

DIAKONIA'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

2021 and onwards

Final version approved by the Board of directors 3rd of December 2020.

Diakonia's global strategy is open ended and based on Diakonia's policy imperative. Instead of having a fixed end date, the strategy has a horizon of approximately five years that is constantly being extended. To stay relevant, the strategy is revised and updated annually based on changes in context and lessons learned in the organization.

WHO WE ARE

Diakonia is a Swedish faith-based development organization that works to change unfair structures that generate poverty, inequality, oppression and violence. The organisation was founded in 1966 and is today rooted in two Christian denominations: the Swedish Alliance Mission and the Uniting Church in Sweden. Our vision and mission are based on theological reflection and the universality of human rights. Diakonia works with around 400 partner organizations (2021) and employs approximately 300 staff in 25 country offices and four regional offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the MENA (Middle East and Northern Africa) region and Sweden.

HOW WE SEE THE WORLD

In many ways the world is a better place today than it was a few decades ago. Fewer people are living in absolute poverty, more people have access to information, education levels are increasing and women's representation in politics has improved, to mention just a few improvements.

At the same time, there are worrying signs that these improvements are under threat, and that continuous positive development cannot be taken for granted, not least considering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many democratic countries are sliding back into authoritarianism, gender justice is once again under attack and human rights are being questioned in principle and undermined in reality. Fundamental negative structures such as the paradigm of never-ending economic growth and the patriarchy remain in place and, unless challenged, will continue to drive the unequal, unjust and unsustainable use of global resources.

The coming years will be marked by many uncertainties that can take the world in different directions: towards a more nationalistic, less democratic, more polarised and less open world, in which the privileged will expand their privilege at the expense of the poor – or towards a more democratic, trustful and open world, in which all people can live a life in dignity. Diakonia's strategy aims to counteract the first and contribute to the second, based on our understanding of a number of global trends.

Climate change and environmental degradation

Climate change and environmental degradation is the single largest contemporary threat to the world. Unless global warming is mitigated and properly addressed and the environment protected, the climate crisis will drive an increase in poverty, instigate more conflicts and force large parts of the population into migration. On the other hand, the climate crisis could inspire

innovation and a global partnership leading to positive development, with a greener economy, more resilient communities and a world order with shared responsibility for our common future.

Demographic changes

The global population continues to grow, with the biggest increase in Africa, which is expected to double its population over 30 years (by 2050). Half of the world's population is under 25 and in many countries, more than two thirds are young people. This presents an opportunity, as young people drive change and find it easy to adapt when change comes about. At the same time, high youth unemployment rates, poverty and a lack of opportunities threaten to exclude several generations from being a productive part of the society, which can contribute to extremism, crime, animosity and violence.

Increased migration

Climate change is already driving migration, as are conflicts, violence, authoritarianism and poverty. Most people are migrating within their countries to big cities, leading to an increasing number of people living in poverty and exclusion in urban slums. International migration poses challenges for the receiving countries, where there is risk for a backlash for democracy, growing nationalism and racism, a polarised political landscape and closing borders. However, urbanisation and migration also lead to higher levels of education and improved living conditions for those who manage to settle in their new environment.

A digital world

Smartphones and access to the internet have initiated a democratic revolution. Never before in history have so many people had access to so much information from so many sources. This creates endless opportunities, ranging from farmers being able to follow daily market prices for their crops to human rights activists being protected by a global digital community. On the other hand, the digital revolution poses a threat to democracy, as hate speech, fake news and propaganda have an instant and global reach. The risk of a greater digital divide is also substantial and, if not countered, it could further marginalise the poor. There is also an imminent risk that states will use the new technology to control their citizens and further shrink the democratic space. This is applicable to both authoritarian regimes and democracies. Digital security has become a growing concern in an increasingly digital world.

