



Diakonia Strategic Plan 2012 - 2014



diakonia

PEOPLE CHANGING THE WORLD

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Introduction: How we view the world

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When people come together and organise themselves towards a common goal – change can happen. In places where we have seen dictators fall and democracies rise there has been a pressure from below, strength impossible to ignore – people demanding their rights. Diakonia exists for these people.

This is the foundation of our work and it is also crucial for how we view the world. Social movements and social challenges bring about change. We need to remind ourselves of this strength when we face the challenges of today in form of an unstable world economy, climate change and new global power structures.

The global financial crisis that began in 2008 has had dramatic consequences worldwide and in particular for developing countries in the form of decline in private capital flows, trade and remittances. The crisis has generated calls for a fundamental reform of the global financial system. However, the actions put in place, mainly driven by rich countries and emerging economies, have failed to address the underlying social and economic imbalances. The climate negotiations have failed to make the necessary shift towards a low carbon economy and to secure sufficient financing for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. What we see now is how climate change strikes hardest at those who have contributed least to emissions of greenhouse gases – men, women and children living in poverty in developing countries.

We have also seen that despite the financial crisis many developing countries show positive growth figures, but this has often been “jobless growth” or economic development with high-income inequalities, which has not contributed to employment opportunities, or equitable development. Many countries are still trapped in “the resource curse” struggling to develop and refine their natural resources for their own benefit. Governance and accountability are weak at national level, which together with international barriers to development, for example unfair trade add to the challenges of developing countries.

During recent years there has been a shift in global power structures with an increasing role played by emerging economies. More actors, so called “emerging donors” as well as private sector stakeholders are engaging in development and aid processes. Old power structures are challenged and there is more diversity in development cooperation. Donors, including Sweden, have increased their direct engagement with private sector stakeholders who aim at using aid to leverage private finance and to tap into the expertise and resources of companies. A development that is interesting, but needs to be closely monitored.

Religion has, from a western perspective, become more and more visible as a factor for both development and conflict in recent years. Diakonia, being firmly rooted in the Christian tradition, but working with humans from many different faiths and worldviews, strives to find common ground and understanding. Faith is a reality in the development context – the question is not whether to acknowledge this but how. As a faith based organisation, Diakonia has an extra merit addressing people in a religious world.



Converging trends of financial crisis, higher prices on food and fuel, consequences of climate change and governments incapacity of finding solutions, pose a great risk that tensions turn into violent conflicts. At the same time there are some positive signs – people suffering from oppressive regimes have shown that it is possible to mobilise against injustice and create a lasting change. And higher rates of education and better access to information in developing countries have contributed to increasing demands for democracy and the fulfilment of human rights, including women's rights.

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Many of the issues that we have stated above and that our partners in developing countries work with are determined in the rich countries, which is why we work alongside partners doing advocacy work in Sweden and EU. We believe that sustainable development for poverty eradication must be based on the empowerment of people to demand what is rightfully theirs. We will continue to support the process of building democracy from below. We believe that civil society will have a key role to play in the next few years to ensure broad based democratic ownership of and participation in sustainable development processes, to promote human rights, gender equality, social and economic justice, climate justice as well as peace and reconciliation. There are many challenges, but we believe that change is possible. The following sections of the global strategy line out our focus and priorities for 2012-2014. We invite you to be one of the people changing the world.

Bo Forsberg
Secretary General



1 Who we are

Diakonia: a Christian development organisation

Diakonia is a Christian development organisation working together with local partners for a sustainable change for the most vulnerable people of the world.

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“Diakonia” is Greek and means ministering or serving. When first used in the Christian tradition the word described the work of the local congregation to secure a just distribution of commonly held resources.

The organisation was founded in 1966 as an ecumenical structure within the Swedish Free Church movement. Today, Diakonia is the development organisation of two denominations; the Swedish Alliance Mission and the newly formed church “Gemensam Framtid” - a merger of the Covenant Church of Sweden, the Baptist Union of Sweden and the United Methodist Church in Sweden.

There is an increasing awareness about the importance of faith as an aspect of development. Faith-based organisations like Diakonia possibly carry an added value in a world where most people carry a religious belief. We share a holistic worldview with people of many religions and may thus have access to arenas that are closed to secular actors. Many of Diakonias partner organisations are churches or Christian organisations, but our focus on empowering right holders and challenging duty bearers leads us to work with partners from many different religious backgrounds as well as secular ones.

Diakonia’s work can be roughly divided into three different elements:

- Cooperation with our partner organisations, and support for their long-term work on change
- Popular education, mobilisation and advocacy in Sweden and internationally
- Humanitarian emergency response together with partner organisations on site

Diakonia has its Head Office in Stockholm, Sweden, four Regional Offices in Africa (Nairobi), Asia (Chiang Mai), Latin America (Bogotá) and the Middle East (Jerusalem), and Country Offices in almost 30 countries around the world.

Vision, mission and goal

Diakonia vision is a world where all people live in dignified circumstances in a just and sustainable world, free from poverty. All people are part of God’s sacred creation and created in God’s image. Diakonia’s vision thus include all people irrespective of religion, gender, ethnicity, colour, sexual orientation, language, ideological or political beliefs, national or social origin, property, age, birth or any other status.

Diakonia’s mission is to seek Gods will and, based on our Christian values, to work for human liberation and restoration, and for the creation or reestablishment of fair and just social and economic structures.

Diakonia’s goal is to change unfair political, economic, social and cultural structures that generate poverty, oppression and violence.



Core Values

Diakonia has identified six core values to guide us as an organisation and as individuals within the organisation. These values are firmly rooted in the Christian tradition and our way of interpreting the Christian faith, but are not exclusive to Christianity. We believe that they guide us as we work together with people of many different faiths and worldviews. They make us open to all humans of good will.

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Freedom

Understood in terms of Christian belief, freedom means that no individual, group or power structure has the right to violate the human rights of another individual. Throughout creation humans were given the freedom to choose between good and evil, and to take responsibility for their choices. From this perspective Diakonia works for human rights. Each individual has the right to develop according to his or her own capacity without being limited by prejudice, gender inequality or stereotypical expectations of others.

