

# Diakonia Complaints and Incident reports 2015



Text: March for peace in Colombia 2013

## Diakonia's complaints and response mechanism

Diakonia is committed to work in an open and responsible way that builds trust in development and humanitarian programming and seeks to work with affected communities and populations in the best way possible.

To ensure continuous improvement we are open to receive complaints regarding our work in the countries where we operate, including Sweden. We do, however, encourage that comments and complaints regarding are raised and discussed with responsible Diakonia staff members and managers as close to the work activity as possible.

## Annual report on complaints

Diakonia set up a web based complaints and response mechanism (CRM) during 2013, when the CRM roll-out plan for the entire organization started. This report for 2015 is the third one since the start, and we are happy the system works.

Diakonia summarizes the organizational learning from complaints handling in annual reports revealing as little information about the details of the complaints, and, most importantly, leaving out any information about the complainant. The annual reports are focusing on lessons learnt and how Diakonia aims at improving our work. The report is available at Diakonia's website.

From January – December 2015 Diakonia received a total of 8 complaints of which 4 has been finalized and 4 are still being investigated. The pending cases from 2014 have also been finalized 2015. All of these complaints were related to partner organizations. Diakonia also has an internal report system for staff members which is used to report on security and working conditions. A total number of 8 Incidents were received during 2015 this way and made known to Senior Management at the Diakonia Head Office. Lessons learned from these are incorporated in Human Resource procedures.

## Complaints and incident during 2015 through CRM complaint system

<b>File no:</b>	2015 CC1	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
In the process of following up a partner regarding late reporting Diakonia staff members became aware of internal problems within the partner organization. Previous agreed organizational changes within the partner had been halted by senior leadership, which created a climate of distrust and conflict and threatened the organizations activities with rights holders, who were in a very vulnerable situation.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia involved in discussions to find a solution to safeguard the activities for the rights holders, getting the reporting done and also solve an issue with a vehicle owned by the partner and which should have been released to one of the entities in the reorganization.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Monitoring and close follow up (accompanying) of partners involved in organizational changes is important. Internal problems within organizations can create situations where a partner organization ceases to exist with rights holders being left alone. Problems within an organization can also be a cause for mismanagement of resources and need to			

be followed up carefully.

<b>File no:</b>	2015.CC2	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
Diakonia was alerted by a whistle blower that a partner had not implemented an activity although it was reported as completed.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
An investigation was immediately instigated, and the suspicion was confirmed. According to Diakonia's guidelines payments were cancelled to the partner, and a long process was undertaken to perform an audit and to try to retrieve funds used inappropriately. The audit was finally made. Diakonia has paid back the funds that had not been correctly used to the back-donor. Cooperation with the partner has been cancelled.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Working in countries with high levels of corruption involve high risk taking. But at the same time the needs for development cooperation are the greatest in those countries. In this particular case a conflict is also ongoing, which limits monitoring and follow up work due to the security situation i.e. Grass-root organizations many times have limited administrative skills (and risks for corruption increases) which means that Diakonia's monitoring is labor extensive and even so corruption occurs. Diakonia has to continue with the capacity building of partner organizations administrative and programmatic skills. In countries with high corruption rates and weak democratic institutions Civil Society support is essential to achieve positive changes for poor people, and Diakonia has to continue to have a close dialogue with the partner organizations, opting for transparency and good governance.			

<b>File no:</b>	2015 CC3	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
During revision of financial reporting from a partner organization Diakonia discovered that the information was fictitious. This was discovered by a Diakonia employee because the report was of poor quality. The audit firm was well-known and issues normally very good reports.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia investigated the case and it was concluded that the financial report submitted by the partner was fraudulent. The partner was asked to pay back the total amount paid by Diakonia and the partnership was ended by Diakonia.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Funding for this particular support was a so called "Nursery Funding" which sometimes is used to give support to a strategic process, a new innovative project within a particular context etc. The lessons learnt are to assess risks with this type of funding and to monitor this type of projects carefully.			

<b>File no:</b>	2015 CC4	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
The partner organization was very late in submitting the financial report regarding Diakonia's support. The report was the last one in a program cycle. This lead to suspicions regarding the organization's book keeping, and when Diakonia looked into the case it was found that there were problems, due to lack of capacity within the partner organization.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia gave support and feed back to the partner, and finally after 2,5 months a report was submitted and it was satisfactory. Diakonia could also conclude that the concerns lifted in the partner dialogue had been addressed by the partner.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			

It is important to closely monitor partners, especially in the end of a program. Diakonia could in this case, through a close dialogue with the organizations management, help solve the problem and support and strengthen the partner's lacking administration.

<b>File no:</b>	2015 CC5	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
A partner organization used Diakonia project funds for other activities without prior consent by Diakonia.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Funding was immediately stopped to the partner, and the back donor was informed. Diakonia pursued the partner for the return of the funds including dialoguing with the organization's board and management on the issue. Diakonia also ended the partnership.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
It is important to immediately halt any funding in case of incidents like this one and follow up cases asap.			

<b>File no:</b>	2015 CC6	<b>Year:</b>	2015
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
During a routine monitoring of a project Diakonia was informed that a member of the receiving organization had withdrawn the money from the installment and had disappeared. There was no money left for the project.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia informed the back-donor at the first possible moment and contacted the organizations leadership who committed themselves to try to recover the funds, but in spite of several propositions the partner has not been able to repay the funds. After several meetings and discussions with the back-donor Diakonia had to pay back the money to them.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Diakonia has identified the following:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review risk assessment regarding projects with a speedy approvals for strategic processes</li> <li>2. Caution regarding projects in areas with high corruption risks</li> <li>3. Apply full procedures for assessing potential partners to all projects</li> </ol>			