Shrinking space for democracy and human rights

The gains made in recent decades in terms of democracy – as both a system with strong institutions and as a culture with values – are under threat. Democracy and human rights are no longer necessarily seen as norms for governance, and across the world, regimes are questioning key features of democracy, such as freedom of expression, an open political debate and an independent judiciary. In many cases, there is a link between shrinking democratic space and the desire to control and exploit natural resources. Similarly, attacks on human rights defenders and women's and LGBTIQ rights are on the rise, with impunity for the perpetrators being the rule rather than the exception. On the other hand, attempts to shrink democracy and question

universal human rights are countered by strong popular movements, intellectuals and by political parties.

Backlash for gender and LGBTQI rights

Conservative and religious fundamentalist actors are causing a backlash regarding gender equality, women's rights and LGBTQI rights. This manifests itself in intolerance and violence towards LGBTQI persons, increased gender-based violence, women dying due to lack of adequate health services and safe abortions, loss of political power and participation for women, lack of women's economic empowerment, lack of access to land and food security for women, the feminisation of poverty, rape, child marriages, trafficking, and obstacles to progress in terms of legal protections for LGBTQI rights.

Increased inequality

Income and wealth inequality continues to increase in and between countries, and there is a bigger gap between the rich and the poor. In 2020 the world's 22 richest men had more money than all the women in Africa. Income and wealth inequality is expected to grow where the rich and the poor have unequal access to basic social services such as education and health, and to natural resources such as land and water. Jobless growth, tax evasion, illicit financial flows and corruption are factors driving these inequalities, manifested in the fact that the richest 1% in the world had more than double the wealth of 6.9 billion people in 2020.

Corruption

Corruption is a global phenomenon that occurs everywhere at all levels; no continent, government or society is free from it. It is multidimensional, and its nature, scale and complexity make it one of the major challenges standing in the way of inclusive growth and sustainable development. Corruption weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty and the environmental crisis. It erodes trust in societies and state institutions, and between citizens.

Violent conflicts increasingly complex and protracted

Violent conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and protracted, with political elites, the private sector and illegal armed actors fighting over economic and political power and natural resources, both within countries and across borders. Traditional violent conflicts between states are being replaced by violent intra-country conflicts. The protection of race, religion and nation, often with explicit objection to gender equality and women's and LGBTQI persons' rights, characterises violent extremist agendas across the world. Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated to contexts where climate change and conflict intersect.

New forms of mobilisation

The negative trends above are being countered by new forms of mobilisation in civil society that brings hope for yet another switch to the positive.

There are numerous examples of popular movements, particularly those driven by young people and students, speaking truth to power outside organised civil society and naturally making use of digital platforms. These and other new forms of civil society counteracting the negative trends influence our analysis of the world. For Diakonia, it is crucial to understand and be a part of these new forms of activism.

Challenges in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)

Whichever path development takes, different types of crises are expected to be the new normal. This makes new demands of everyone, at all levels. Even before COVID-19, spiralling humanitarian needs and unprecedented shortfalls in crisis funding were undermining the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Linked to the challenges of mobilising funding are the global trends of nationalism, anti-multilateralism and often a lack of political will to stand by the commitments made. If the world is going to meet the 2030 deadline, the private sector, governments, multilaterals and civil society need to come together to secure adequate engagement in and funding for the Agenda. With falling GDPs and a need for internal financial rescue packages, the funding gap for development cooperation in general and the SDGs in particular will widen further. In this landscape, competition for funding is expected to increase at the expense of coordination and the collaboration required, as development actors give more priority to strengthening their brands.

Religious literacy key to development

The role of faith and religion in development is increasingly being recognised within the development community. Given the fact that the vast majority of the world's population is affiliated with a religion, and the strong influence that faith-based actors and structures exercise over social norms, sometimes all the way to government, many progressive faith-based organisations are attempting to increase their religious literacy in order to better understand the role of religion in development. For example, in the COVID-19 crisis, faith-based actors have proven crucial in assisting governments in conveying important messages to their citizens. On the other end, you have powerful faith-based actors being fiercely opposed to women's and LGBTQI rights.