Thus, we uphold, respect, promote and protect human rights by recognising and appreciating diversity and by treating people equally and equitably.

Solidarity

We have chosen to side with marginalised people, living in poverty, and work for their right to determine their own lives. All sustainable change takes place through the joined efforts and will of many individuals. The God of creation is also the God of history who chose selfless love to bring about change and who works in history through people, both individually and collectively. Our belief is that long-term work done in love and solidarity, with the vision of a just and dignified life for all, will in fact change the world.

Thus, we believe in using power with integrity and for empowerment. It is crucial to recognize that power relations, whether on a global or local scale, are structured around different hierarchic categories, such as gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, age and other factors. For Diakonia it is appropriate to consider power within our organization and in our relationships with partners. We promote and protect the right to participation and non-discrimination. We promote good leadership, team spirit and solidarity.

Responsibility

The Christian message points to both personal and shared responsibility. Each person is responsible for his or her own life, and for that of the community and the creation at large. Democracy is the form of governance which best expresses the fundamental ideals in the Bible regarding the equal worth, rights and obligations of all people. Therefore, it is our task to work for a deepening of democracy, both in the formal sense and in terms of a culture of democratic values that should permeate society at all levels.

Thus, we believe in the equal worth of every individual, we strive to practice and promote transparency, qualitative participation, inclusiveness, non-discrimination and accountability.

Righteousness

Underlying the Christian claim for social and economic justice is the belief in God's righteousness. Injustice awakens the anger and sorrow of God. All people should have a share in the world's resources and participate in its development, irrespective of economic and social status.

Thus, we strive to be fair, just and transparent in all our work.



Hope

In a world torn apart by conflict and injustice the contribution of Christian faith is the hope that a better world, the kingdom of God, is possible and will one day become a reality. Christian hope concerns not only life after death, but also the fulfilment of God's will today. Hope provides motivation and endurance in a chaotic world. It is a force already creating change.

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Thus, we inspire and support those working to change unequal and unfair structures.

Peace

Peace is used in the Bible to describe people's relationship with God, other people and creation. Peace involves safeguarding the life of each person, physically and mentally, and preserving creation. It is our task as Christians to strive for peace for all people on earth. This is the basis of our work with peace building.

Thus, we believe that peace is a pre-requisite for people to live dignified lives.

Guiding principles

Diakonia has two guiding principles for how we conduct our work that expresses our identity and core values:

- Diakonia's Strategy for Change – a formulation of how we see sustainable change happen through awareness, organisation and collective action. Our interpretation of Rights Based Approach.
- Good Donorship and Partnership – expresses our ambition to be a good, equal and long-term donor and partner.

What these two principles mean in practice is further developed in section 3.3.

2 Who we work with

Rights holders

Diakonia exists and works for people who are denied their human rights. It is fundamental to us that vulnerable people are not simply victims or survivors who have endured injustices, violence and discrimination – above all, they are individuals who have been denied their human rights. This is why we talk of "rights holders". Women make up a majority of those who live in poverty, who are oppressed and exposed to various forms of violence. As rights holders they are therefore a priority in Diakonia's work.

Partner organisations

Diakonia develops partnerships with likeminded organisations within civil society in various parts of the world and at different levels of society. Likeminded organisations are organisations sharing an understanding similar to Diakonia's of the structural causes of poverty in the world.

Diakonia cooperates with different kinds of partner organisations in different ways:

- With grass roots organisations and social movements through funding their long term development work, assisting in organisational capacity building, exchanges of experience, networking, joint campaigns, etc.
- With CSOs and networks of partner organisations through funding their long term development work, assisting in organisational capacity building, exchanges of experience, networking, joint campaigns, advocacy, etc.



- With faith based organisations through theological reflection, organisational capacity building, funding of their long term development work, exchanges of experience, networking, joint campaigns, advocacy, etc.
- With international networks through membership, funding of policy and advocacy work, exchanges of experience, joint campaigns, etc.

The scope of partner organisations ranges from organisations in the developing countries to organisations working in Sweden, in Europe and at the global level with international organisations.

Founding churches and Diakonia's youth groups

Diakonia has strong roots in the Swedish popular movement and the founding churches behind our organisation. In both our analytical and our practical work, we strive to cooperate and coordinate with the churches, their global networks and the ecumenical bodies to which they belong. We interact through theological reflection, exchanges of experience, dialogue, common advocacy work, etc., and members in these churches provide the crucial start-up capital for our work. The founding churches also conduct their own development work, often linked to sister churches in various parts of the world.

In Sweden we have a close relationship with many local congregations all over the country, as well as activists who are members of Diakonia's youth groups. Both congregations and the youth groups support and interact with Diakonia through fund raising, popular education, canvassing and other activities.

Networks and Alliances

Diakonia is a member of Action of Churches Together, the ACT Alliance. ACT is an alliance of more than 100 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance and development. Diakonia will prioritise cooperation within ACT during this strategic period, since it provides unique opportunities for division of labour and quality improvements. The European group in ACT Alliance consists of large, well-respected, likeminded agencies, with whom we have a long-standing relationship through APRODEV – the European protestant network for development advocacy. The membership in ACT Alliance strengthens our platform for long-term aid, advocacy and emergency preparedness at national, regional and global levels. We expect the membership to lead to both increased development and cost effectiveness.

Other networks that we are active members of include the European Network on Debt & Development (EURODAD) and the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD). The networks provide a platform for us to perform high-level advocacy activities, which are largely conducted from our office in Sweden. We aim at being pro-active, to set the agenda and to achieve results. This is best done in collaboration and coordination with others.

Duty bearers and others

Our work is also oriented towards privileged people and those in power, who are challenged and encouraged to act for a just world and for sustainable development. Some actors have greater judicial or moral responsibility and greater opportunity than others to work for a world where all people can live a dignified life. This is why we use the term "duty bearers". Diakonia and our partner's work includes interaction with:

- Duty bearers in the local context like heads of families, village elders, religious leaders, etc.

