



Fondazione  
Riccardo Catella

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# Child Protection Policy

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## FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

### Opening Letter

Dear readers,

We're pleased to present Fondazione Riccardo Catella's Child Protection Policy. This policy reflects our commitment to safeguarding all children involved in our programs.

For over 18 years, the Foundation has worked to promote a culture of sustainability, dedicating tangible projects to citizens, especially the younger generations. In doing so, we must recognize the risks children can face and take responsibility to protect them. Fondazione Riccardo Catella strongly condemns all forms of violence against children, as we believe the wellbeing of children should be paramount and everyone has a responsibility to promote and protect it.

We hence decided to review and update our safeguarding provisions concerning children, to comply with international standards and best practices.

Adopting a Child Protection Policy is the first step in a process to minimize these risks. This is not the end goal. Indeed, it is a further step in creating an organizational culture that states and demonstrates, with strength and consistency, that no form of violence against children is tolerated. We are committed to promoting our Child Protection Policy widely, not only internally but also with partner organizations representing the children we work with. Together we can build a world where all children are safe, protected, and empowered.

Sincerely,

Fondazione Riccardo Catella

## About Fondazione Riccardo Catella & BAM - Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano

Fondazione Riccardo Catella is a nonprofit organization active since 2005 with the mission of spreading a culture of sustainability in land development and improving the quality of urban life, enhancing public spaces and green areas.

Over the last 18 years, the Foundation has developed a series of civic-cultural and research programs dedicated to environmental sustainability, social inclusion and the regeneration of public spaces, born through listening to the neighbourhood communities.

Promoted since 2012, with the aim of encouraging the younger generations to adopt a proper, healthy diet, through the experience of educational vegetable gardens in public schools' courtyards, MiColtivo, Orto a Scuola also provides a requalification of these public green spaces.

In 2019, Fondazione Riccardo Catella signed a public-private partnership with the Municipality of Milan and COIMA for the management of the Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano park. As part of this partnership, Fondazione Riccardo Catella created the BAM - Biblioteca degli Alberi project to handle the park's maintenance, security, and cultural programming. BAM's mission is to create a caring, safe and lively public green space in Milan. Its vision is to provide an inclusive park that engages the local community in caring for the environment and sustainability.



## ABOUT THIS POLICY

### Our Commitments to Children

The overarching goal of this policy is to create environments where children are valued, protected and safe. We will take all necessary steps to prevent our programs from having any negative impacts on children and will have zero tolerance for any violations of this policy. Any and all concerns and complaints about violence against children will be taken with utmost seriousness and thoroughly investigated. We commit to giving equal priority to keeping all children safe, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor.

Fondazione Riccardo Catella pledges to allocate the resources required to effectively implement this policy, including appointing trusted individuals at all levels of the organization. We will continue to establish safe and transparent communication channels, guaranteeing all stakeholders the right to be heard. We recognize that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. We are committed to upholding all children's rights to non-discrimination, survival, development, and participation and we will work to promote safe, inclusive and non-violent environments for all children.

### Principles Underpinning Safeguarding Policy

This policy is rooted in Italian law, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and child protection standards laid out by the coalition Keeping Children Safe.

Through this policy and our programs, we aim to contribute to SDG targets:



SDG 4.5 - By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;



SDG 16.2 - End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

We prioritize marginalized children at risk of being left behind, to uphold the principle of "leave no one behind" in the SDGs.

## Glossary

**CHILD:** any human being below the age of 18 years.

**CHILD ABUSE:** any intended, unintentional or withholding action, along with any effect resulting from such action or inactivity, which violates children's safety, well-being, dignity and development and/or prevents them from thriving. It encompasses all forms of physical and psychological harm, united by an abuse of responsibility or power and betrayal of the child's trust. It could be perpetrated by parents, guardians, other adults, adolescents or children.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** all behaviours that impair the child's emotional, cognitive and relational development, as well as their self-esteem. It may convey that children are unloved, worthless, inadequate or valued only in meeting another's needs. It can also impose age or developmentally inappropriate expectations as well as any form of rejection. Some examples are: humiliating, criticizing and ridiculing; imposing restrictions on movements; creating an intimidating environment; exposing them to abuse from others; blaming, threatening, frightening or discriminating them.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** the intentional use of force against a child that results in, or risks, physical harm as the result of action or inaction by an adult or peer. It includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, poisoning, unnecessary medicating, suffocating or otherwise physical injuries. It can be an isolated case or a repeated pattern of violence

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or gives consent. Physical contact is not required for abuse to occur: exposing a child to pornography, and encouraging sexualized behaviour, are also forms of abuse that might be perpetrated both by adults and peers.