Religious literacy in development is necessary both to understand context and to strategize, especially for faith-based development organisations like Diakonia.

THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE – DIAKONIA'S VISION

A just, equal and sustainable world

A just world

Diakonia strives for a world in which all people are able to enjoy their inherent individual and collective fundamental rights so they can live a life in dignity. A just world also requires a fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

An equal world

Diakonia works for a world in which nobody is constrained by prejudice, inequality or stereotypical expectations, in which each person is free to shape and decide over their life and body. A world in which gender equality and equity prevail, and oppressive power structures are dismantled to ensure that no one is discriminated against for any reason.

A sustainable world

Diakonia seeks to counteract inequality and contribute to peaceful, resilient societies that live in harmony with the earth's resources. This includes a commitment to addressing global climate challenges and environmental degradation and to preventing violent conflicts. It requires just solutions that recognise the unequal distribution of climate debt, and how the consequences of climate change, environmental degradation and violent conflict exacerbate inequality and poverty.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE – DIAKONIA'S MISSION AND OVERALL GOAL

Diakonia's mission and overall goal is to change unfair structures – political, economic, social and cultural – that generate poverty and inequality, oppression and violence. We work together with partner organizations, movements and other relevant actors to secure the right to a life in dignity for all people – regardless of their age, sex, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, political conviction, religion or sexual expression and identity.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN – DIAKONIA'S VALUES

Diakonia's identity is characterised by five values. These are inspired by the founding churches' theological reflection, as well as by our real-life experiences of facing numerous challenges when pursuing our mission. These values guide our strategic choices, day-to-day decisions and behaviour. They serve as both a reminder of who we are and a description of the work we do. Diakonia believes in people's ability to bring about positive change. When we come together, we can change the world.

Solidarity

Solidarity is a fundamental part of Diakonia's institutional identity and a key to how we understand human relationships. Our imperative is therefore to stand with and accompany rights holders, partner organizations and other change actors striving for a just, equal and sustainable world.

Justice

Oppression and poverty derive from injustice. Diakonia works for fair societies and social structures in which all people can enjoy their freedom and human rights without facing discrimination.

Courage

Together with others, Diakonia counteracts oppressive forces and power structures. Diakonia believes that for the world to change, unfair power structures must be challenged and changed, but challenging privileges and power entails a risk and often requires a great deal of courage from the organization.

Commitment

Securing sustainable change requires a long-term commitment – not backing out or giving up as difficulties mount up along the way. When people are aware of their rights and join forces to make demands, they can change the world. However, societies are complex, encompassing multiple interests, including resistance to change. This makes the change we want to see unpredictable and progress non-linear.

Accountability

Diakonia's mission demands a high level of trust and accountability towards rights holders, partner organizations, donors and our founding churches. Diakonia is transparent, takes responsibility for the resources allocated to the organization, presents the results openly and welcomes complaints.

HOW WE BELIEVE CHANGE HAPPENS – DIAKONIA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Diakonia's Theory of Change is at the core of all our work. It is the vehicle with which we move within our focus areas towards our mission and vision, standing firmly on our foundation of values. We therefore contextualise and adapt the theory of change to each change process we engage in, and we adjust it when conditions and/or our analysis changes. Diakonia aspires to be adaptive, responsive and move with agility and accountability in complex, unpredictable and often risky contexts.

Diakonia's Theory of Change is made up of three building blocks.

We believe that people change the world. People drive change using their own voice and their own identity. People's drive and passion, combined with knowledge of their rights and of the root causes of their lack of fulfilment in their particular context, is *the first building block* of our Theory of Change.