- Politicians and civil servants at local, regional and national level – both in developing countries and in Sweden.
- Decision-makers in and representatives of international and multilateral institutions and organisations.
- Journalists and opinion leaders (newspapers, internet, radio and TV).
- The general public in wealthy countries, Sweden in particular.
- Institutional donors that provide much of the needed financial resources for our operations, but also because of their political influence.

3 How we work

Working through partner organisations

The work of Diakonia is about changing unfair structures that are at the roots of poverty – it is not a matter of charity. A fundamental principle since our very beginning has been to always secure that all supported projects are guided by a strong sense of local ownership by rights holders and partners. Local organisations and networks that have the best opportunity to make change and that remain in place when, at a suitable time, Diakonia concludes its development work in an area. Our partners have a good cultural understanding of the context, something that is decisive for the design of a project. They are frequently also more specialised, giving them greater expert knowledge. Through a mutual learning process, both Diakonia and our partner organisations can develop and improve our work together. By supporting local organisations and networks, we also contribute to the strengthening of civil society.

Working in programmes

Diakonia's goal to change unfair structures is a huge task that requires many interventions at different levels over a period of time. Therefore we work with a long term approach, in programmes consisting of a number of complementary partners at different levels of society. This creates synergies between different partners and different levels. The context analysis, and available funding, determines the design of a programme.

How we choose partners

Diakonia's programmes are often composed of a mix of grassroots' organisations, social and popular movements, gender organisations, indigenous organisations, churches and ecumenical organisations, research institutes, networks and umbrella organisations, etc. possessing different, complementing thematic and/or methodological skills.

When establishing a relationship with a new partner, or when contracts are renewed, we assess if the potential partner organisation:

- Shares Diakonia's values as expressed in the policy.
- Sympathises with Diakonia's vision, general problem analysis and goal.
- Fits well with how Diakonia envisions the programme in the near future
- Is clearly oriented towards reaching outcomes and impact beyond the activities.
- Possesses administrative skills, or willingness to possess such skills, in order to fulfil Diakonia's requirements.
- Is willing to participate with other partners and networks that emerge or may emerge as a result of the partner group and Diakonia coming together.



- Have or is willing to adjust to formal and actual organisational structures characterised by transparency, accountability, participation, influence and non-discrimination.
- Fulfils or is willing to work in line with Diakonia's gender indicators during the programme period. This regards the organisation's internal structure and culture as well as the projects themselves.
- Where relevant, has an intercultural perspective and an inclusive view of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.
- In HIV and Aids affected regions, is willing to analyse the socioeconomic consequences of HIV and Aids for the rights holders and adjust the work accordingly.
- Has diversified funding and preferably not depend on Diakonia for more than 30% of its total budget (exceptions can be made if motivated).

Guiding principles

We believe that there are certain strategies that can make change happen. This is why all of our efforts are analysed in regards to our two guiding principles:

Strategy for Change – Diakonia's Rights Based Approach

On the basis of many years of experience, both in the regions and in Sweden, we have formulated a strategy of how we see change happen. The Strategy for Change is our way of putting the Rights Based Approach (RBA) into practice, and it also permits us to assess and describe the complex processes that we work with in a logical way.

The three components of the Strategy for Change are:

- Knowledge and awareness raising
- Organisation
- Collective action and advocacy work

Qualitative participation, non-discrimination, transparency and mutual accountability are key to the strategy. People who become aware of their rights and gain new knowledge can through organisation, collective action and advocacy directly influence their own situation as well as decision-making processes that influence their lives. But the components do not occur in a fixed order and they overlap each other, e.g. in some contexts organisation around income generating activities may come first, and serve as an entry point for right holders to become aware of their rights and to take further steps to collective action. The creativity and self-esteem that result from such empowerment processes lay the foundation for democracy and sustainable development.

Good Donorship and Partnership

Good Donorship is about creating equal and long-term relationships with our partner organisations, to empower the rights holders and jointly strive towards our vision.

As a donor, we endorse the following three commitments:

- Alignment and harmonisation based on each and every partner organisations' specific conditions
- Process oriented, priority to core funding
- Transparency and mutual accountability

The fulfilment of these commitments contributes to partner's development effectiveness. This is a broader concept that aid effectiveness, and includes work on

political, economic, social and cultural structures that hinders sustainable development.

Tougher competition for funds and stricter rules for civil society in many countries means that the space for civil society work is shrinking in many cases. Diakonia sees this as a worrying trend, since we see a well-functioning civil society as key for democracy and sustainable development. Given all this it will be even more important for us to, during this strategic period, implement and advocate for principles regarding ownership, enabling working environments, long-term commitment and harmonisation with partners organisations' strategic agendas.

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Diakonia, and other international NGOs within the Better Aid process, will challenge the discrepancy between the official discourse of back donors regarding the principles of the Paris Agenda and their practice on the ground, which has often been characterised by increasing requirements, short term financing, project focus, increasing control at detailed level and incapacity to harmonise among themselves. These demands have not always been perceived as reasonable by international and local CSOs and they seldom contribute to local ownership or are based on the partner organisations' planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, and are thus an obstacle for us to be a Good Donor and Partner.

Good Partnership means that our work strives to build strong and genuine partnerships. This has included shared values and problem analysis, horizontal relations, political dialogue, mutual confidence and respect, mutual learning and long-term commitment. We seek as far as possible to base our work on the analysis of our partners and the right holders, to improve the quality of our work.

Diakonia's added value

Diakonia's added value is defined in the principles of Good Donorship and Partnership, and is concretised through the different roles we play:

Accompanying partner

One of our most emphasised roles over the years is that of accompanying partner. To be a good partner in this we have always realised the need for local presence, long-term commitment and thematic knowledge. Change takes time and through our presence we learn, both from partners and others. Still, it has been a process to reach today's effective setup with competent Country Offices, with mostly local staff, committed to our core values and principles, but also to the country and peoples they work with. This attitude has made us an appreciated dialogue partner, a moral as well as political supporter, flexible and quick to decision when necessary in a transparent relationship with partners.

In contexts of violence and conflict our presence has also meant protection for partners and rights holders. In the general tendency during recent years of increased demands and means of control from many back donors we have to some extent been able to cushion some of these demands rather than pass them on to the increasingly strained partners. We believe that building these kinds of close relationships with partners is the best way to prevent corruption and embezzlement.

