

# Diakonia Sweden

## Renewal Audit – Summary Report - 2025/07/02

### 1. General information

#### 1.1 Organisation

| Type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Mandates                                                                                                                                            | Verified                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International<br><input type="checkbox"/> National<br><input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Federated<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy |
| <b>Legal registration</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | INGO, registered with the Swedish Tax Authorities                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Head Office location</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Stockholm, Sweden                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Total number of organisation staff</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                     | 210                                                                                                                                                 |

#### 1.2 Audit team

|                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Lead auditor</b>                 | Jorge Menéndez Martínez |
| <b>Second auditor</b>               | Simon Maina             |
| <b>Third auditor</b>                | -                       |
| <b>Observer</b>                     | -                       |
| <b>Expert</b>                       | -                       |
| <b>Witness / other participants</b> | -                       |

#### 1.3 Scope of the audit

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CHS:2024 Verification Scheme</b> | Certification                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Audit Cycle</b>                  | Third cycle                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Type of audit</b>                | Renewal Audit                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Scope of audit</b>               | The audit covers the whole organisation. The audit includes Diakonia Head office, and all the humanitarian, development and advocacy programmes, including the International Humanitarian Law Centre. |
| <b>Focus of the audit</b>           | The audit has focused on assessing the three different operations models implemented by Diakonia this year as part of its reorganisation process.                                                     |

#### 1.4 Sampling\*

|                                                             |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sampling unit</b>                                        | Country Programme                              |
| <b>Total number of sampling units</b>                       | 22                                             |
| <b>Sample size</b>                                          | 4                                              |
| <b>Total number of onsite visits</b>                        | 1                                              |
| <b>Total number of sampling units for remote assessment</b> | 3                                              |
| <b>Sampling Unit Selection</b>                              |                                                |
| <b>Random Sampling – onsite/remote</b>                      | <b>Purposive Sampling – onsite/remote</b>      |
| Bolivia – not selected                                      | Regional Programme (Kenya and Uganda) - onsite |
| Sri Lanka – not selected                                    | Nicaragua – remote                             |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Paraguay – remote                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| Africa Economic Justice - remote                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| <b>Any other sampling considerations:</b> <p>We have intentionally included country offices that represent each of the three different management models used by Diakonia. This approach ensures a more comprehensive understanding of how the organisation operates in diverse contexts and under varying structural conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Country Model is represented by offices that operate with an in-country programme strategy and a locally based team (Paraguay Country Office)</li> <li>• The Remote Country Model is reflected in contexts where Diakonia manages its programme remotely due to limited portfolio size or specific constraints, such as security risks or restricted civic space (Nicaragua Country Office)</li> <li>• The Multi-context Model is included to examine regional or global programmes where management and operations are distributed across multiple countries, allowing for cost-efficiency and shared resources. Regional Programme (Kenya and Uganda)</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, a regional advocacy programme (Africa Economic Justice programme) has been included in the sample to ensure that all forms of programme and office management used by Diakonia are adequately represented.</p> <p>As part of the head office interviews, the Audit team included staff from the International Humanitarian Law Centre.</p> |  |
| <b>Sampling risks identified:</b> <p>There are no sampling risks identified. The audit team has full confidence in the findings and conclusions of this audit based on the sample as outlined above.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |

*\*It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's activities, programmes, and documentation, as well as direct 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 Opening Meeting

|                 |            |                                       |      |
|-----------------|------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Date</b>     | 2025/04/24 | <b>Number of participants</b>         | 14   |
| <b>Location</b> | Remote     | <b>Any substantive issues arising</b> | None |

### 2.2 Locations Assessed

| Locations                                                           | Dates                  | Onsite or remote |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Sweden                                                              | 28 April – 13 May      | Remote           |
| Kenya                                                               | 26 May – 30 May        | Onsite           |
| Uganda                                                              | 5 June                 | Remote           |
| Paraguay                                                            | 21 – 23 May and 6 June | Remote           |
| Honduras (Country from where the projects in Nicaragua are managed) | 7 June                 | Remote           |