**NEGLECT:** the failure of a caregiver to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, developmental, and psychological needs, resulting in impaired growth and well-being. It includes inadequate provision of food, clothing, medical care, education, shelter, affection, and protection from harm.

**STAFF:** The term staff refers to anyone who works for or on behalf of Fondazione Riccardo Catella on a full-time or part-time basis. As such it includes employed staff, interns, consultants, and members of the Board.

**PARTNERS:** Those who have a contract with Fondazione Riccardo Catella, such as our suppliers. Those where the relationship is less formal or built upon mutual work and interests, such as a network or coalition, rather than a formal contract.



## FIELDS OF APPLICATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Description of activities and related risks

This policy applies to all activities, events and projects promoted by Fondazione Riccardo Catella, which engage children. For each of them, potential risks have been identified and mitigation actions defined to prevent them and ensure child-safe environments. Risk is scored as per the table found in paragraph Safe program design (pag. 13). Specifically:

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RISK FACTOR	RISK SIGNIFICANCE	MITIGATION ACTION IMPLEMENTED
BAM- Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano initiatives	Cultural events organized within the framework of the BAM - Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano project.	Non-controllable indirect participation	High	Ensure the presence of trained operators to survey the event area and easily identified if needed
		Insufficient resources to take responsibility for unaccompanied minors	High	Statement requiring a parent/guardian to accompany children when booking  Inclusion of the policy with mandatory acknowledgement during booking to ensure diffusion
		Unauthorized photos/videos	Medium	Mandatory use of consent forms (Annex E)
Education programs	Educational programs for primary and middle schools with hands-on collaborative activities in vegetable gardens and labs. Occur in schools with the teachers supervision	Lack of proper background checks or training for external experts interacting with children	Medium	Thorough screening and checks for all staff and external experts according to this policy
		Unauthorized photos/videos	Medium	Mandatory use of consent forms (Annex E)



## **List of stakeholders involved**

This policy applies to all Fondazione Riccardo Catella's staff and associates at all times. Specifically and not exhaustively:

- Members of the Board of Directors;
- Children and young people involved in any activity and project;
- Personnel employed under any kind of contract (managers, volunteers, interns, trainees and representatives);
- Personnel and representatives of partner organizations collaborating on projects that involve contact with children;
- Sponsors, donors, visitors, journalists, celebrities and anyone who comes into contact with Fondazione Riccardo Catella's projects;
- Families or foster families of children involved;
- Teachers, researchers, technicians and experts collaborating on programs;
- Consultants and suppliers working on behalf of Fondazione Riccardo Catella.

## **Allocation of duties**

Fondazione Riccardo Catella's Child Protection Officer is Piero Ciravolo , who can be contacted at [piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org](mailto:piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org).

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for:

- Overseeing proper implementation of the policy;
- Hearing any child-safeguarding concerns or reports, and taking action to address them;
- Recording all child safeguarding information and referring it, in case of necessity, to the Board of Directors, maintaining an incident tracker;
- Taking a lead role in raising awareness about the organization's child safeguarding measures;
- Supporting, supervising, and periodically training staff on the safeguarding policy;
- Supervise that staff ensure that stakeholders and communities in contact with children are informed of the policy;
- Participating in any investigation regarding an incident.