Capacity builder and conveyor of synergies

A strong civil society is key for democracy and sustainable development. By strengthening our partner's capacity, we give valuable contribution to this development which is often overlooked by donors supporting individual projects. To



be successful in the work with the rights holders, partners need a clear identity and vision, effective and democratic internal structures, thematic, methodological and administrative capacity, a developed gender and an intercultural perspective. Therefore we reserve funds for partners' capacity development, which is in line with the principles of aid and development effectiveness, and perform trainings and coaching that builds partner's capacity.

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Another important element is to compose the programs so they take partners' capacity development into account and maximise cross-fertilisations between partners. By facilitating synergies within the program, value is added. We are also trying to identify, together with partners, potential synergies between different countries, within a region as well as between regions. With our vast network of partners and alliances we are in a unique position to bring actors together for mutual learning and inspiration.

Resource mobiliser and grant manager

Resources are mobilised through donations and grants. Our start-up capital comes from fundraising in the congregations and contributions from private donors, such as our Change Sponsors. These initial funds are then used to enable us to apply for funding from various institutional donors. Systems are in place and constantly fine-tuned to effectively manage both small donations and larger grants. We are becoming more and more experienced in building alliances and consortia to absorb even larger volumes.

Resources mobilised are further transferred to our partners to fund their important work at local, national, regional and international level. Partners report back to us and we effectively monitor the use of funds through a well-established system for project cycle management and monitoring, including field visits and the use of independent, certified auditors. Sometimes resource mobilisation also takes place in closer cooperation with local partners, e.g. when a call for proposals fits the plans and priorities of a partner and where Diakonia, as a well-established international organisation, can play a complementary a role.

Donor coordinator

We strongly believe in and adhere to the principles generated by the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. The debate on aid and development effectiveness has served to reinforce the fundamental values in our organisation and has inspired us to promote them in the donor community. In practical terms it means to assure ownership by rights holders and partners in the projects, give priority to core funding and adaptation to partners systems and routines. It means to share analysis and coordinate actions towards partners, back donors, embassies, and others (see advocacy below). It means avoiding overlapping work, even share infrastructure and staff with like-minded organisations when relevant. Donor coordination is also used to link partners to other donors and a more diversified funding.

Awareness raiser and advocacy organisation in Sweden and Europe

Many challenges in developing countries are closely linked to global challenges, but also to values, life styles, policies, economies, consumption and production patterns in developed countries. Diakonia, as part of a popular movement and linked to various networks, is also a political actor in its own right on the Swedish and European arena.

By raising awareness, encouraging mobilisation and action among our constituency towards politicians and other duty bearers in Sweden and the EU, we complement



the work of the rights holders and our partner organisations in the regions. This work is often done with direct links to rights holders and partners, which allows for experience sharing and joint action as well as gives them opportunities to make their voices heard in arenas they might not have had access to before. We call this rooted advocacy. Partners' cooperation with us on a policy level also strengthens their capacity for important local policy work. Diakonia plays a role as a pro-active proposal maker and watch dog towards duty bearers in Sweden and the EU. During 2012-2014 our awareness and advocacy work will, depending on criteria outlined in the Swedish Programme, touch upon all of Diakonia's thematic priorities (see section 4.1-4.6) but will focus mainly on:

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- Improve responsibility and development effectiveness of flows to developing countries
- Reduce drainage of resources from developing countries and promote domestic resource mobilisation for development
- Promote peaceful conflict management
- International law
- Private actors in conflict
- Protect Human Rights Defenders
- Protect space for Civil Society
- Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

4 What we do

In our policy we have chosen to focus on five thematic areas:

- Human Rights
- Democracy
- Gender Equality
- Social and Economic Justice
- Peace and Reconciliation

All these themes are interdependent and overlapping, and it is thus not always relevant to label the work of a given partner as one or the other of these thematic areas – most of the work of our partners in fact relate to several of them.

Within these five themes we mainstream:

- a Rights Based Approach
- a Gender perspective
- an HIV and Aids perspective
- an Environmental perspective
- a Conflict perspective

Diakonia is also upgrading our organisational capacity to work with Humanitarian emergency response, in line with international standards and commitments.

The focus within each of these areas for the strategic period 2012-2014 is further elaborated below:

Human Rights

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasises the rights of individuals and in a clear and coherent manner defines what is meant by a dignified life. All these rights are universal, indivisible and of equal value. They are mutually dependent on one another and jointly necessary for every person to have the opportunity to live in dignity. Nevertheless, despite the increasing consciousness among rights holders and the existence of UN Conventions, regional HR-

frameworks and national legislation, Human Rights still need to be promoted and defended. During 2012-2014 we will work to:

Empowering Rights Holders to know about and claim their rights

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Through our previous work we have come to learn that one of the most effective ways of creating change is to empower rights holder to know about and claim their rights. People living in poverty have many times testified how their lives have changed when they learn about their inherent rights. This is why all programmes work with a Rights Based Approach (see 4.7.1. below), but different programmes focus on different rights, for example the right to truth, justice and reparation; the right to health; the right to education, the right to water, etc.

Protect Human Rights defenders

We work in countries with on-going or recently ended conflicts, with authoritarian regimes or very fragile formal democracies. In these situations HR defenders face threats, legal processes and some are even killed because of their work. Groups working with gender related issues such as the right of women and LGBT persons, gender based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights are often victims of violence and persecution. This is also the case of groups working with Economic, Social and Cultural Rights related to the exploitation of natural resources and land issues as they challenge powerful economic interests. Diakonia will continue to work to protect these Human Rights defenders, linking efforts to national and international advocacy work.

Legal processes and Shadow reports on Human Rights

When international conventions and national legislation are linked to rights holders' daily life they become powerful tools for the promotion of human rights. If national judicial systems are too weak or unwilling to fulfil their duties, then regional and international institutions are important complements. Despite the criticism against the UN Human Rights Council, in several of our partner organisations elaborate so called shadow reports and perform advocacy work at national and international level, which will be further developed in this strategic period.

