

DORCAS

Initial Audit – Summary Report 2022/08/09

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
International office location	Almere, The Netherlands	
Total number of country programmes	14	Total number of staff 90 (International Office) 282 (Country Offices)

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Birgit Spiewok
Second auditor	Camille Guyot-Bender
Third auditor	-
Observer	-
Expert	-
Witness / other	-

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit cycle	Initial Audit
Phase of the audit	Stage 2
Coverage of the audit	Entire organisation and all its activities, including implementation by partner organisations
Extraordinary or other type of audit	-

1.4 Sampling*

Randomly sampled country sites	Included in final sample	Replaced by	Rationale for sampling and selection of sites	Onsite or remote
Iraq	Yes		Iraq represents a programme from the Middle East region and provides geographical coverage.	Remote
Lebanon	Yes		Lebanon was considered low risk and provided no issues with onsite visits.	Onsite
Egypt	No	Albania	Albania was included instead of Egypt because Egypt was considered high-risk and because data collection by foreigners would be difficult to collect due to sensitivity issues. Albania was low risk and information was accessible.	Remote

Mozambique	Yes		Mozambique represents a programme from the Southern Africa region and provides geographical coverage.	Remote
Any other sampling performed for this audit:				
<p>International Office staff interviewed were selected with the support of the Focal Point. Auditors described the types of interviews and content required for Stage 1 and suggested a list of possible staffing positions that could provide the information. The Focal Point then made suggestions and changes accordingly and adapted to Dorcas' structure and staffing titles. Auditors ensured that interviews would cover all subject areas from perspectives of different positions.</p> <p>Remote Country Office interviews were selected through a similar process as the International Office with support from the Focal Point.</p> <p>On-site Country Office interviews were organized with the Deputy Country Director from Lebanon. The CO also suggested the Partner Organisations to be interviewed and the complete list of interview partners was then reviewed and agreed with the audit team. The audit team requested the Country Office to plan community consultation with women, men, girls, boys and elderly in different communities and locations, and this was organised accordingly.</p>				
<p>Sampling risk: With only one site visit, communities and partner organisations were directly interviewed exclusively in Lebanon. In the other remotely assessed locations, interviews with staff and document review could therefore not be triangulated through community and partner consultations but only through staff interviews and documentation review. However, the conclusions of this audit have not been influenced by this potential sampling limitation.</p> <p>-</p>				

**It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's country programmes, its documentation and observation. Findings are analysed to determine an organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across different contexts and ways of working.*

2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

2.1 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
International Office Netherlands	2021/12/06 – 2021/12/15	Remote
Iraq	2022/03/27 – 2022/04/01	Remote
Lebanon	2022/04/03 – 2022/04/08	Onsite
Albania	2022/04/11 – 2022/04/15	Remote
Mozambique	2022/04/18 – 2022/04/22	Remote

2.2 Interviews

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
International Office			
Management	3	6	Remote
Staff	5	4	Remote
Member of the Board	1	0	Remote
Country Offices			

Management	7	5	Onsite
Staff	9	14	Onsite
Partner staff	5	6	4 remote / 7 onsite
Others			
Total number of interviewees	30	35	

2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of participants		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Girls FGD – Batroun (Lebanon)	8	0	Onsite
Boys FGD – Batroun (Lebanon)	0	10	Onsite
Women FGD – Batroun (Lebanon)	10	0	Onsite
Men FGD – Batroun (Lebanon)	0	9	Onsite
Boys FGD – Aley (Lebanon)	0	12	Onsite
Girls FGD – Aley (Lebanon)	11	0	Onsite
Women FGD – Aley (Lebanon)	13	0	Onsite
Men FGD – Aley (Lebanon)	0	13	Onsite
Elderly adults FGD – Beirut (Lebanon)	7	4	Onsite
Total number of participants	49	48	

2.4 Opening meeting

Date	2021/12/06
Location	remote
Number of participants	13
Any substantive issues arising	-

2.5 Closing meeting

Date	2022/05/12
Location	remote
Number of participants	9
Any substantive issues arising	At the closing meeting, the auditors presented that substantial evidence was found in the audit that indicated a major non-conformity.

2.6 Programme site

Briefing

Date	2022/04/04
Location	Beirut, Lebanon
Number of participants	20

De-briefing

Date	2022/04/08
Location	Beirut, Lebanon
Number of participants	13

Any substantive issues arising	
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Any substantive issues arising	
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3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Stichting Dorcas Aid International (Dorcas) is a Christian, international, development and humanitarian aid organisation founded in 1980 by Dutch entrepreneur Dirk-Jan Groot. His inspiration to start the organisation came from a foundation that supported Eastern Europeans who were persecuted for their religious beliefs during the Cold War. The organisation has deep Christian values and describes its work as being rooted in its faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

The organisation started its programming in Eastern Europe and expanded its activities to Africa in the 1990s. Today it is operational in 15 countries in both Eastern Europe and Africa as well as the Middle East. Africa is its largest operational region and Dorcas' three largest country operations are South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Iraq. Through a three-level approach, which consist of working with people, communities and societies, Dorcas works to improve the resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable people living with poverty, social exclusion, armed conflict, and natural disasters.