<b>ROLES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
All staff	Adhere to Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct and report concerns
Board of Directors, Top Management	Integrate child safeguarding measures into existing processes and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, program cycle management, performance management, procurement, partner agreements, etc.)
Human Resources, Child Protection Officer	Ensure all new employees receive a copy of the policy prior to – or at the time of – issuing an employment contract. A signed copy of Declaration Form (Annex B) must be placed in their personal file
Human Resources, Child Protection Officer	Ensure all employees receive child protection policy training
Human Resources, Child Protection Officer	Ensure all stakeholders in contact with children are provided with and have signed and returned the declaration form (Annex C)
Programme staff, Child Protection Officer	Ensure children and families are aware of the policy, know what behaviours they can expect from staff, associates and visitors and how to report concerns
Human Resources, Child Protection Officer	Provide appropriate care, support and protection to those reporting child safeguarding concerns or accused of child abuse and address any safety concerns and potential reprisals arising

## Code of conduct

### Rules for a safe, ethical and proper relationship between a stakeholder and a child

All Fondazione Riccardo Catella staff and associates are expected to observe the following standards of behaviour whenever they come into contact with children:

#### DO'S:

- Prioritize safeguarding and protection of children
- Treat everyone with respect and fairness without any form of discrimination, especially in front of children
- Report any suspected case of child abuse or concern about a child's safety/well-being
- Plan and organize activities to minimize risks for children
- Inform children of their right to report any worrying situation indicating the relevant communication channel
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact with children, including but not limited to, holding, caressing, hugging, kissing or similar
- Pay attention to language, gestures, and behaviour in the presence of children
- Empower children and adolescents - listen to them, respect their points of view, talk to them about their rights and help them participate in decisions concerning them
- Always respect professional boundaries during interactions with children
- Communicate, both directly and indirectly, verbally and non-verbally, using a respectful attitude, especially when interacting with children
- Preserve the autonomy of the children and promote their abilities and potential



## DON'T'S:

- Embarrass, humiliate, belittle or demean children or display any behaviour bearing signs of emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Spend prolonged time alone with a child in secluded areas where you cannot be observed continuously by others
- Offer preferential or exclusive treatment to a child, such as giving excessive gifts or any behaviour outside normal professional boundaries
- Use degrading or offensive language, gestures, comments, remarks or culturally inappropriate provocative behaviour towards children
- Invite a child to your place of residence, or the movies, restaurant, or elsewhere
- Transport a child alone in a vehicle unless a parent or guardian is present
- Represent children in a degrading manner
- Serve children alcohol, medications or other psychoactive substances
- Sleep in the same room as children during summer camps, trips
- Come into inappropriate physical contact with the child
- Engage in sexual relationships or sexual activities with anyone under 18 years old, regardless of whether or not they consent. Erroneous belief or mistake about age does not constitute a defence



## PROCEDURES

### a) Induction & training

Induction and training ensure that policy addressees understand and comply with this policy's requirements. All policy addressees sign this policy through declaration forms (Annex B and C) and receive induction explaining the necessity of safeguarding and protecting children. This includes obligations such as reporting policy concerns and using reporting channels, as well as implications for breaching policy provisions. Depending on their role, policy addressees can receive different learning supports like classroom training and webinars.. Staff with child safeguarding responsibilities get more in-depth training.

### b) Prevention

#### Staff recruitment and selection

Fondazione Riccardo Catella applies high recruitment standards across the organization, to ensure all candidates and staff with direct or indirect child contact are screened for suitability to work with children.

#### Ensuring partners', contractors and volunteers' compliance

Partners and suppliers are all policy addressees. To ensure child-safeguarding among addressees, Fondazione Riccardo Catella takes the following actions:

- Fondazione Riccardo Catella assesses partners' child-safeguarding measures.
- Not following the child-safeguarding policy can end partnerships.



**Safe program design**

Fondazione Riccardo Catella is committed to delivering programmes that are safe for children. Thus, child safeguarding is considered at every stage of the programme and project design. Safeguarding is not a separate activity but a theme running through all Fondazione Riccardo Catella's work.

