies to everything we say, write, show, or post. This principle is central to avoiding traditional charity mechanisms. It demands ethical and creatively conscious work: content must be accurate, protective, and participatory.

2.2.1 Represent people as equals

Public communication respects human dignity. It assumes that people everywhere are agents of their own actions, not mere recipients of aid. This should be evident in words, images, and sound. At the same time, we acknowledge the power imbalance between the organization and crisis-affected people and act responsibly and sensitively.

2.2.2 Review visuals and texts before publication

Before publishing, we ask: does this representation strengthen or diminish the dignity of the person or group depicted?

2.2.3 Avoid "pity communication"

We do not appeal to guilt, sadness, or voyeurism. Instead, we promote solidarity, responsibility, and agency.

2.2.4 Use language consciously

It must be clear that people are not passively "rescued" but are part of the solution themselves.

2.3 Commitment to Openness and Truthfulness

CADUS's public relations work is committed to truth, accuracy, and transparency in our values, motivations, and actions.

We clearly state what we stand for and why we act the way we do. We do not claim to have the only right approach. Instead, we show that there are multiple ways to help and that our own work has limitations.

This requires integrity in communication. CADUS commits to reflective, multi-voiced, and transparent public relations. This may be more challenging but is more credible and key to distinguishing us from other organizations.

Our communication focuses not just on symptoms but on structural contexts. This reflects CADUS's commitment to long-term, politically aware, and effective solidarity work.

2.4 Commitment to Respect

Public relations should encourage perspective-taking and self-reflection. This is rooted in respect for other viewpoints, as long as they do not violate human dignity.

2.5 Commitment to Constructive Change

Public relations do not stop at showing individual hardship or generalized suffering. They also explain the causes and consequences of crises and show pathways to constructive change. Context is always included, especially when using imagery. Communication must reflect whether our actions align with the objectives set out in CADUS's statutes.

2.5.1 No portrayal of suffering without context

Showing suffering alone is not sufficient and can be harmful. We always provide factual context.

2.5.2 Address root causes and power dynamics

Public relations should not depoliticize but expose political and social structures – without aligning with political parties.

2.5.3 Show hope and agency

Solidarity grows through empowerment, not resignation. Our communication should highlight solutions, options for action, and resistance.

2.6 Commitment to Partnership

Public relations at CADUS are rooted in the principle of partnership. We recognize people's ability to shape their own lives. Our communication seeks open dialogue with diverse global communities, embraces self-reflection, and promotes mutual learning.

We make it clear: people in crisis zones can act and take responsibility. We meet them as equals and seek to learn from as many people as possible.

2.6.1 Show affected people as capable partners

Rather than portraying people as mere “recipients of aid,” we emphasize their self-determination, skills, and agency.

2.6.2 Treat communication as dialogue

Partnership is reciprocal. This applies to public communication as well.

2.6.3 Learn instead of preach

CADUS does not position itself above others. We show that we too are learning – especially in unfamiliar or complex contexts.

2.6.4 Acknowledge diversity in communities and audiences

Partnership also means not reproducing stereotypes but representing diverse perspectives.

2.7 Commitment to Integrity and Anti-Discriminatory Communication

We commit to non-manipulative, respectful, and discrimination-sensitive communication. Our goal is not to overwhelm or patronize, but to create space for informed, supportive engagement. We want to have an impact, but not at any cost.

We aim to foster mutual understanding – on equal terms, without arrogance, and with respect for the varied realities people live in.

2.7.1 Avoid manipulative strategies

CADUS rejects emotional manipulation, exaggeration, or misleading depictions. Our communication seeks to inform, not manipulate.

2.7.2 Anti-discrimination as a minimum standard

Our language, images, and sound must never exclude or degrade anyone, intentionally or unintentionally.

2.7.3 Encourage reflection instead of persuasion

We do not try to convert people to a fixed position. Instead, we support them in developing their own informed perspectives.