In addition to its international operating presence, Dorcas has offices to mobilise resources in the Netherlands and in the United States. In the Netherlands, Dorcas receives support and contributions from volunteers, partner organisations (POs), churches, private and public donors, and its staff. In the United States, it is certified under the name Dorcas Aid America (DAA) as a 501(c)3 non-profit organisation and uses its presence in the United States to specifically attract donors and engage in partnerships that will help fund development projects.

Dorcas' Strategy 2022-2025 has identified five strategic ambitions to deliver on desired impact so that people and communities flourish:

1. Focus on People who are marginalised
2. Develop Coherent and Community-based programmes
3. Increase the Scale and Effectiveness of our Work
4. Mobilise Resources and Engage Communities
5. Become an Agile Catalyst and ConnActor

As of 2020, according to Dorcas' Annual Report 2020, Dorcas has 404 staff members and is supported by 41 Dorcas shops, 10,000 volunteers, 56,000 individual donors and 7,750 sponsorships by individuals, 964 companies and 888 churches. It reached almost 900,000 vulnerable people across its 14 operational countries.

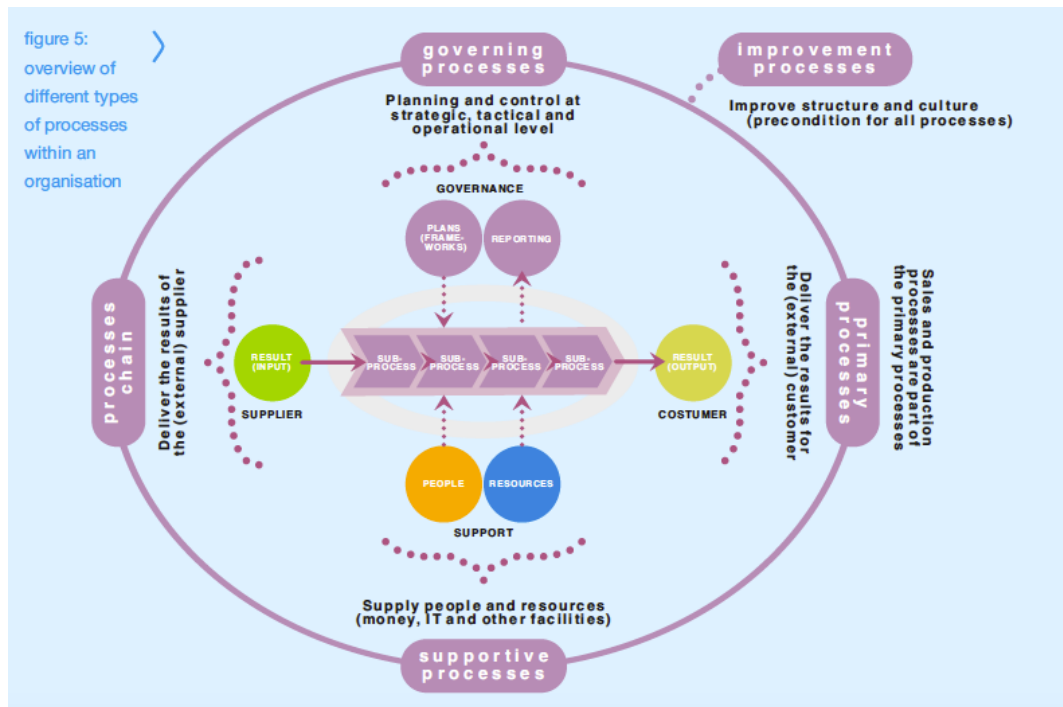
The total income reached in 2020 was 26.9M Euros, of which institutional donations made up the majority of financial support funding Dorcas' programmes.

3.2 Governance and management structure

Dorcas' "Design of the organisation" document describes in detail the design, processes, and structure of the organisation, including how Dorcas has evolved since its inception and how it anticipates changing in the future. The most significant change has been shifting its traditional, hierarchical organisational structure to incorporating a process structure, where the organisation is structured, organised, managed, and measured around its primary business processes. Dorcas has identified two such primary processes: 1) Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating (PME) projects and 2) Attracting, Binding and Assisting supporters. All processes are developed using the RACI matrix model, defining who is **R**esponsible, **A**ccountable, **C**onsulted, and **I**nformed.