Key actions for Fondazione Riccardo Catella's child-safe programming:

- A risk assessment must be undertaken to identify any potential dangers and a plan put in place to minimise these risks. Risk is scored as per the following table:

LOW RISK	No contact with children	N/A
MEDIUM RISK	Contact with children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical contact</li> <li>• Face-to-face contact</li> <li>• Oral communication</li> <li>• Written communication</li> <li>• Electronic communication</li> </ul>	E.g. visiting locations like schools; community consultations (data collection, surveys, training) involving child participation
HIGH RISK	Working with children: being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of it	E.g. disability service; child education services; children in sports; counselling and support services for children

- Fondazione Riccardo Catella staff and volunteers working with children are regularly supervised and can discuss safeguarding issues

### **Safeguarding and media (data and image use)**

Children's images are overwhelmingly used and abused in traditional and social media, often stereotyped. Fondazione Riccardo Catella's communication strategies, including fundraising, follow ethical principles of respectful communication. Children and youth in vulnerable groups and their issues are presented as dignified individuals. Fondazione Riccardo Catella commits to:

- 1) Get permission before collecting images or interviews (Annex E).
- 2) Supervise media visitors and guide appropriate conduct when interviewing children.
- 3) Portray children as valuable individuals, not objects. Pay special attention to vulnerable children.
- 4) Don't use information that could identify or endanger a child.
- 5) Avoid images of naked children or suggestive poses.
- 6) Never distort or manipulate the reality (e.g. through misleading post-production or cropping, or asking people to do things that are unusual to them).
- 7) Archive images/videos securely. Limit access to child information to those who need it for work.

### **c) Reporting and responding**

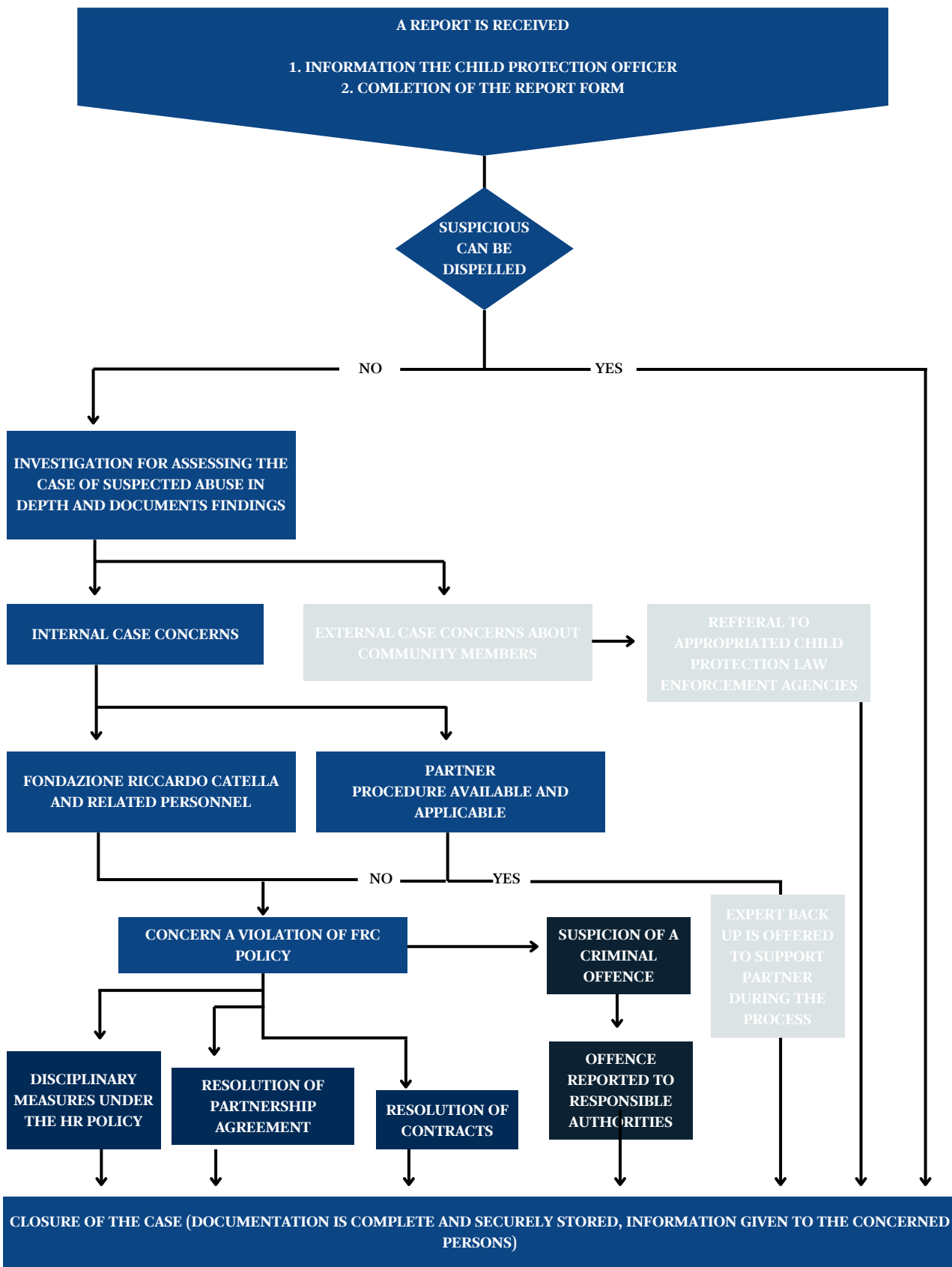
#### **Safeguarding reporting procedure**