Democracy

Democracy is the form of governance which best expresses the fundamental ideas in the Bible regarding the equal worth, rights and obligations of all people. It is therefore Diakonia's task to work for a deepening of democracy, both in the formal sense and in terms of a culture of democratic values that should permeate society at all levels. During 2012-2014 we will work to:

Promote qualitative participation of civil society in processes crucial for development

A truly just and sustainable development is only possible if the rights holders themselves have power over their own future. Thus, the active and qualitative participation of rights holders is a consistent theme in all projects supported by Diakonia.

We will continue to do the main part of our work at local level, where we support partners to enable people living in poverty – women and youth in particular- to organise, alter power relations and create qualitative participation in decision-making processes that are important for their own development. A common example is where rights holders, strengthened by partners' capacity building and awareness raising activities, successfully have negotiated with local authorities and have held them accountable through budget monitoring.



In issues like legislation, decentralisation, accountability and anti-corruption, the democracy work at local level is linked to that at national level. What is done at local level, for example results from budget monitoring, can be used as an input for advocacy work at national level in order to denounce corruption, influence national policies, elaborate law proposals for participation, etc.

Diakonia also works with similar processes to enable rights holders and partner organisation to bring their input to regional and international level. Qualitative participation by rights holders and civil society is key to tackle structural problems also at regional and international level that hinders a just and sustainable development.

Contribute to fair and transparent electoral processes

Elections, referendums and the development of new constitutions are crucial parts of democracy and a starting point to grow a culture of democratic values. During the strategic period 2012-2014 many of the countries where Diakonia is active will go through these processes, including countries where there is a high risk of tension and violence. We will support partners' work with civic education, monitoring of election, etc. to promote fair and transparent electoral processes.

Protect space for civil society

When governments are incapable or unwilling to protect or fulfil rights, listen to their citizen or put into practice mechanisms for dialogue and negotiation they may try to hinder and control civil society action. During 2010 the space given to Civil Society has been shrinking through different types of stricter legislation, burdensome administrative requirements or persecution of Civil Society Organisations in almost half of our country programs. Diakonia will monitor and work to reverse the trend of shrinking space for CSOs.

Ensure policy space for developing countries to promote their own development

All countries are responsible for their own development. But in our globalised world, developing countries' possibilities for development are often also strongly affected by the rules, regulations and policies of international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, or the activities of large multinational corporations. In practice, most developing countries have limited possibilities to influence decisions in these institutions and companies. Diakonia will, both through supporting partners and as an advocacy actor in our own right, continue to work to increase transparency and accountability of these international institutions and private actors, to promote policy space for developing countries.

Gender Equality

Diakonia works for gender equality through challenging unequal and patriarchal structures and attitudes. Our work on gender includes all people, irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity. During 2012-2014 we will work to:

Promote political and economic empowerment of women

Inflexible gender roles, patriarchal structures, and violence are often obstacles to women's political participation. Religious beliefs and traditions may also hinder women's participation in the governance of local decision making bodies or faith-based institution. Diakonia will therefore continue to work to challenge such structures and promote gender sensitive policies, in order to empower women and thus to contribute to the realisation of the full potential of society. Awareness raising,

education and support to women's organisations are some of the strategies that will be used.

Economic empowerment of women is also a key entry point for Diakonia. Sometimes economic empowerment, such as Income Generating Activities, is a necessary starting point to enable women to engage in the Strategy for Change. Women who have control over their own economy are also e.g. more likely to invest in health and education to the benefit of the whole family, and are also less likely to stay in abusive or violent relationships, so economic empowerment of women can contribute to many other development goals.

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Combatting Gender Based Violence

Violence against women by states, communities and the family is not decreasing, as gender based violence is still sanctioned by many societies and cultures. 90 per cent of all violence, be it domestic, sexual abuse, war crimes, socio-cultural harmful practices, etc. is committed by men. Thus when we speak of gender based violence the main issue is men's violence, the root cause of it being the unequal power relations between women and men.

Diakonia's main focus during this strategic period will be the protection of women's rights and physical and mental integrity, e.g. combatting female genital mutilation. This also entails challenging stereotyped gender roles and patterns of violent and destructive masculinities.

Promote involvement of men

Diakonia's work for gender equality primarily focuses on supporting women in their struggle against discrimination and oppression. At the same time, we realise that current gender power relations cannot be changed without the active participation of men. During the strategic period 2012-2014 we will put more emphasis of the involvement of men through partnership and networking with Men Engage-organisations.

A basic premise is that men gain awareness, take responsibility, actively involve themselves in and contribute to the struggle against unjust gender structures. Thus, Diakonia will encourage men to question current models of masculinity, to organise themselves as a group, and/or to participate actively in gender equality work together with women. Men's involvement is also a key element in the work to combat gender based violence and the HIV epidemic.

Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The power over women's bodies has been a cornerstone in the subordination of women, which is probably why Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are still very controversial in many countries. Despite numerous studies about the close connections between ban on abortions and maternal mortality, between the use of condoms and the spread of HIV, etc. it is often difficult to keep the discussions around these issues based on facts. Religion often plays an important role in these discussions, and religious knowledge and theological communication can sometimes be key to enable dialog and promote change. This is why it is important that a faith-based organisation like Diakonia works with SRHR issues. We will support partner's work to promote access to SRHR-services for all, and to do advocacy work to ensure SRHR rights.

Promoting the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution



In situations of armed conflict Diakonia emphasises the importance of the equal participation of women in all efforts to maintain or bring about peace and security, and the importance of increasing the role of women in all decision-making regarding conflict prevention and resolution.

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Although conflicts affect men, women, youth and children differently, all suffer during times of war. Most combatants are men and boys, most institutions involved are male-dominated, and definitions of masculinity and femininity are created and mobilised. Women and girls are often targeted in armed conflict, where sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war in many recent conflicts.

Two UN Security Resolutions 1325 and 1820 are instrumental to Diakonias work in this area:

- UNSCR 1325 (adopted 2000) stresses women's active roles as peace agents. The aim of the resolution is to increase women's participation on decision making levels in all activities that deal with conflict prevention, peace keeping, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction.
- UNSCR 1820 (adopted 2008) recognises rape and sexual violence as unacceptable weapons of war that "can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide".