2.7.4 Maintain respectful tone and context awareness

CADUS communicates without moral superiority. Instead of saying “we know best,” we share our perspective while acknowledging that it is not the only one.

2.8 Commitment to Gender Diversity and Anti-Racism

Our communication actively challenges heteronormativity and avoids reinforcing it. We stand in solidarity with LGBTQIA+ people and make sure their realities are fairly represented in words and images, without stereotypes.

We actively counter racism and any portrayal of ourselves as “white saviors.”

Our communication is anti-discriminatory, decolonial, and queer-sensitive. We are committed to not reproducing power imbalances but to challenging them.

2.9 Commitment to Fairness Toward Other Organizations

Our communication makes clear what CADUS stands for, including in comparison to other organizations. When drawing distinctions, we do so respectfully and factually.

2.9.1 Clear identity

CADUS should be recognizable and distinct through its communication – by clearly stating positions and naming differences, without trying to stand out at all costs.

2.9.2 No disparagement

Distinction must not lead to polarization or disrespect. Criticism should be factual and support constructive dialogue.

2.9.3 Respectful tone toward colleagues in the sector

Even if CADUS takes a different approach, the humanitarian sector is vast, complex, and challenging. Respect for others remains a core principle.

2.9.4 Fair competition for attention and resources

While we operate in a competitive funding and communication landscape, our public relations remain values-driven and rooted in solidarity.

2.10 Commitment to Transparency and Responsible Use of Funds

We handle all donations with care and honesty, regardless of whether they come from individuals, companies, or institutions. It must always be clear where the funds come from and how we use them.

2.11 Commitment to Fair and Transparent Fundraising Communication

Our fundraising aims to inspire donations through fair and respectful messaging. We appeal to solidarity, not pressure or manipulation.

Emotional, but never manipulative. Committed, but never intrusive.

In a field where many organizations rely on emotional pressure, this is a conscious and distinctive decision, and an essential part of our solidarity-based communication – even if it means raising funds more slowly or less effectively.

2.11.1 Fundraising with integrity

CADUS wants to raise funds effectively, but not at the expense of the dignity of supporters or affected communities.

2.11.2 Treat donors with respect

Donors are not just financial contributors, but part of a solidarity network. Their intelligence and integrity must be taken seriously.

2.12 Commitment to Data Protection

CADUS e.V. complies with data protection laws. Beyond legal requirements, we will never rent or sell donor or member data for commercial purposes.

If data is ever shared with third parties, we require them to commit to the same data protection standards.

2.13 Commitment to Common Standards

Our public relations follow journalistic and ethical standards. We are guided by recognized

rules, such as the International Code of Athens and the German Press Code. This means: report fairly, carefully, and responsibly.

2.13.1 Journalistic standards also apply to NGOs

Although CADUS is not a media organization, our publications follow the same rules as serious journalism: fact-checking, transparency, fairness.

2.13.2 Orientation toward the Press Code

The German Press Code offers specific guidance on ethical reporting, especially concerning personal rights, discrimination, and truthfulness. No identifying reporting on individuals without consent. No degrading language or implicit prejudgment. Clear distinction between opinion and information

2.13.3 The Code of Athens as an international benchmark

The Code of Athens (1954) calls for truthfulness, respect for human dignity, and avoidance of misinformation.

The same standards apply to English-language content and beyond. No “double communication” for internal vs. external audiences. No sensationalism, even in international contexts

2.14 Commitment to Professionalism

CADUS e.V. ensures professionalism in public communication through quality assurance and training measures for all team members involved.

3. Binding Nature

This Code of Conduct has been established by CADUS e.V. It is binding for all staff and volunteers and offers a transparent and accountable standard for openness, partnership, and credibility.

4. Addressing Violations

Potential violations of the Code of Conduct are reviewed by the responsible department at CADUS e.V. upon request. This department is responsible for clarifying the matter, mediating between parties, and determining appropriate measures to minimize harm if necessary.