The *second building block* is to facilitate this drive and knowledge being turned into effective agency to challenge the destructive paradigms of the patriarchy, unsustainable growth, exclusion and inequality that regenerate poverty, oppression, violence and injustice, and lead to the lack of rights fulfilment. We believe that these paradigms are most effectively challenged when people come together, grow together and take collective action, be it in more organised ways or more informally and spontaneously.

The *third and final building block* regards the nature of the action and towards whom it is directed. There is a large toolbox for pursuing rights. They can be claimed, defended, expressed and advocated as determined by each context, from the very local level to national or international level. What is common to all contexts is that the change we seek needs to take place in fundamentally two arenas: the formal arena of structures made up of institutions and legislation on the one hand, and social norms in society on the other. In times of limited democratic and civic space, the focus will be on the latter.

The three building blocks are seen as parts of a whole, with all parts needed for change to be sustainable. While we seldom can expect linear causality between the three building blocks, and while we recognise that they all nurture each other, we do see movement from the first to the last to a certain extent.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON

Diakonia's work focuses on human rights, democracy and gender justice. Based on our experiences and expertise, we believe that focusing on these three interlinked areas is the best way for us to contribute to eradicating poverty, inequality, oppression and violence, and to support people of all genders and ages in claiming power and resources. All our work shall thus be

rooted in these interlinked areas. As climate change, environmental degradation and conflict undermine development gains and increase vulnerabilities, these perspectives are to permeate all Diakonia's work.

Democracy

Diakonia believes in a society in which all people are heard and can be actively involved in decision making at both national and local level, and in which decision-makers respect human rights and safeguard the rule of law.

A true democracy contains both formal building blocks – free and fair elections, transparent and accountable governance structures, free and independent media, an independent judiciary, a vibrant civil society and much more – as well as a strong democratic culture that encourages and welcomes diversity, tolerance and different opinions at all times.

Different countries have different models for how democracy is formalised, but values such as accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, a fair distribution of power and resources, tolerance and the celebration of diversity are universal indicators of a true democracy.

Human rights

Diakonia believes that all people, in all situations and in all parts of the world, are entitled to the equal fulfilment of all sets of rights, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural. Such rights are protected through international and regional human rights treaties, alongside international humanitarian law. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law at all levels, from local and national through to regional and global, is crucial for peace and security.

The state is principally responsible for respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling these rights, but all duty bearers and power holders, including but not limited to armed non-state actors and the private sector, have responsibilities connected to the fulfilment of these rights.

Gender justice

Diakonia believes that all people regardless of gender, sex, sexual orientation, expression or identity should have the power, knowledge and resources to contribute to shaping their own life and the society they live in. This is what we mean by gender justice.

Patriarchal structures, norms and attitudes permeate every part of society. For gender justice to be realised, transformative change must take place in many different spheres. This transformation is needed in our individual consciousness and capabilities, in people's access to resources and services, in collective social norms and in the laws, rules and policies that govern our societies.

Gender inequality is one of the deepest and most pervasive injustices of the world, and it is a severe violation of human rights. It stops people from being free, from making decisions about their own lives and bodies and from contributing to their societies. Therefore, in addition to being a goal in and of itself, gender justice is also a prerequisite for any other change that Diakonia

works for. Without it, there can be no democracy, human rights, economic justice, climate justice or peace. There is no justice without gender justice.

HOW WE WORK – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To ensure sustainable change and dignified living conditions for all people, everything we do must be rooted in the Human Rights Based Approach and Diakonia's feminist principles.

Human Rights Based Approach

The Human Rights Based Approach, HRBA includes the following principles:

- That human rights are universal, applying equally to all.
- That human rights are indivisible, none to be considered more important than the other.
- That human rights are interdependent and interrelated.
- That human rights are characterised by principles of equality and non-discrimination.
- That the pursuit and defence of human rights must be based on principles of the participation and inclusion of rights holders.
- That the guarantors of human rights are principally the state, but that all duty bearers and power holders, including but not limited to armed non-state actors and the private sector, have responsibilities connected to the fulfilment of rights. They are accountable through the rule of law, as ratified in national, regional and international laws, treaties and systems.

