

# Diakonia Complaints and Incidents reports

## January 2018 – May 2019



## 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. You can report anonymously via our web site. We also encourage you to raise comments, complaints, feedback or incidents i.e. with Diakonia employees and directors directly in the countries where we operate.

## Annual report on complaints

Diakonia set up a web based complaints and response mechanism (CRM) during 2013, when the CRM rollout plan for the entire organization started. Diakonia summarizes the organizational learning from complaints and incidents handling in annual reports revealing as little information as possible about the details of the complaints and leave out all information about the complainant or the subject of the complaint. The annual reports focus on lessons learnt and how Diakonia aims at improving our work. This report for 2018 is the sixth since the start, and we are happy the system works and contributes to improve Diakonia's operations.

From January 2018 until May 2019 Diakonia received twenty-three complaints or incidents out of which six cases are finalized so far during 2019. One of the two remaining cases from 2017 was finalized during 2018, and the second one will be finalized during 2019. All of these complaints or incidents are related to partner organizations. Lessons learned from the cases are incorporated in Diakonia's monitoring routines. In addition to this, Diakonia has an internal report system for employees used for reporting of security issues, working conditions and breaches of code of conduct. Fourteen such incidents were received during the period and all, but four, have been dealt with. Investigations are ongoing in the remaining cases. Human Resource routines and procedures incorporates lessons learnt from such cases.

The Senior Management at the Diakonia Head Office get information about all cases reported in Diakonias Complaints and Incident mechanism. They receive briefing regularly, and take part in decision making regarding each case.

## Complaints and incident finalized during the reporting period

<b>File no:</b>	2017 CC1	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
When Diakonia assessed the narrative and financial reporting from the partner there was a discrepancy regarding the content. When Diakonia assessed the audit report, it was clear that it did not meet the standards of the agreement between the partner organization and Diakonia.			

<b>What we did:</b>
Diakonia contacted the partner organization. They explained that the organization was going through internal problems, and they were suffering difficulties due to political pressure from authorities in the country in question. The organization had not informed Diakonia about this. We informed the Back Donor about the situation. Diakonia commissioned an investigation by an auditor in order with the purpose of finding out what had happened. The investigation concluded that some of the funding had not been used according to budget. The partner organization could not repay the amount in question, and Diakonia has repaid the Back Donor according to our agreement. Partnership has ended.
<b>Lessons learned:</b>
It is important to follow up the organizational assessments during the project period during monitoring since the situation for a partner can change rapidly over time. Diakonia should also visit partner organizations, make controls, and safeguard that bookkeeping is correct and according to budget. Partner organizations also need to change auditors on a regular basis.

<b>File no:</b>	2018 CC2	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
A whistleblower contacted Diakonia and other donors and reported that funding was not used according to good administrative practice, and that there was possible fraud.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia took the initiative for a donor coordination. We informed our Back Donor about the case. Diakonia made an investigation and funding was suspended. A special audit was performed. It concluded that no fraud had taken place, but made some suggestions to improve the organization ´s internal management system. Partnership continues with the organization.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
When an organization wrongfully is accused of fraud, donors usually stop their funding during the time of an investigation to avoid a possible financial risk. This puts the organization in a difficult position, not being able to pay staff, rent etc. The situation of risk taking needs to be addressed with Back Donors.			

<b>File no:</b>	2018 CC3	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
The partner organization had not submitted the annual reporting for 2017 on time, and the case automatically becomes an incident after a certain time.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia reminded the partner several times, and tried to contact their representatives on several occasions to find out what had happened. The Back Donor was informed about the situation. Diakonia informed the partner that no payments would be made due to the missing documentation. During the fall of 2018, the partner submitted both a narrative and financial report and an audit report that was unqualified. Diakonia has visited the partner and the auditor to explain our reporting demands. Partnership is ongoing.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Diakonia need to make sure that partner organizations understand the content in the agreements. Visits to and communication intents from Diakonia need to be well documented to facilitate monitoring.			

<b>File no:</b>	2018 CC4	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
Diakonia, together with two other organizations, received information from female staff in a partner organization that they had been sexual harassed and abused by a manager.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Together with the other two organizations, Diakonia commissioned an investigation and contracted an expert in PSEA (protection against sexual exploitation and abuse) investigations. It became clear that the abuse had taken place. The victims had repeatedly reported the situation to the organization's leadership but nothing had happened. Diakonia informed our Back Donor about the case. Partnership was ended.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
It is important that partner's management and staff are aware of the meaning of their Code of Conduct, and that reporting mechanisms are in place should violations of the code happen. It is also important to make sure that everyone understands what constitutes unappropriated behavior, including sexual harassment and the importance of protection for vulnerable groups. Diakonia has a responsibility to help partner set up reliable and safe complaints systems so victims can report and be certain that complaints are addressed. Partners board members also need to understand their roles and responsibilities.			

<b>File no:</b>	2018 CC5	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
The partner organization missed to submit annual reporting in time and this became an automatic incident according to Diakonias internal system.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia reported to the Back Donor. Contact was taken with partner organization and they submitted the annual reporting. The audit had some comments, and when Diakonia contacted the partner, most of the suggested actions had already been taken. An agreed action plan to strengthen the partner's administration and management was signed and has been implemented. Partnership is ongoing.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
This case highlights the importance of monitoring the financial aspects of a partner relationship. An organization that does a good job within its field of work can sometimes lack in administrative skills.			

<b>File no:</b>	2018 CC6	<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Content of the complaint:</b>			
An assessment of a partner organization was made and administrative weaknesses and suspicious fraudulent behavior of staff came up as a result.			
<b>What we did:</b>			
Diakonia had a dialogue with the Back Donor during the case. Payments to the partner was stopped, and a follow up process and investigation was instigated. The board of directors and management repaid Diakonia the questionable amounts and took upon themselves an action plan to strengthen administrative routines and policies. Disciplinary actions were taken against personal who were responsible for the lacking in following procedures.			
<b>Lessons learned:</b>			
Partners who show weaknesses in their administrative skills need close monitoring by Diakonia. The thematic and administrative skills of partners need to be assessed in the beginning of a program to make sure Diakonia has the proper capacity for accompanying partners in all aspects.			