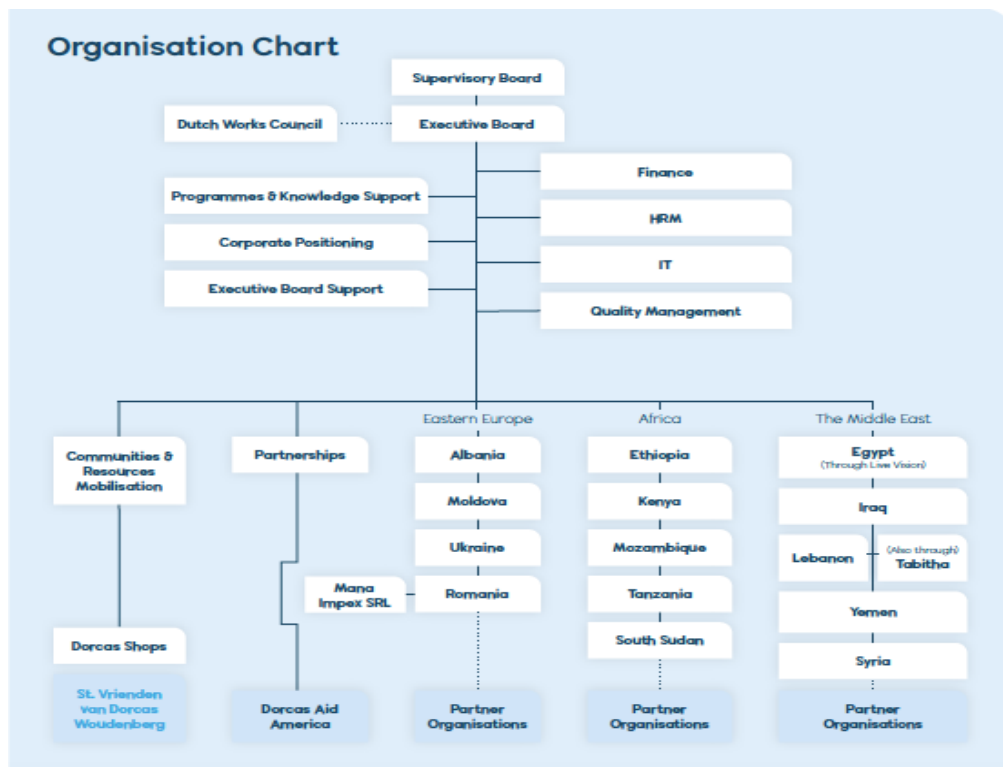
Dorcas bases its work on the following key principles:

- Responsibilities and powers are to be assigned as decentralised and as low down as possible in hierarchy of the organisation;
- The process comes before the hierarchy; and
- General management responsibilities concern result areas that are not linked to a process, including implementation of general policies (e.g. integrity/PSEA), and ensuring that processes within the organisation are aligned with each other.



(Figure 5, page 17, Dorcas Design of the Organisation)

The organisation chart of Dorcas is as follows:



The Supervisory Board is the highest authority in the organisation. It supervises the organisation and is also responsible for determining (on the proposal of the Executive Board) the register of powers, the treasury statute, and the procurement scheme. Its objective is to direct long-term organisational strategy, approving (long-term) policy plans, annual budgets,

and tracking progress through the review of annual reports and annual accounts. The Supervisory Board meets approximately every eight weeks.

The Executive Board consists of the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Operations Officer. They are supported by the Executive Board Secretary. Mutual responsibilities of the Executive Board include managing strategic direction through the coordination of portfolios and external contacts, preparation of consultations with the Supervisory Board, the Works Council, the International Management Team, and the International Council.

The International Management Team (IMT) consists of the Executive Board, the Executive Board Secretary, the Programmes & Knowledge Support Manager, the Communities & Resources Mobilisation Manager, the IT Manager, the Partnerships Manager, the Finance Manager and the Human Resource Management Manager, and a representation consisting of one country director per region where Dorcas works. The IMT meets every six weeks and takes decisions regarding strategic and tactical consultation on international activities and the deployment of people and resources internationally. It monitors the implementation of agreed policy as well as operational management.

The International Council (IC) consists of the IMT plus all Country Directors. The IC meets twice a year and has similar responsibilities as the IMT plus it takes the decision on annual plans.

Dorcas works in Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. In principle, each Country Office (CO) consists of a locally registered branch of the I-NGO, whereby Dorcas Aid International controls the office in question through the Country Director, who is employed by Dorcas. The responsibilities and powers of the Country Directors are defined by means of a Power of Attorney and a Management Charter.

3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

Dorcas uses several working documents and frameworks that provide guidance on its internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management. Responsibilities are also given to individual staff to guide, lead and hold the organisation accountable to its quality assurance and risk management commitments. A legal advisor at the International Office (IO) ensures compliance with Dutch laws and regulations.