### 2.3 Interviews

| Level / Position of interviewees | Number of interviewees | Onsite or |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|

|                                                   | Female | Male | remote            |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------|------|-------------------|
| <b>Head Office / Entities / Affiliate offices</b> |        |      |                   |
| Board members                                     |        | 1    | Remote            |
| Management                                        | 5      | 5    | Remote            |
| Staff                                             | 4      | 4    | Remote            |
| <b>Country Programme</b>                          |        |      |                   |
| Management                                        | 3      | 1    | Onsite and remote |
| Staff                                             | 7      |      | Onsite and remote |
| Partner staff (Male, Female and Non-Binary)       | 12     |      | Onsite and remote |
| Stakeholders                                      |        | 3    | Onsite and remote |
| <b>Total number of interviewees</b>               |        |      | <b>45</b>         |

## 2.4 Consultations with communities

| Type of group and location                                                                                | Number of interviewees |      | Onsite or remote |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------|------------------|
|                                                                                                           | Female                 | Male |                  |
| Group discussion #1. Participants in the Democracy and Human Rights Program (Male, Female and Non-Binary) | 9                      |      | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #2. Resilient Commercial and Agricultural Villages– Women                                | 5                      |      | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #3. Resilient Commercial and Agricultural Villages – Widows                              | 5                      |      | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #4. Resilient Commercial and Agricultural Villages – Members of the cooperative          | 2                      | 3    | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #5. Resilient Commercial and Agricultural Villages – Men                                 |                        | 6    | Onsite           |
| Interview #1. Paralegal – People with disabilities                                                        |                        | 1    | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #6. Paralegal – Young                                                                    | 1                      | 2    | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #7. Paralegal – Community Leaders                                                        | 2                      | 1    | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #8. Paralegal – Women                                                                    | 4                      |      | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #9. Paralegal – Men                                                                      | 4                      |      | Onsite           |
| Group discussion #10. Paralegal – Community Leaders                                                       | 2                      | 1    | Onsite           |
| <b>Total number of participants</b>                                                                       |                        |      | <b>48</b>        |

## 2.5 Closing Meeting

|                 |            |                                       |      |
|-----------------|------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Date</b>     | 2025/06/09 | <b>Number of participants</b>         | 17   |
| <b>Location</b> | Remote     | <b>Any substantive issues arising</b> | None |



### 3. Background information on the organisation

#### 3.1 General information

Diakonia Sweden (Diakonia) is a Swedish faith-based non-profit organisation founded in 1966 by Swedish churches. It is a multi-mandate organisation registered in Stockholm and involved in development, humanitarian emergency response, and advocacy. Diakonia supports and works with around 350 locally rooted movements and organisations in countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Middle East, and Sweden.

Diakonia's vision is a just, equal and sustainable world. Its mission, pursued in its global strategy and its country strategies, is to change unfair structures – political, economic, social and cultural – that generate poverty, oppression and injustice. Human rights perspective and feminist principles are mainstreamed in long-term development cooperation, emergency response, mobilisation and advocacy work. Communities and people affected by crisis are referred to as rights holders by the organisation to adequately reflect their rights-based approach also in language.

The global strategy 2021 relies on a Theory of Change based on people's knowledge of their rights, effective agency and mobilisation, and action at both institutional-legislative and social norms levels. To achieve its objectives, Diakonia supports and works through local civil society organisations and social movements that implement projects with and for rights holders. The new strategy also commits the organisation to link development work, humanitarian assistance and peace.

Diakonia is member of ACT Alliance, the Swedish Fundraising Council, Giva Sverige and Svenska postkodföreningen (the association behind the Swedish Postcode Lottery). The organisation also takes an active part in different fora and groups at the national, European and international levels, such as the Swedish Humanitarian Network for Human Rights, the Swedish Network for Disaster Risk and Resilience, CONCORD, Eurodad, and the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR).

In 2023, Diakonia's revenues amounted to 533 million SEK (55 million USD), an increase of 43 million SEK (4 million USD) compared to 2022. Consequently, Diakonia's operational expenses also increased from 468 million SEK (48 million USD) in 2022 to 490 million SEK (50 million USD) in 2023.