Diakonia's feminist principles

Diakonia believes that while gender justice is the goal, operating on the basis of feminist principles is the way to get there. By basing our operations on these principles, we commit to:

- Making patriarchal structures visible, challenging them and addressing their root causes, not just their manifestations.
- Supporting and being not just a donor but also an ally to women's and feminist movements and organizations at local, national, regional and global levels, as we recognise them as the primary actors in the fight for gender justice.
- Always defending certain core issues, regardless of whether we work directly with them or not, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, the end of gender-based violence, the recognition and remuneration of women's unpaid care work, women's participation in decision-making and the rights of LGBTQI persons.
- Implementing a transformative gender mainstreaming perspective, meaning that all projects and programmes must contribute to a tangible improvement in gender equality, regardless of whether they work with gender justice as a standalone area or not.
- Based on this dual-track approach (stand alone and mainstreaming), including a variety of partner organisations in our programming and advocacy work towards gender justice, as we recognise that we all have a role to play in achieving gender justice.

DIAKONIA'S ROLE – FUNDING PARTNER, ALLY AND VOICE FOR CHANGE

Diakonia is an experienced funding partner and ally to global civil society, having accompanied partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the MENA region since the 1970s. We have a presence in the countries in which we operate, enabling us to be a co-creator of change and to accompany partners in their efforts for change. We strengthen the capacity of civil society through global mutual learning, and mobilise and manage funds to support partners and strategic actors through mutual accountability. We coordinate and harmonise with other donors to facilitate aid. We implement programmes ourselves when appropriate and when we see a proven comparative advantage and local demand. Diakonia is a connector that networks and builds and nurtures relationships with strategic change actors to convey messages and analyses, as well as to facilitate strategic alliances.

With our strong position and voice in Sweden, we influence Swedish and European politics through Diakonia's and our partners' analyses and engage with the Swedish public on international development and solidarity.

WHAT WE WORK WITH

Diakonia's mission and goal will be achieved through the following approaches:

Development cooperation

Diakonia carries out development cooperation programmes that address the root causes of poverty, inequality, oppression and violence. The programmes are developed based on local, national, regional and global context analysis. They are consistent with Diakonia's focus on human rights, democracy and gender justice, as well as the Theory of Change, the aim being to bring about long-term change and sustainable impact. Horizontal relations with partner organizations are at the core of the programmes, but we also build strategic alliances with civil society in all its forms and collaborate with other change actors.

Bridging between development and humanitarian emergency

Diakonia aims to break the traditional silos of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace building and adopt a preventive approach. We seek to integrate the three perspectives and approaches in our work by focusing on the risks of disruption to sustainable development. By investing in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, recovery, and community resilience to violent conflict and environmental risks such as climate change, we bridge the silos, help prevent crises and attempt to safeguard long-term development gains.

Humanitarian work

Diakonia works with local partner organizations to respond to humanitarian emergencies when the humanitarian situation makes it difficult to continue with long-term development cooperation. Our humanitarian advantage is that our partners and we are present before, during and after a crisis. This allows us to share specific expertise and make use of existing local resources and structures to ensure an integrated approach to emergency response, with disaster risk reduction, relief and recovery linked to long-term development. Diakonia's humanitarian work is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Policy, advocacy and mobilisation

In line with our theory of change, mobilisation and advocacy are at the core of most of our partner organizations' strategies across the globe, as is also the case for Diakonia as an actor in its own right in Sweden. With a particular focus on our base of congregations and activist groups, we invite people to take part in the global struggle for a just, equal and sustainable world. We do this by raising awareness and facilitating their mobilisation in advocacy work. Based on the voices of rights holders and partners, Diakonia formulates policy and conducts advocacy work in relation to decision-makers, donors, the private sector, and public and other influential actors.