Diakonia will prioritise capacity building of civil society organisations on the UNSCR 1325/1820, which is crucial in order to secure implementation and a sustainable rights-based process.

Social and Economic Justice

In a globalised world it is crucial to work at local, national, regional and global level in order to achieve social and economic justice, and a fairer distribution of resources in the world. During 2012-2014 Diakonia will work to:

Promote economic empowerment and access to social services

In some contexts economic empowerment is a necessary first step required to enable rights holders to be able to engage in the Strategy for Change. But to increase income for people living in poverty is not the end of the process. Rather, Diakonia uses Income Generating Activities, etc. as a means of getting people organised to be able to continue to do greater work to ensure their rights, get access to social services, to hold duty bearers accountable and tackle structural causes of poverty.

The UN estimates that approximately 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living on less than one dollar a day are women, and these figures are rising with current food, fuel and financial crises. Women are often denied the rights to access, own, control or inherit land and property, and are therefore particularly vulnerable to economic injustices. Lack of employment and economic resources are push factors for the feminisation of global migration, including human trafficking. Half of the world's migrants are now women looking for new ways of securing a livelihood for themselves and their families. This why Diakonia will put focus on women in our work to create economic empowerment. Youth and People Living with HIV and Aids are other groups that require special promotion.

Improve responsibility and development effectiveness of resource flows to developing countries

All developing countries are in great need of investments of various kinds that can promote development and poverty eradication. Some of these resource will come



from outside, and Diakonia will work to ensure that such flows, public as well as private, abide by the highest standards in terms of their human rights, social, economic and environmental impact. Diakonia and our partners will work at different levels with issues such as private sector trade and investments, loans and debt conditions, aid quantity and effectiveness, and finance for climate justice.

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Reduce drainage of resources from developing countries and promote domestic resource mobilisation for development

Ensuring enough resources for development is not only about attracting and obtaining resources from outside. Many developing countries are in fact rich, but often suffer from “the resource curse” where much of the wealth created from a country’s natural resources end up in foreign bank accounts belonging to elites or foreigners. Reducing the drainage of resources from developing countries and promoting domestic resource mobilisation is therefore a priority for Diakonia during this strategic period. Diakonia and our partners will work at different levels with issues such as budget monitoring, curbing capital flight and military spending, promoting tax justice and a fair resource distribution, and reducing illegitimate and unsustainable debt repayments. This work contributes to freeing domestic resources that can be used for poverty eradication and climate justice.

Peace and Reconciliation

Diakonia works to support the building of peaceful communities and societies where women and men are able to live a dignified life. Peace is more than the absence of war or organised violence. True peace means that all forms of violence are eradicated and social conflicts are solved by peaceful and constructive means. During 2012-2014 we will work to:

Promote peaceful conflict management

Diakonia works to strengthen our own and partner’s capacity to work with conflict situations in a way that contributes to peaceful conflict management and sustainable peace based on the fulfilment of people’s rights. We focus on structural factors conducive to peace: socio-economic foundations, political frameworks, justice systems, rule of law, human rights adherence, traditional mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution and the ability of democratic institutions to manage relevant conflicts peacefully.

Diakonia emphasises that the ownership and capacity of processes for change as well as building peaceful societies belong to the local actors. This requires the views, participation and influence of all rights holders; women, men, boys and girls alike. Legal tools, like Resolution 1325, are important in this work.

International law

Diakonia has over the past years built special expertise in international law in relation to conflict and justice. International Human Rights Law (IHRL) apply at all times: in peace as well as during armed conflict. In times of armed conflict, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) also applies. It includes regulations to limit the means and methods of warfare and protect civilians in times of armed conflict. Diakonia will endeavour to create synergies between programmes with expertise on IHL and other programmes that could benefit from best practices.

States (including third states), and sometimes also non-state actors, are duty-bearers but all too often also the perpetrators of violations of international law. Diakonia will promote civil society organisations to take on the important watch-dog function in this regard, and to advocate for accountability and justice.



Private Actors in conflict

In risk areas, conflict areas or post-conflict areas, private actors can either contribute to peace or exacerbate violent conflict. Lack of rule of law, transparency and a free and working financial market do however tend to favour private actors who benefit financially from the situation and thus have a vested interest in obstructing efforts to create peace.

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Diakonia will focus our work around private actors in conflict around:

- Rights for People
- Role and Rules for Business
- Role and Responsibility for States

Voluntary initiatives, such as different corporate responsibility standards and ethical policies, play an important role for proactive and responsible business practices, but are inadequate to ensure corporate accountability – especially in conflict situations. Diakonia believes that it is necessary to have binding international rules to secure corporate accountability.

States bear the primary responsibility of protecting their citizens' human rights, but sometimes the state doesn't live up to that responsibility, and even requires or expects companies to, directly or indirectly, disrespect human rights or engage in unsustainable business practices. This type of dilemma often faces companies that operate in conflict areas, and it is thus important to clarify the roles and responsibility of state vs. private actors.

Natural resources, climate change and conflict

Competition for natural resources, such as water, pasture, arable land, minerals, fossil fuels, etc. is often a driver of conflict and environmental degradation.

In the wake of climate change, conflicts resulting in involuntarily displacement, disintegration of social structures where men and women are forced to fight for their livelihoods and survival will only increase in number and further strengthen the unprivileged access to resources for women. If the relationship between climate change and violent conflict is not addressed, there will be a vicious circle of failure to adapt to climate change, worsening the risk of violent conflict and, in turn, reducing the ability to adapt.

Diakonia will support partners to work with e.g. peaceful conflict management and democratic natural resource management, as well as dialogue, trust building and education initiatives that increase communities' capacity to address the root causes of the problems and that increases their resilience.