#### 3.2 Governance and management structure

Diakonia implemented an organisational restructuring effective January 1, 2025, as outlined in the updated Order of Delegation. The aim of this restructuring is to strengthen accountability and improve operational efficiency across all levels of the organisation. The revised framework clarifies the distribution of responsibilities and decision-making authority among the three key governance bodies: the General Assembly, the Board of Directors, and the Secretary General.

Under the new structure, the General Assembly remains the highest decision-making body, responsible for approving global policies, budget frameworks, and electing the Board and the Secretary General. The Board of Directors leads strategic direction, oversees financial administration, manages global risk, and supervises the Secretary General. The Board of Directors of Diakonia is composed of the following members: Chairman, Deputy Chairman and eight members. They are selected based on their backgrounds, experience, and competencies. Many of them are affiliated with the two denominations that form part of Diakonia's support base in Sweden: the Uniting Church in Sweden and the Swedish Alliance Mission.

The Secretary General is responsible for implementing the organisation's mandate in line with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors, representing Diakonia externally, and appointing Global Directors. The Secretary General also holds the authority to define and delegate operational responsibilities within the organisation.

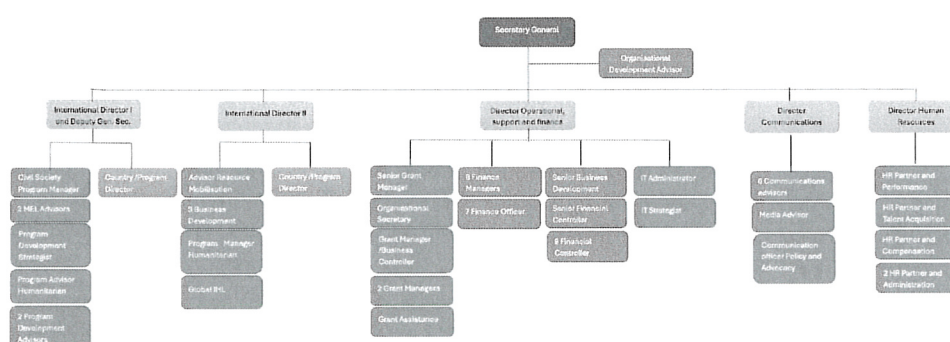
Diakonia's new operational model reflects a major restructuring aimed at enhancing flexibility, contextual relevance, and cost-effectiveness across its global work. One of the most significant changes is the elimination of regional offices, with global functions and



positions now distributed across various parts of the world, not just based in Sweden. This decentralisation is aiming for closer proximity to the contexts in which Diakonia operates, supporting better-informed decision-making and stronger engagement with partners.

Under the new model, Diakonia operates through three distinct modalities: the Country Model, the Remote Country Model, and the Multi-context Model. These are selected based on funding levels, security and political conditions, and program complexity. The Country Model ensures direct in-country presence and strategic engagement. The Remote Country Model allows for program continuity in high-risk or low-capacity environments through remote management and resource sharing. The Multi-context Model supports regional and global initiatives through flexible and cost-efficient structures. All models are designed to be scalable and are supported by globally based teams, allowing Diakonia to remain adaptive and resilient in a rapidly changing development landscape.

Organigram of Diakonia Sweden



### 3.3 Work with partner organisations

Diakonia supports and implements its programmes through more than 350 implementing partner organisations worldwide. Only two programmes are implemented directly by Diakonia: its advocacy initiatives and resource mobilisation activities in Sweden. Diakonia strives to support people who do not have their basic human rights respected through the funding of NGOs and CSOs working with rights holders for sustainable change. The organisation is committed to long-term partnerships.

The new Partnership Policy, adopted in December 2023, defines the principles and standards guiding its relationships with civil society partners. The policy emphasises mutual accountability, transparency, and shared commitment to human rights, gender justice, and sustainability. It outlines what partners can expect from Diakonia—including financial and strategic support, respectful dialogue, and flexibility—and what Diakonia expects in return, such as alignment with its core values and a clear focus on rights-holder impact. The policy also affirms Diakonia's dedication to decolonisation, localisation, and long-term transformative partnerships, including with informal actors.