Dorcas' Integrity Framework defines how the organisation prevents and manages any integrity-related risks and if necessary, has guidance for staff on how to respond. The Framework is applicable to all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, and POs and comprises of several annexes: Code of Conduct, Financial manual, Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing policy, PSEA policy, Feedback and Complaints procedure and Whistle-blowing policy. At the IO, Dorcas employs a Coordinating Integrity Focal Point, and each CO has a designated Integrity Focal Point.

The organisation also has in place overarching Accountability Guidelines which define how Dorcas holds itself accountable to affected communities, specifically regarding Rights & Participation, Safety & Protection and Privacy & Dignity.

According to Dorcas' process structure, governing processes have been defined in terms of the development and updating of strategic and policy plans, annual and budgeting plans, as well as monitoring progress against action plans, budgets, and annual reporting. Their defined Quality Management processes include complaints handling, investigating customer satisfaction, managing risks, opportunities, and incidents, and having an improvement cycle in place. Dorcas has a Quality Manager who is responsible for the overall Quality Management of the organisation.

With regards to Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating projects (PME), the organisation uses a Project Cycle Management (PCM) process. Two Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and

Learning (MEAL) officers at the IO support these activities and work with dedicated MEAL officers at each CO. Dorcas uses a Results Framework to track progress of intended objectives, which is integrated into its recently established online PCM platform (SalesForce). Dorcas also uses Kobo to collect data at the country level.

As part of the improvement cycle, there are general process improvement consultations that take place twice a year for managers and process coordinators, and specific consultations for PME, support functions and corporate positioning and resources mobilisation processes which take place once per quarter.

COs are audited internally once every three years and audits are typically conducted by Dorcas' Financial Officers and the Manager Finance. Compliance with donor requirements is the responsibility of the Country Directors. There are internal audit requirements and a process outline described in the organisation's Financial Manual. POs also require audits according to Dorcas. If the PO is receiving more than 75K Euros annually from Dorcas, they are required to have an external audit. Any PO receiving less than 75K Euros annually, it is up to the Country Director to decide whether there is need for an audit and whether it should be conducted internally or externally. The IO has an internal audit template to follow for COs and POs. Annual audits at the IO are also conducted and it is recommended that they are conducted by an independent, external auditor, who is Advanced Financial Modelling (AFM) certified. Financial control responsibilities are shared between the Finance Manager and Finance Officer Projects.

An organisation-wide risk analysis is to be done quarterly and updated by management and checked by the Board, covering financial, reputational, personnel-related, and strategic risks. The organisation provides a format for designing Country Strategies, which includes a risk analysis. The Project Implementation Manual also stipulates within the PCM when and how risks are to be assessed.

Dorcas' Integrity Framework defines how the organisation prevents and manages any integrity-related risks and if necessary, has guidance on how to take action. The Framework is applicable to all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, and POs.

3.4 Work with partner organisations

Dorcas has made a strong effort to prioritise collaboration and coordination through partnerships and to integrate the promotion of national and local actors into its ways of working. It works with partners in all of its COs, where roughly 40% of Dorcas' project budget is implemented by partners, and stresses this commitment through its three-level approach to aid: by working with people, communities and societies, which is referenced throughout its strategic documents.

Dorcas has put in place a Policy Guideline for Partnering, Localisation and Capacity which provides strategic direction to its Partnership Department and lays out principles with regards to partnering with other actors, its approach to localisation through a localisation agenda, and how to build PO capacity. The document also refers to the importance of CHS compliance. Although Dorcas is not a signatory of it, it also stresses the importance of committing to the principles of the Grand Bargain. Localisation is considered a key driver in Dorcas' attempt to develop partnerships.

Partnerships take many forms at Dorcas and can be international, regional, and country level partnerships. They are made with NGOs, the private sector, government, research institutes, and investors. Reasons for beginning a partnership can vary and include programme implementation, resource mobilisation, knowledge sharing and positioning. Dorcas IO reported that they track partnerships through its Mapping Networks and Strategic Partnership excel document, however not all CO staff were aware of this document or reported making use of it.

Dorcas recognises the importance of formalising PO relationships and does this through a Project Partner Agreement and Partner Registration Form, which help to identify roles, and responsibilities for each partnership. By signing the agreement, the PO confirms that they are aware of and subscribe to Dorcas' mandates and obligations with regards to CHS, fraud, PSEA, corrupt practices, conflicts of interest and misuse of resources. The Project Partner Agreement also requires that they are in compliance with Dorcas Code of Conduct. If the PO does not have essential policies in place, such as the Code of Conduct, however, Dorcas requires that they follow the Dorcas policy. CO staff and partners confirmed that the agreement and registration form are currently used to formalize these partnerships. Partners interviewed considered that their relationships with Dorcas are clearly defined and commitments are respected.

In most cases POs use the same (financial) structure as Dorcas and report in Dorcas formats. Although POs do not have access to Dorcas' new Salesforce PCM platform, all partner financial information is imported into the system.

