

Approved by the Board of Directors 2012-10-27. Updated 2014-06-18 and 2019-03-12.

Diakonia's Accountability Framework

This is Diakonia

Diakonia is a faith-based organisation founded on Christian values that is working together with local partners for a sustainable change for the most vulnerable people of the world.

Diakonia has a **vision** of *a world where all women and men can live their lives in dignified circumstances, in a fair and sustainable world, free from poverty*. Diakonia's vision is based both on a theological reflection and on respect for the universally recognised Human Rights.

The **overall goal** of Diakonia's work is to *change unfair political, economic, social and cultural structures that generate poverty, oppression and violence*.

The **five focus areas** for Diakonia's work are: democracy, human rights, gender equality, social and economic justice and peace and reconciliation.

Diakonia implements its activities through local partner organisations. Diakonia links our partners' work and experiences to the advocacy and information work that we do in Sweden and Europe. Activities are also performed jointly with partners at global level.

Diakonia's implements its work **unconditionally**, without any intention of influencing people's religious affiliation, and we do not support proselytising activities. Diakonia supports people irrespectively of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, functional abilities, ethnicity and political persuasion.

Diakonia is committed to uphold the highest level of standards throughout its long-term development and humanitarian work.

All Diakonia employees are bound by the Diakonia Code of Conduct. As a member of the [ACT Alliance](#) (Action by Churches Together), Diakonia is bound by their Code of Conduct. Diakonia is also a signatory to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief](#).

Diakonia is a member of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance since 2015 following the merging of for example the [Humanitarian Accountability Partnership](#) (HAP) International which Diakonia was certified in between 2014 and 2018. Diakonia will continue to strengthening its mechanisms for quality management and accountability. Other tools for internal control and quality management are our Programme Management and Evaluation Handbook, the Human Resource Handbook and the Administrative Handbook.

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Being accountable

Throughout its work, Diakonia is guided by **two principles**¹:

- The rights based approach and strategy for change, which seeks to include qualitative participation², non-discrimination, transparency and mutual accountability throughout our work.
- Good donorship and partnership, which implies creating equal and long-term relationships with our partner organisations, to empower the rights holders and jointly strive towards our vision.

These guiding principles provide the basis for Diakonia's perception and practice of accountability throughout its work.

The adopted definition of "accountability" at Diakonia is:

*Accountability is the means through which **power is used responsibly**. It is a process of taking into account the views of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily the people affected by authority or power*³.

In the work to improve accountability, Diakonia is guided by the [CHS standard](#), which consists of nine commitments; these are embedded in Diakonia's organisational commitments, shown below in this document. Stakeholders are encouraged to monitor Diakonia's performance against these commitments and hold Diakonia accountable, should the organisation fall short of its commitments.

Diakonia's Accountability Framework states the organisation's **commitments to** 1) rights holders (with focus on disempowered and marginalised people and their communities); 2) our partners; 3) member churches, activists and our sponsors; 4) Decision makers/civil servants, media and other stakeholders.

The implementation of Diakonia's Accountability Framework has to be **contextualised** in the regions and countries where the organisation works. This includes adapting the ability to live up to the standards in relations to security situations and other contextual limitations.

Working with partners

Rather than imposing accountability standards on its partners, **Diakonia aims to share its standards and facilitate capacity building and support to them**. Diakonia views this as a process of improving the overall quality of partnerships, in line with the principle of good donorship. The key approach for working with partners on accountability will be the joint needs assessments and capacity developments, focusing on accountability between Diakonia and partners but also on Diakonia's accountability to right-holders and other stakeholders.

¹ More information about Diakonia's core values and Guiding principles can be found in Diakonia's Global Strategy 2015-2020

² It is our belief that *Qualitative participation* is the key through which women and men can become involved in the process of change. The focus on 'quality' implies that participation only becomes meaningful when it leads to real influence followed by concrete change with a bearing on the participants' quality of life.

³ According to HAP's definition of accountability as stated in HAP 2010 standard.

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Our commitments

Details about *how* we aim to live up to our commitments to different stakeholders, including activities, implementation mechanisms, indicators and time frame.

1. Delivering on commitments

Diakonia will communicate its commitments towards rights holders, partners and other stakeholders. Diakonia will work in a systematic way to live up to the commitments and encourage stakeholders to hold us accountable to these.

2. Staff members' competence

Ensure that all personnel has relevant job descriptions relating to organizational commitments. Staff members have good knowledge about Diakonia and have signed Diakonia's Code of Conduct as part of the employment contract.

Diakonia will support and encourage partners to ensure that they have the right competencies to enable them to meet their commitments towards rights- holders. This includes competence development of partner's personnel and ensuring that partners have a Code of Conduct in place.

3. Information sharing and transparency

Diakonia ensures that stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about Diakonia including commitments, policies, standards and Code of Conduct. Diakonia's employees shall be able to give relevant information about Diakonia to rights holders during field visits, at partner meetings etc.

Diakonia will encourage partners to share relevant information about Diakonia with rights holders.

4. Qualitative participation

Through dialogue with partners, Diakonia ensures that the support is contextually relevant and well founded in the realities where partners work. Diakonia will support partners in ensuring that rights holder's perspectives are included in project activities, which includes taking aspects of gender and diversity into account.

5. Enable stakeholders to complaint and give feedback

Rights holders, partners and other stakeholders are able to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process in case Diakonia fails to meet its commitments and policies or violate the Code of Conduct.

Diakonia will support partners in improving their own systems to handle and respond to complaints from rights-holders in an efficient and safe manner, and inform rights holders about their right to complain.

6. Organizational learning

Ensure that monitoring, progress reports, evaluations, studies and other feedback is used within the organization to capacitate and improve Diakonia's work.

Diakonia will support partners to continuously learn and improve their work by monitoring and evaluating projects/programs and through other feedback.

7. Shared goal and values

Diakonia will work with partners who share Diakonia's vision and values as stated in Diakonia's policy

8. Common fundraising standards are met

Public fundraising are being done responsibly; costs related to fundraising are being acceptable; sound market strategies are being applied.

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Diakonia's main Steering documents and guidelines

- [The Statutes of Diakonia, Two Principals](#)
- [Diakonia's Policy](#)
- [Gender Equality Guidelines](#)
- [Diakonia Code of Conduct](#)
- [PME \(Programme Monitoring Evaluation\) Handbook](#)
- [Global Fundraising Policy](#)
- [Administration Handbook](#)
- [Human Resource Handbook](#)
- [Images/photo policy](#)
- [Global Communication Strategy](#)
- [Policy for Diakonia Complaints and Response Mechanism](#)

Diakonia's varying roles and responsibilities in relation to these standards is outlined in the ***Implementation Plan for Diakonia's Commitments***.