The policy rejects donor-recipient dynamics and promotes equitable, trust-based collaboration. Diakonia commits to flexibility in funding, inclusive engagement, and minimising bureaucratic burdens to maximise resources for partners. It also highlights feminist principles, aiming to allocate at least one-third of its funding to feminist and LGBTQI+ movements. The policy includes mechanisms for partner feedback, annual partnership reviews, and a whistleblowing mechanism to ensure compliance and ongoing improvement.

## 4. Overall performance of the organisation

#### 4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms

Diakonia continues to work through its decentralised organisational structure, implementing programmes and projects solely through local partners. The two exceptions to this rule are advocacy and resource mobilisation in Sweden as well as the International Humanitarian Law Centre (IHL). The IHL is implemented directly by Diakonia Sweden and provides legal and policy advice to the humanitarian community on International Humanitarian Law.

The organisation continues to have a human resources system that includes performance management and staff capacity building. Its Financial control system regulates the management of the grants from different donors, implemented by a large variety of partner organisations. The auditing system of Diakonia has not changed since the Initial Audit (IA2020). The organisation undertakes an annual financial audit. Also, Diakonia requires its partners to be audited externally, and audit requirements are stated in each contract between Diakonia and the partners. The audit assesses the finances of partner's project, programme or organisation (when core funding), and checks the coherence between finances and activities.

The organisation has several steering documents such as the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Handbook, the Accountability Framework, the Procurement Guidelines, as well as practical tools, formats, instructions and routines. Some of these are expected to be updated during 2025 to adapt to the new organisational structure. These documents are accessible to all staff in the intranet, DiaConnect.

At the time of this audit, a new mechanism for managing programmes is being developed to replace the previous FixIT system. This mechanism aims to facilitate project management and adapt to the new organisational structure. The new system is expected to be launched this year.

Diakonia takes a comprehensive approach to risk management by identifying key risks at the global, country, and project levels. These risks are documented in risk matrices, which are regularly updated throughout the year. Risks are assessed, categorised as either contextual or operational, and accompanied by defined mitigation actions. Risk analysis and management are considered shared responsibilities of all employees across the organisation. Additionally, the global risk matrices are reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

#### 4.2 Level of application of the CHS

In this audit, Diakonia was certified against the revised 2024 version of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), which introduced several new requirements not included in the previous version. As a result, a number of new Corrective Action Requests (CARs) have been identified.

Diakonia continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard. Staff are regularly informed and trained on the Standard, and the organisation communicates this commitment both externally—through partner agreements, evaluations, and capacity development plans—and internally via manuals and documented procedures. Since the previous Renewal Audit (2022), Diakonia has made significant efforts to address the Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and observations raised during the RA 2022, further reinforcing its dedication to continuous improvement and accountability.

Strengths identified in the audit:

- Impartial assistance: Diakonia provides assistance based on community needs and capacities, considering diversity and including marginalised groups.
- Programme adaptation: Diakonia adapts programmes to changing needs, capacities, and contexts.
- Collaboration and coordination: Diakonia effectively collaborates with local and national authorities, NGOs, CSOs and partners, ensuring their projects complement other humanitarian efforts.



- **Equitable partnership:** Diakonia places strong emphasis on equitable partnerships, fostering relationships based on mutual respect, shared values, and joint accountability. All partner organisations consulted highlighted the quality of Diakonia's collaboration and expressed appreciation for the consistent support, open communication, and commitment to strengthening their capacities.
- **Community capacity building:** Diakonia strengthens local capacities and resilience, empowering local leaders.

Weakness identified in the audit:

- **Data Protection management:** Diakonia does not ensure all the partners have an appropriate mechanism to ensure the data protection of information collected from the communities.
- **PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment) information sharing:** Diakonia does not ensure that staff and partners consistently share relevant information with communities regarding PSEAH and expected standards of behaviour.
- **Disaster risk reduction:** Diakonia does not support local capacities to anticipate and reduce the risks of potential crises or disasters.
- **Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) complaints mechanisms:** Diakonia lacks safe, accessible, and appropriate mechanisms in communities for reporting complaints related to SEAH.
- **Monitoring of SEAH reporting awareness:** Diakonia does not regularly monitor whether communities understand how to report SEAH-related concerns and how these will be addressed.
- **Share Learning:** Diakonia does not ensure that learning from feedback and monitoring are shared with the communities.