Due-diligence assessments are also meant to be conducted to identify capacity strengthening needs as well as ways Dorcas can support these. Traditionally, these were completed before signing an agreement with a PO, however some CO staff reported that they have not recently used the assessment tool as it is currently being revised. The IO confirmed that not all COs are using this tool.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Effectiveness of the governance, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation

Dorcas has undergone significant organisational developments in recent years and is clearly dedicated to providing high quality humanitarian and development assistance. Many of the recent changes demonstrate commendable policy commitments in the areas of Accountability to Affected Populations, Integrity, and they aim to strengthen systems to be in line with the commitments of the CHS. The most recent quality assurance procedures that have been put in place are the Quality Management System, Integrity Framework, revised Feedback and Complaints Mechanism, and Accountability to Affected Populations Guidelines. These improvements have been in part in response to weaknesses identified in the 2019 internally led CHS self-assessment, which found inconsistencies in standardisation of policies across the organisation and a need for strengthened quality assurance systems. The recent improvements specifically aim to harmonise policies, standardise procedures and reinforce accountability at the IO level, and to ensure more robust quality assurance and risk management processes at the COs.

Despite these efforts, the present audit identified major weaknesses in the management of quality assurance and monitoring, as well as at the level of risk management processes at the CO level. While policies and procedures at the IO have improved, there is a gap in terms of how Dorcas assures itself that comparable procedures and practices are in place at the CO level. In some countries, procedures are in place whereas in other countries, auditors found no evidence of equivalent procedures being followed. Instead, COs have set up their own systems without getting the necessary support from the IO to ensure consistency across the organisation. For example, the Feedback Complaints Mechanism has a different structure in each CO sampled: some were not functioning whereas others were designed using internally led CO standards and not IO ones. As such, evidence drawn from the sampled project sites did not provide sufficient assurance that standard quality assurance processes are applied.

CO staff further stated that they have been challenged in recent years to keep up with the new structures, IT set-up and policies and frameworks. Staff confirmed that they saw improvements and potential for further improvements with the new process-led management structure, policy developments and IT systems, but have lacked time to fully implement all the changes.

To ensure quality assurance, internal IO-led audits are conducted in each respective CO every three years. Audits follow a standard template that intend to review the general structure of COs, verifying their legal structure, staff structure, general and financial administration. Findings and recommendations typically address CO-identified gaps and other structural support that may be lacking. The scope, however, does not systematically include checking compliance with Dorcas internal policies and regulations, e.g. functioning Complaints Handling System, Anti-Corruption policy and processes, Partnership Agreements or Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Nor are the gaps identified systematically linked with training or other support mechanisms to ensure that staff can confidently work to agreed performance standards and adhere to policies that are relevant to them. Audit reports also do not currently allow the organisation to identify and address non-compliance at CO level with CHS requirements.

With regards to planning, monitoring and evaluation, Dorcas has procedures and tools that demonstrate the organisation's commitment to M&E such as the Project Implementation Manual which outlines the M&E activities to be reported on. Dorcas also has a requirement that all projects must have an M&E plan, and this should be reflected in the budget. The organisation is currently revising its Evaluation Guide, which has not been finalised or rolled out yet. And a Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptation and Learning (MEAL) manual has been drafted but is also not yet finalised or rolled out. Nevertheless, practices that are currently in place do demonstrate that the organisation is committed to systematic, objective, and ongoing M&E and uses findings from these activities to adapt and improve programmes when and where possible.

Part of Dorcas' monitoring system includes organisation-wide quarterly risk monitors, to record and track risks at COs. At the IA, however, the evidence provided does not ascertain that those risks identified at the COs are systematically escalated to management and the Board. Furthermore, several risk areas are not fully covered. These areas include the environment, corruption, data protection, and procurement.

With regards to POs, auditors found that there is not a systematic quality assurance process to ensure that they also comply with Dorcas' frameworks or principles.

4.2 How the organisation applies the CHS across its work

Dorcas demonstrates its commitment to the CHS and explains this to its staff and POs publicly. The organisation has been undertaking major changes in recent years and many of these changes in policies, organisational structure and IT system will – once they are fully in place across all CO and POs – may most likely contribute to Dorcas compliance with the CHS.

However, at the time of this audit the application of the CHS across all the Core Commitment (CC) indicators is still a work in progress. Auditors found important disparities and inconsistencies in the application of CHS related processes at programme level, which is most probably linked to the systemic weaknesses identified by the present audit around the coherence of the internal compliance and quality assurance management systems.

A major weakness was identified related to Dorcas capacity to ensure its staff have the adequate support and capability to deliver its programmes, while managing the change process. This relates also to Dorcas lacking systematic mechanisms to verify internally and

with its POs if and how the CHS related processes are adhered to (see section 4.1). Minor weaknesses were also found in all CHS commitments (see sections 4.6 and 5).