Fondazione Riccardo Catella requires all staff to immediately report any suspected or actual child abuse or risks to children they become aware of in their work. Reports can be made confidentially without fear of retaliation by contacting Fondazione Riccardo Catella's Child Protection Officer at [piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org](mailto:piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org).

To facilitate anonymous reporting, Fondazione Riccardo Catella has implemented the following channels:

- The anonymous online form allows details of concerns to be submitted without personal identification and can be found at the following link: <https://www.fondazionericcardocatella.org/>
- Concerned individuals are encouraged to send anonymous letters/reports by post to Fondazione Riccardo Catella, via G. de Castillia, 28 - 20124 Milano, Italy.

All concerns are treated seriously and investigated promptly as per the following scheme:





Fondazione Riccardo Catella intervenes legally where a crime or threat to a child's welfare is suspected, in compliance with local regulations. The decision to intervene is made by a team not involving the suspected perpetrator and comprising the reporting staff member, relevant program coordinator. Informing law enforcement requires authorization from Managing Director or Board of Directors. Concurrent with any external intervention, Fondazione Riccardo Catella staff offer assistance and support to the affected child and non-offending caregivers. If a child's health or safety is in imminent danger, intervention is taken without delay. All activities are documented. If harm to a child occurs despite Fondazione Riccardo Catella's efforts, an analysis is conducted to draw learnings for improvement. Information is only shared strictly on a need-to-know basis to protect confidentiality.

### **Managing children's disclosures**

Children can directly report any concerns, abusive behaviour, or threatening situations to Fondazione Riccardo Catella staff who will take all such disclosures seriously and handle them sensitively to avoid further stress on the child. When a child discloses concerning information, Fondazione Riccardo Catella staff will:

- Listen without pushing the child to provide details, allowing the child to share information at their own pace.
- Seek support from internal or external experts specialized in providing psychological/psychosocial support to children, with gender considerations.
- Inform the child in a simple, transparent way about the procedures to be followed, the expected timelines for feedback and who the information will be shared with.
- Carefully document the child's disclosure in the incident report form (Annex A) without bias.
- Take immediate action if there is reasonable doubt that the situation poses a threat to the child's safety and security.
- Avoid repeated interviews with the child to prevent re-traumatization. Instead, identify one person with appropriate skills to collect complete information in a single interaction. They will then report to the Child Protection Officer.

#### **d) Monitoring and review**

On an annual basis, Fondazione Riccardo Catella performs a self-assessment to track safeguarding processes and identify areas for improvement. Based on this, a specific improvement plan is developed. By December, 31st each year, Fondazione Riccardo Catella's Child Protection Officer drafts an Annual Child Safeguarding Report for the Board of Directors, including:

- Details of child safeguarding cases managed in the past year.
- Training activities conducted and planned.
- Updates on checks and assessments done internally and with external bodies.
- Results of the self-assessment and improvement plan.
- Analysis of resources available to implement the improvement.



Version approved by Members of the Board on December 14th 2023. It is linked to more detailed child protection procedures found in Chapter 5, Procedures. This policy is subject to periodic review, at least once every five years - or sooner if some particular problem arises - by the Board of Directors. To implement and improve a possible new version feedback from staff, communities, stakeholders and, eventually also children, is highly encouraged. If you have any please write to [piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org](mailto:piero.ciravolo@fondazionericcardocatella.org)



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