Humanitarian emergency response

Since Diakonia focuses on long-term development, it could be said that all its work is preventative work against disasters. However, situations arise where human suffering is so great that it is essential for Diakonia and its partners to carry out emergency relief efforts. In 2011 Diakonia adopted a Humanitarian Policy, and during 2012-2014 we will put special focus on:

Emergency relief efforts

Diakonia responds to humanitarian crisis when the state or another party that has primary responsibility for doing so is unable or unwilling to respond adequately. As a humanitarian actor, Diakonia is committed to upholding the fundamental principles of humanity and impartiality as enshrined in the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949



and their Additional Protocols, and incorporated into the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross Movement and Non-Governmental Organisation in Disaster Relief. During this strategic period, Diakonia will take further steps to professionalise our humanitarian work in line with the Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standards (read more in section 5.3.). In all humanitarian actions we will identify the different needs, vulnerabilities and coping strategies of women and men, so that they can be more adequately addressed in response to the emergency situation.

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We believe in the unique role of civil society organisations with a commitment to humanitarian principles and an established relationship with populations affected by disaster or conflict. Local organisations can respond appropriately and rapidly, build on existing capacities and systems within the affected communities, promote early recovery and facilitate reconstruction. We also believe in strengthening democratic ownership and participation. For these reasons we always undertake humanitarian action with one or more of our long-term partners.

Together with our partners we seek to coordinate our humanitarian action with all relevant levels of government, international NGOs and local civil society actors, UN agencies and others, in order to contribute to a coherent and efficient humanitarian response and enhance aid and development effectiveness and accountability.

When military personnel and assets are deployed for humanitarian purposes, we are prepared to coordinate on operational aspects of its humanitarian action, but we want to ensure that specific measures are put in place to maintain and communicate its civil nature, independence and impartiality of decision making. In situations of conflict we only coordinate with the military on matters relating to humanitarian action if alternative civil options already have been explored, and if sufficient information exists to assess how such interactions will affect its own and other agencies' staff, and the protection of the beneficiary communities.

Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

Natural disasters are in fact often "man-made" disasters – the effect of a disaster does to a major extent depend on the level of resilience and preparedness in a given society. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness is thus key to avoid emergencies and will be part of Diakonia's work in areas where disasters such as recurrent floods and droughts, now often amplified by climate change, is a threat to Diakonia's long-term development work.

Mainstreaming areas

Diakonia has five mainstreamed areas that permeate our work.

Rights Based Approach

Diakonia's Strategy for Change (see 3.3.1. above) is one of our main guiding principles, and our interpretation of a Rights Based Approach. By putting focus on empowering people to demand what is rightfully theirs and on the duty bearers' obligation to fulfil these rights, the approach provides not only a legal framework and tools to pursue change. It also seeks to empower the rights holders to be the protagonists of change and to be owners of this process.

Gender perspective

Women and men experience poverty differently. Ignoring these differences risks further entrenching poverty and the subordination of women. All Diakonia's work shall include a gender perspective, which means analysing how the work is affected



by the power relations between men and women, and *vice versa* how the work itself affects the power relations between men and women, and how contributions to gender equality can be maximised.

HIV and Aids perspective

Spread of HIV worldwide is greatest among people who live in poverty. Diakonia does not work with medical assistance, but strives to mainstream an HIV and Aids perspective in our work by analysing how the work is affected by the HIV situation, and *vice versa* how the work itself affects the HIV situation and how contribute to combat the HIV epidemic can be maximised. Increase knowledge about HIV and Aids among all our employees and partners is an important first step to create a climate that counteracts fear and isolation between people, challenging stigmatisation and discrimination.

Environmental perspective

Environmental problems and climate change are often a consequence of underlying structural causes. For example when people living in poverty have no choice but to use resources unsustainably in order to survive, or when rich people cause problems that most severely affect people living in poverty. Diakonia's goal is to change those underlying structures and we strive to integrate an environmental perspective by analysing how the work is affected by the environmental situation, and *vice versa* how the work itself affects the environmental situation and how contributions to an improved environmental situation can be maximised.

Conflict perspective

Conflict sensitivity is relevant – to a higher or lesser degree – in all countries where Diakonia currently works. A minimum requirement is to carry out an analysis with a conflict perspective for programmes in areas where armed conflict is on-going, imminent or recently concluded. This includes analysing how the work is affected by the conflict situation, and *vice versa* how the work itself affects the conflict and how contributions to peace and reconciliation can be maximised.

5 Quality Assurance

Internal control

Internal control is an on-going process, a series of actions, which ideally should be intertwined with other processes of the organisation. Our work with internal control is based on an international standard – the COSO model. Internal control is broadly defined as a process, executed by the board, management and other employees, designed to provide assurance of quality regarding the following categories:

- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations
- Reliability of reporting
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations

Our global reporting, such as narrative and financial report, is reviewed by our auditors and is approved by the General Assembly. The internal control is followed up at all levels in our organisation. At a global level the control of the work in our four regions is mainly done by the International and Administrative departments at Head Office. The main tasks for the Head Office are policy making, to provide quality assurance of internal control and to support the regions. Our organisation is decentralised with regional and country offices since it is essential for our way of working to be close to partners and rights holders. This facilitates the follow-up of projects and gives us better knowledge of difficulties and problems. If the conditions



for the projects are changed it is easier to have a direct dialog with our partners and try to make necessary adjustments in the plans.

Risk analysis, assessment and management

In development work there is always a risk taking. We operate in different regions where conflict and catastrophes affect partners and rights holders. Therefore the planning of our operations always involves a risk analysis and an assessment of the relevance of the operations. The local presence is important in the assessment and follow-up of the content, implementation and reporting of the projects. Without the local presence it is much more difficult to find out if there is suspicion of misuse of funds or any other violation of the agreement.

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We acknowledge that there are many risks that may affect the organisation. Some risks must be accepted. We also believe that the work with minimising risks must be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis. In the strategic plan for 2012-2014 the risk assessment and management parts have been further developed and will include the whole organisation.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Diakonia's interpretation of Results Based Management (RBM) is outlined in our Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) handbook. This is the main steering document for the internal control, and has been used since 2007. The PME-handbook gives instructions for all the controls and routines, regarding planning, monitoring and evaluation, to be performed by the different levels of the organisation and the partners during the project cycle. The routines ensure that the operations follow policies and guidelines, are being quality checked and that control and assessments are transparent and effective. Of utmost importance is reporting of results and cost effectiveness.