4.3 PSEA

Dorcas is fully committed to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. To this end, the organisation has put in place an *Integrity Framework* and *Accountability (AAP) Guidelines*. The Framework and Guideline are rolled-out to COs, but not yet fully in place in all country programmes.

Projects are assessed and implemented recognising and addressing the specific needs and risks of vulnerable groups,

Dorcas informs communities of the kind of behaviour they can expect from their staff and encourages and welcomes feedback and complaints. The Feedback and Complaints Policy recognises the need to ensure the safety of complainants, however not all Country Programmes or Partner Organisations have full FCM in place yet.

POs reported that Dorcas programmes were realistic and safe. POs are required to comply with the Integrity Framework of Dorcas or have their own protection processes in place. Dorcas however, does not fully satisfy itself that all their POs comply with this requirement.

Communities stated that they felt safe accessing the services provided.

4.4 Localisation

Dorcas recognises localisation as one of its organisational commitments. Its Strategic Plan 2022-2025 states that “humanitarian response and development is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership of local authorities and the capacity of local civil society” in order to “better address the needs of affected populations, connect to available assets and resources, and prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses and development”.

Dorcas commits to becoming as local as possible through approaches such as Assets Based Community Development and Organization (ABCD) described in its Ways of Working document which aims to build capacities, assets and relationships present in the communities, and establish and strengthen community structures. The organisation’s Policy guidelines for partnering, localisation, and capacity, also describes how it focuses on community-led development and enhanced local capacities and lists the principles required to apply these.

In practice, Dorcas has developed tools and guidance for identifying capacity building needs of POs, such as the Questionnaire for partner capacity development, however they are outdated, no longer in use, and currently being revised. Local capacity building, therefore, occurs on an ad hoc basis and is not standard across the organisation.

4.5 Gender and diversity

Although it shows a strong commitment to diversity, the organisation does not ensure inclusive representation is promoted when working with communities in all country programmes. The commitment to collect and use disaggregated data is not being applied systematically.

In its programmes, the organisation performs impartial assessment of needs and risks and demonstrates understanding of vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups. Dorcas also analyses the risks to people’s safety and has clear guidelines to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the risk assessment is not fully in place in all country programmes and the organisation does not ensure that all its Partner Organisations comply with this requirement.

Human resource policies are fair and transparent and staff behaviour is guided by a Code of Conduct known to all staff and endorsed through trainings and mandatory signing.

4.6 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Feedback from communities	Average score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	Dorcas has policies and procedures in place to ensure its humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant. Assessments include ongoing context and stakeholder analysis and needs are assessed impartially, taking into consideration the diversity of communities. However, it was observed, that not all assessments include disaggregated data. The organisation does not have a formal commitment to impartiality in place, however, practice shows that Dorcas complies with the humanitarian principles.	Communities confirmed that Dorcas provides assistance based on impartial assessments and that aid is given regardless of faith. Communities stated that Dorcas was open to suggestions and responded quickly to sudden emergency needs.	2,3
Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	The organisation implements programmes effectively and timely. It ensures that its response is safe for communities, that no unnecessary delays occur and that communities are referred on if the organisation cannot meet their needs. CO staff demonstrate adequate technical competencies and apply relevant standards, but there is no system in place to ensure that standards are adhered to. The organisation's M&E system is in the process of being revised and the audit identifies a gap in monitoring and reporting at outcome level. Dorcas has several processes in place to make sure that programme commitments can be met but staff report having reduced capacities due to a large amount of organisational changes in recent years (see major non conformity 8.4 and related minor non conformities)	Communities stated that they felt safe accessing the services provided by the organisation and did not experience unnecessary delays. They confirmed being referred on if necessary and that Dorcas staff being very satisfied with the professional approach of the organisation. Although community members did not confirm being involved in formal monitoring activities, they stated that their input was listened to and taken into consideration.	2,3
Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	Dorcas puts lot of effort into avoiding negative effects. This includes setting up an Integrity Framework and other processes to addresses sexual exploitation and abuse and other risks to the health, safety and security of communities. The organisation also has a policy for data protection in place. However, not all COs apply the integrity or data protection principles and Dorcas also does not ensure systematically that its POs comply with these requirements. The organisation is	Community members valued the support given by Dorcas. Communities confirmed that Dorcas and its POs are respectful of local culture, promote local livelihoods and consider the safety of communities in their programming.	1,8