WHAT CUTS ACROSS ALL OUR WORK – DIAKONIA'S MAINSTREAMING PERSPECTIVES

No matter what change we want to see, three perspectives will cut across and permeate all Diakonia's work, both internally and externally: conflict sensitivity, gender justice and concern for the environment. We call this mainstreaming, and it implies that we need to address these perspectives in all work that Diakonia engages in.

Gender

Diakonia uses gender mainstreaming and standalone gender work as a dual-track approach in its programming and advocacy work on achieving gender justice. By recognising that women's and feminist movements and organizations at the local, national, regional and global levels are the primary actors in the fight for gender justice, we have committed to applying a transformative gender perspective to all projects and programmes. The aim is for all operations to clearly and tangibly contribute to gender justice.

Conflict

Peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development, and Diakonia recognises that democracy, human rights and gender justice will not be achieved in a context of social unrest, political violence or violent conflict. We therefore commit to recognising, understanding and responding to conflict in our conduct and our work. This perspective demands that we understand the conflicts we interact with and continuously adapt and adjust to control our impact. We take the

“do no harm” approach to ensure conflict sensitivity. Diakonia seeks to prevent and respond to conflict by investing in the factors that support and foster sustainable peace.

Environment/Climate change

Diakonia uses environmental mainstreaming to adjust, adapt and reduce the negative impact on the environment, as well as to increase positive impact. Environmental risks, such as climate change, natural hazards and environmental degradation are some of the most urgent threats to sustainable development and basic human rights, and the poorest and most vulnerable people carry the heaviest burden of climate change. Diakonia is committed to taking into consideration the environmental effects of its own operations and programmes – what and who is affected and how – and trying to mitigate the risk.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Diakonia’s imperative is to stand with and accompany rights holders, partner organizations and other change actors striving for a just, equal and sustainable world.

We collaborate with civil society organizations, movements and other actors that share our vision and values and that we assess to be strategic change makers. Our partners range from community-based organizations in rural settings, to national, regional, or international civil society organizations fighting for change. Their work is driven by commitment and rights holder ownership. Given the fact that half the world’s population is under 25, with 85 percent of this group residing in developing countries, young people are crucial to Diakonia. In alignment with our feminist principles, women and girls are prioritised in all our work.

WHERE WE WORK – GEOGRAPHICAL PRIORITIES

Diakonia has a local presence in 25 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the MENA region where we believe we can contribute to change. We regularly assess the need for and effectiveness of our programmes, including when assessing new opportunities and geographical priorities.

Our main strategy is to operate through country programmes, but also to develop our regional and global added value for regional and global programming. If we need to wind down our operations in a country, we will ensure that our withdrawal is based on clear criteria and employs a responsible exit strategy for staff and partner organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS – STRATEGIC SHIFTS AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Strategic movements 2021–2025

Four internal strategic movements and a set of supporting strategies are needed to make the organization fit for purpose, allowing us to implement our strategy in the best possible way. Management needs to support the strategic shifts, make priorities regarding what needs to be in focus over time and allocate resources to make this happen. All strategic movements should be implemented by 2025 at the latest.

From thematic steering to context, processes and Theory of Change

From 2015–2020 Diakonia operated on the basis of a global results framework covering five thematic priorities and our humanitarian response; six result areas in all, with each area having 3–4 objectives. In combination with a generic, more limited theory of change than the current one, this global results framework guided all projects and programmes.

The new strategy aims to move closer to reality and context, to be more flexible and able to respond to developments on the ground as they unfold – be it in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the MENA region or Sweden. To achieve this, we are leaving the global results framework behind to allow all projects and programmes to be designed based on Diakonia’s Theory of Change, the core of which is the context.

This shift is a shift in mindset and programme design that requires strengthening staff and partner capacity to construct and present theories of change, which will also have a bearing on how we report results on a global level, how we present programmes to back donors, how we budget for these programmes, and how we implement them.