The management has an on-going dialogue on control issues with back donors, mainly Sida, and the PME-handbook is constantly adapted to include new demands. With the PME-handbook the management sets a minimum standard for the internal control of Diakonia.

For the on-going monitoring we rely on narrative, financial and audit reports and evaluations done at all levels from partners to Head Office. The audit reports are carried out by certified public accountants. We assess all of the reports. This is complemented with field visits performed by the Country Offices and/or the Regional Offices. The management reports from the Regional Offices, besides financial follow-up, also deal with administrative capacity issues and other challenges for the partners. Different kinds of evaluation are also done, mostly of the programs. The information from the evaluation is used for improving the operation for new programs or continuation of programs.

Other institutions also evaluate our systems and operations. Annually Diakonia reports against the Code of Quality standard of the Swedish Fundraising Council, as well as to the Swedish Fundraising Control. The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) also makes system audits of our work and sometimes of separate Country Offices. With the intention of becoming certified according to the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standard, Diakonia will improve systems for accountability and quality management guided by HAP's recommendations.



6 Organisational prerequisites

In order to be true to our vision and to be relevant, Diakonia needs to focus on a number of areas as stated below. These are in no way exhaustive, but constitute some key elements.

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Organisational structure

Diakonia is a highly decentralised organisation with offices in almost 30 countries, besides the Head Office in Stockholm. The organisation is structured in three levels: Head Office, Regional Offices and Country Offices.

All in all Diakonia have more than 200 staff members, whereof less than 20 per cent are based in Stockholm. A majority of all our employees are women. During the past few years Diakonia has undergone a process of decentralisation, delegating authority from the Head Office to the Regional Offices, and onward from the Regional Offices to the Country Offices. This decentralisation involves a change in the division of responsibilities and to some extent new roles. The role of our Head Office has changed to focus more on policy making and quality assurance, including support to the regions/countries.

At Head Office our work is structured in five departments:

- The Administrative department
- The Fundraising and Communications department,
- The Human Resource department.
- The International department
- The Policy and Advocacy department

The formal structure is complemented with interdepartmental task forces, working groups and project groups, in order to create a flexible and adaptable organisation.

Committed and skilled staff

Committed and skilled staff is our most important asset in the work towards our vision. Diakonia consists of staff from various background distributed around the world, close to the reality of our stakeholders. This provides us with insight and potential to deliver results. Our staff consists of highly skilled, empowered people with strong motivation to change the world. Through introduction, work descriptions and interaction with management each individual is expected to understand what is required of her or him with corresponding authority and responsibility. We encourage a culture where all employees have the space to take initiatives.

Visible leaders

Leadership in Diakonia is about creating results together with others. Diakonia shall be characterised by visible, close leadership with the task of creating conditions for everyone to participate and contribute with their special talents to our work. Meetings and collaborations shall be implemented in a democratic order, with a gendered and human approach. Care and respect for one another's differing opinions shall characterise work. Participation and co-determination shall be encouraged.

Dedicated constituencies and activists

Diakonia is more than our staff and partner organisations. Our organisation is also all our ombudsmen, activists and other individuals in Sweden who involve themselves in our campaigns, collect money, spread our messages and engage others in the work for a just and sustainable world, free from poverty. Their support



and commitment increase our possibilities of creating change and gives us clout as an actor in the debate on global development.

Diversified funding

A diversified and solid funding base is an absolute necessity for us. The organisation started as a fundraising initiative, and donations from individuals and congregations in Sweden are still very important. The support we get from thousands of individuals gives us legitimacy and credibility. We aim at a substantial increase of the donations from individuals.

The bulk of our funding comes from institutional back donors like Sida. Over the years we have built up a capacity to handle complex and big development cooperation contracts, and deliver results to rights holders and back donors. In the past we have mainly relied on funding from Sida, but during the last few years we have tried to diversify the number of institutional back donors. This is a work in progress, but the number of contracts has increased. Today Diakonia has funding from different EU budget lines, Norway, the UN system, as well as foundations like the Post Code Lottery in Sweden and the Swedish fundraiser Radiohjälpen. The aim is to continue the diversification, and investments have been made in both IT systems and in staff competence in this regard.

A priority is to continue building trust and relationships with donors – regardless if they are institutions or individuals

Adaptable organisation

Diakonia is constantly developing and adapting to changing external conditions. We need to make sure that we are relevant, at the same time as we keep focus on our vision, mission and goal. We also want to reduce risks, simplify work processes and be cost effective.

In an ever faster changing context Diakonia will continue to stay alert and be prepared to review and adjust our structure. For the coming years we expect a development towards and even more flexible organisational structure.

Internal Communication

Good internal communication is an important tool for us. This implies a well-functioning flow of information and exchange of ideas between leaders and co-workers, and within different levels of the organisation. A significant dimension of the internal communication is to build a common identity and bring to life our values and principles.

A well-functioning system for internal communication also supports decision-making processes. Easy access to information is essential in a decentralised organisation like Diakonia. A new intranet and a joint document handling system are underway. Different forms of management reporting have been developed, and a system for video conferencing is underway.



External Communication

Our external communication is an important part of our effort to achieve our vision. Our communication conveys the perspective of the rights holders; we also adapt our messages to the targets of our communication. This includes choice of language, channel, time of day and month for communication etc. As we believe that rights holders are strong actors of change, we want this to permeate our communication. Structural changes in society take time to accomplish, but by being consistent in our communication and our initiatives, we facilitate that process. At the same time, we constantly measure, evaluate, improve and adapt our communication methods to constantly improve our work.

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We strive for transparency, both in regard to rights holders, partner organisations, decision makers, donors and other stakeholders. This means that we are open with our internal processes, that dialogue and listening is of highest priority. Our communication often deals with the rights holders' situation in conflict areas. The issues and individuals we highlight in our communication are carefully chosen, so that the publicity does not endanger the person, the partner organisation or the development work. The issues and individuals we choose to highlight in our communication are chosen from a gender perspective; based on a gender analysis we communicate women and men as strong and active agents of change. The gender sensitivity also involves what type of photos we use. Diakonia always consider environmental issues. This affects what communications channels, type of material and transports we choose. To increase our visibility and to create a unified communication we use and develop our steering tools and working methods within communication.