	<p>committed to strengthening local capacities and the local economy; some gaps were identified regarding incorporating existing community hazard and risk assessments and exit strategies into all programmes.</p>		
<p>Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback</p>	<p>Overall, Dorcas demonstrates a good level of compliance with this commitment. The organisation provides information to and is communicating adequately with communities. Feedback is encouraged and most communities stated that they can actively participate, and that all community groups are represented and addressed by Dorcas. The organisation's Ethical Guidelines are not fully in place and rolled-out yet to ensure their systematic application. As not all COs have functioning Feedback and Complaints Systems in place, Dorcas is not in a position to ensure that all communities can provide feedback.</p>	<p>Communities stated that they felt well informed about the organisation, the programmes, and what kind of behaviour they can expect from Dorcas staff. They stated that Dorcas staff is respectful and works in a culturally appropriate way. Not all community groups felt adequately included in activities of interest to them, but all reported that Dorcas was open to feedback.</p>	2,3
<p>Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>Dorcas has a strong organisational commitment towards accountability to affected populations and communities, which is reflected in its procedures and mechanisms throughout its programmes and project management. The Code of Conduct covers complaints or concerns about safeguarding, child protection, the conduct or behaviour of staff, and fraud and corruption. Dorcas manages complaints in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner that prioritises the complainant's safety and those affected at all stages.</p> <p>An Integrity Focal Point was in place in all countries sampled.</p> <p>Dorcas consults communities on the design and implementation of the complaints handling processes and staff interviewed stated that the organisation encourages them to report any wrongdoing and that they feel safe to report.</p> <p>Dorcas ensures that communities are aware of the organisation's commitment on PSEA.</p> <p>However, the FCM is new and not in place in all COs. This means that there are inconsistencies across the organisation in application and availability to communities and partners. Dorcas does not ensure in all its locations that communities are consulted</p>	<p>POs and communities state that Dorcas commits to ensuring that they are aware of expected behaviour of staff. This has been put in place through FGD, kick-off meetings, and posters seen throughout the office.</p> <p>Communities confirmed that complaints raised which did not fall within Dorcas' scope were referred to relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Communities in countries where the FCM are in place confirmed that they are satisfied with the systems in place.</p>	2,0

	<p>regarding complaints procedures, or that reporting and handling of cases is consistently managed according to procedures and policies.</p>		
<p>Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary</p>	<p>Dorcas identifies the roles, capacities, and interests of different stakeholders. The organisation is committed to coordination and complementarity of its activities and ensures that activities create no duplication and are coordinated with national and local authorities, and other organisations.</p> <p>Partnerships with local organisations are one of Dorcas' principles, in line with its commitment to localisation. Partnership agreements are developed with all POs. Dorcas has built transparent and equal relationships with its implementing partners, respecting each partner's mandate, obligations, and independence. Information is shared through appropriate communication channels such as via emails, phone calls, and through trainings and workshops.</p> <p>POs confirmed that they have a good relationship with Dorcas and feel respected and open. However, Dorcas capacity building mechanisms are not fully in place; its capacity assessment tool is out of date and currently not being used. Dorcas is also not consistent in ensuring POs level of compliance with CHS, including having a fully functioning FCM.</p>	<p>Communities stated that they receive assistance without specific demands on their resources and that to their knowledge and experience, there is no duplication of activities between Dorcas and its partners.</p>	2,5
<p>Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve</p>	<p>Dorcas is dedicated to learning and lays out a framework to ensure its project and programme development is continuously informed by learning. The organisation shares experiences internally and with its partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Documents, such as the Learning Lessons and Programme Adaptations, have been provided by the IO to standardize capturing learnings.</p> <p>Dorcas is considered an active contributor to learning and innovation amongst its peers. Staff regularly meet with their respective sector counterparts to share promising practices and challenges. Projects are informed by learning.</p> <p>M&E plans are mandatory for all projects. However, Dorcas does not have a specific learning policy to help standardise the processes. POs staff also reported not being</p>	<p>Communities confirmed that there have been adaptations to programming in response to contextual or environmental changes, especially in response to Covid-19.</p> <p>Communities also stated that they have contributing to learning through sessions set up by Dorcas staff, however they also shared that not all learnings or innovation were reported back to them.</p>	2,3

	supported to implement changes based on the M&E results in a systematic way.		
Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	<p>Dorcas staff work according to the mandate and values of the organisation. The organisation's staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and compliant with local employment law. Staff have up to date job descriptions, receive performance appraisals once per year or when a contract ends and receive trainings to improve skills and competencies when budgets allow. Dorcas staff interviewed are all aware of and sign the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>However, the organisation does not currently have the necessary management and staff capacities to deliver its programmes in line with its own quality commitments. This is due to a high workload resulting from substantial management and policy changes that have been introduced recently. Training plans are not in place to support the rolling out of newly introduced policies and processes. There is an added burden with regards to the change in the management structure and the new IT systems.</p> <p>Dorcas staff have reported not always being aware of how their responsibilities fit within the broader process and structure and struggle to keep up with the numerous changes introduced.</p>	Communities consulted reported that Dorcas staff are competent and effective in their jobs and that they have the capacities to implement projects in an appropriate manner.	0
Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	<p>Dorcas has financial governance systems across all offices and operations sampled, and manages human resources, finances, assets, and project funding resources to achieve intended purposes.</p> <p>Dorcas has a range of policies and procedures at the global and country level to govern the use and management of resources. Part of this guidance has to do with accepting gifts ethically and legally and it prohibits staff from accepting personal gifts from communities, donors, partners or any other stakeholders.</p> <p>Annual plans and budgets were reported to be developed with input from relevant stakeholders to efficiently design programmes, balancing resources, quality, cost and timeliness. Risk monitors, however are not used on a regular basis.</p>	Communities consider that Dorcas is not wasting resources. They stated that they felt comfortable with their impression of the processes to manage risk.	2,0