To succeed, we need to build capacity throughout the organisation. Changes in internal procedures and systems, such as the PME handbook, are anticipated, as well as in how we monitor and gather results and stories of change. This new approach will require more work hours to be allocated to monitoring the context, and we will therefore review the way we are working and lay the foundations for staff to carry out their work in accordance with this new approach.

Towards operating based on feminist principles

In 2019 Diakonia took the decision to step up its ambitions and base all its work on Diakonia’s feminist principles. While gender equality and gender-sensitive mainstreaming have been long-standing priorities for Diakonia, levels of understanding and commitment in programming have varied between countries and regions. Through the introduction of feminist principles, the political struggle to achieve gender justice is emphasised, while the components of this struggle also become more specific. Similarly, the move from gender-sensitive to transformative represents a sharp increase in the gender mainstreaming ambition. All programmes, as well as

Diakonia as an organization, are committed to achieving the full implementation of these principles.

The shift to operating based on feminist principles builds on where we stand today with our work on gender equality. The first step is for Diakonia's staff to understand and internalise what the principles stand for and entail in terms of our day-to-day work. Following that, the concept needs to be explored with partners, with the possibility that some of them might not agree, necessitating a review of Diakonia's partner portfolio. In terms of programming, it constitutes a shift on different levels: in standalone gender justice programming in terms of analysis, design, actors and the role of Diakonia, as well as from gender-sensitive to truly transformative gender mainstreaming in programme design and the measurability of results.

Developing dynamic partnerships and including new change actors and forms of civil society engagement

Diakonia operates in increasingly complex and rapidly changing contexts in which change agents take different forms – traditional NGOs, social movements, loose networks or simply individuals joining forces to claim their rights. Horizontal relationships with established CSOs, based on long-term contracts, continue to be at the core of our programmes, but we will also take a broader approach to partnership and collaborate with networks, movements and other strategic change actors that share our vision and values. Such collaboration will differ depending on the context, opportunities and demand. Sometimes we will be in direct contact with these actors, and sometimes it is more strategic for our partner organizations to become the focal point. When the collaboration involves financial support, we will adapt and adjust our organizational requirements where needed and strengthen our capacity for risk taking without sacrificing accountability. This means that all staff need to have good knowledge of our internal procedures, anti-corruption work, and risk analysis and mitigation. The shift implies the introduction of alternative systems of control for non-registered organizations and organizations with limited administrative capacity. It also implies increased knowledge of the dynamics of these organizations, as well as strategies for non-funding relationships.

Taking an intentional and contextually defined role as co-creator, facilitator and catalyst in change

Diakonia's added value should not limit itself to channelling funds to and building the capacity of civil society. We also want to walk side-by-side with partners and co-create the change we mutually agree on. As a funding partner and ally of civil society, Diakonia has dual roles: we are both co-creating and facilitating change. With a committed local staff presence in our programme countries, we can be part of the change we want to see without taking over ownership from the civil society actors we are supporting. Diakonia brings learning and experience from decades as part of the global struggle for democracy, human rights and gender justice that allows us to co-create change with partners in any given context. This entails accessing and using valuable experiences, best practices and expertise built on our vast pool of examples and experience from our global work. It represents a shift in taking a proactive role as connector and facilitator of

information, analysis, action and collaboration between strategic actors, cultivating and making use of relationships our partners do not necessarily access as easily as we do. In Sweden, Diakonia is a change actor in its own right.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES 2021–2025

Diakonia has identified six supporting strategies to make the organization fit for purpose so that the commitments in the global strategy can be implemented. These priorities consider what we have achieved and learned from our experiences, as well as new requirements and needs that have been identified. Our overall organizational goal to enhance One Diakonia – a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable and accountable organization with a clear organizational set-up and major capacity to adapt to a changing context and achieve results – is at the core of this plan for the coming period.