	<p>However, Dorcas does not have an Environmental Policy to govern how the organisation uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way.</p> <p>There is a lack of awareness amongst staff on Dorcas' commitment to zero tolerance of any kind of corruption, fraud, or misuse of resources.</p> <p>PO agreements include a clause stating that procurement procedures have to include anti-corruption, and conflict of interest policy commitments.</p>		
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* *Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/ weakness at the level of the Commitment. In these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0.*

5. Summary of weaknesses

Weaknesses*	Type	Recommended resolution due date	Date closed out
2022-1.2: Dorcas does not ensure that its policy commitment regarding collecting disaggregated data is systematically applied in project work and does not consider gender and ability in all its programmes.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-1.4: Dorcas does not have a policy level commitment to impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and people affected by crisis.	Minor	2023-06 -20	
2022-2.5: Dorcas does not systematically monitor outcomes of its programmes and therefore does not adapt programmes at this level.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-3.2: The organisation does not ensure that existing community hazards and risk assessments and preparedness plans are systematically considered.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-3.6: Dorcas does not systematically ensure that POs identify and address actual unintended negative effects nor does the organisation consider environmental risks.	Minor	2024-06 -20	

2022-3.7: Dorcas does not ensure that its policies and guidance on protection are understood and applied in all its country programmes and when working with POs.	Minor	2024-06 -20	
2022-3.8: Dorcas does not ensure that personal information collected from communities is safeguarded systematically in all its COs and when working with POs.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-4.7: Dorcas does not systematically ensure that external communications are accurate, ethical and respectful.	Minor	2024-06 -20	
2022-5.1: Dorcas does not ensure that communities and people affected by crisis are consulted on the organisation's Feedback and Complaints Mechanism	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-5.4: The complaints-handling process for communities and people affected by crisis is not in place in all country programmes .	Minor	2024-06 -20	
2022-5.5: Dorcas does not ensure that complaints are acted upon according to defined policies and processes in all locations	Minor	2024-06 -20	
2022-6.6: Dorcas does not have in place procedures ensuring that POs are following agreed policies and obligations.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-7.4: Dorcas does not have evaluation and learning policies in place.	Minor	2024-06 -20	
2022-8.1: Dorcas does not sufficiently support its CO staff so that they can work to the agreed objectives.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-8.4: Dorcas does not currently have the necessary management and staff capacities to deliver its programmes in line with its own quality commitments.	Major	2024-06 -20	
	Minor	2025-06 -20	

2022-8.6: Work objectives are not always attainable due to staff feeling overwhelmed by other organisational-level priorities.			
2022-9.4: Dorcas does not ensure that all staff fully consider the impact of using local and natural resources on the environment.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-9.5: Dorcas does not ensure that all staff fully understand the risk of corruption and can take appropriate action.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
2022-9.6: Dorcas does not have policies or processes in place governing how the organisation uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way or how its CO or POs comply with non-financial policies.	Minor	2025-06 -20	
Total Number	18 Minor CARs 1 Major CAR		

6. Sampling recommendation for next audit

Sampling rate	As per procedure
Specific recommendation for selection of sites	Ensure that all mandates are covered

7. Lead auditor recommendation

In our opinion, DORCAS demonstrates a good level of commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and its inclusion in the Independent Verification scheme is justified.

Name and signature of lead auditor:



Birgit Spiewok

Date and place:

Berlin, 20 June 2022

8. HQAI decision

Registration in the Independent Verification Scheme:

- Accepted
 Refused

Next audit: renewal audit by 2025-08-11

Name and signature of HQAI Head of Quality Assurance:

Elissa Goucem

Date and place:

2022-08-11

9. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation

Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:

I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit

Yes No

I accept the findings of the audit

Yes No

Name and signature of the organisation's representative:



Natascha Gendi-Groot

Date and place:

15/08/2022



Appeal

In case of disagreement with the decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 days after being informed of the decision. HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 10 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform HQAI in writing within 30 days after being informed of the proposed solution, of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will constitute a panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. These will strive to come to a decision within 30 days.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal Procedure.

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: major weakness; • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issue or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020