### 4.3 PSEAH

Diakonia demonstrates a strong organisational commitment to the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) through comprehensive policies such as its Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and the Complaints and Incident Response Mechanism. Staff and partners receive regular training on these standards, and community members generally trust Diakonia to handle complaints confidentially and in a survivor-centred manner.

As part of its partner assessment process, Diakonia verifies whether partners have appropriate PSEAH policies and mechanisms in place. When gaps are identified, Diakonia supports its partners in developing and implementing the necessary systems to ensure compliance with PSEAH standards.

In 2024, the revised Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) introduced more detailed requirements related to PSEAH. In the context of this updated standard, the audit identified several areas requiring improvement:

- Not all communities have access to safe, accessible, and appropriate mechanisms for reporting SEAH-related concerns.
- Information about staff behaviour and Diakonia's PSEAH commitments is not always shared with communities, and the use of visual or accessible formats remains limited.
- There is no consistent process in place to monitor whether communities are aware of the expected conduct of Diakonia and partner staff.
- Although Diakonia manages SEAH-related complaints appropriately, it does not require partners to report SEAH complaints received at their level, limiting oversight.



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Despite these gaps, Diakonia is actively working to address them and has shown a strong commitment to continuous improvement and full alignment with CHS requirements and best practices in safeguarding.

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#### 4.4 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

| Strong points and areas for improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Average score* |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Commitment 1: People and communities can exercise their rights and participate in actions and decisions that affect them.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2.5            |
| <p>Diakonia's commitment to accountability and information sharing is clearly stated in Diakonia's policies, website and strategy. Diakonia demonstrates a strong focus on the meaningful inclusion of people and communities in decisions that affect them. The organisation integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion principles across its policies, strategies, and practices. Diakonia has established a coherent organisational approach that ensures transparency, inclusive participation, and effective information sharing at all levels.</p> <p>Diakonia and its partners share timely information about its work and its values with communities and stakeholders in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate. However, there is a lack of consistent practice, and no mechanisms are in place to ensure that Diakonia and its partners regularly share information about PSEAH and Code of Conduct (CoC) with the communities. In addition, Diakonia does not use visual or pictorial information in all the programmes to inform the community about PSEAH and CoC.</p> <p>Diakonia communications and fundraising are made with informed consent and in a respectful, ethical, and dignified manner. Partner agreements require to obtain a permission from the person for the described use of their images. Partners staff confirm that they always ask for consent.</p> |                |
| <p><b>Feedback from communities:</b></p> <p>Community members state that the communications are easy to understand, respectful and appropriate to their context.</p> <p>Community members are satisfied with the level of participation in the decision-making and the level of engagement in the programmes.</p> <p>Community members confirm that Diakonia and its partners always ask for consent before taking photos or videos.</p> <p>Community members state that they are regularly informed about Diakonia and programme activities. However, not all communities recall being informed about how they can expect staff to behave when working with them.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                |
| <b>Commitment 2: People and communities access timely and effective support in accordance with their specific needs and priorities.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2.5            |
| <p>Diakonia demonstrates a strong organisational approach to designing and implementing programmes that are relevant, inclusive, and responsive to local contexts. The organisation respects and builds upon local knowledge, capacities, and existing initiatives, and communities confirm that programmes reflect their realities. Diakonia and its partners undertake systematic context analysis, including the SEAH risk, which is described and considered in country strategies, programmes and projects.</p> <p>Diakonia applies fair and impartial criteria to define programmes, and the groups supported. Diakonia designs and implements programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs and risks and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups, with particular attention to those most marginalised. In 2025, Diakonia rolled out the new Humanitarian Need Assessment tools, which aim to ensure that Humanitarian Programmes are based on the main needs of the communities, however, due to the recent introduction of this tool it is not yet fully implemented in all Country Programmes.</p> <p>Diakonia and its partners regularly monitor and adapt their programmes to ensure they are timely, accessible, and meet the priority needs of people and communities, and partners appreciate the flexibility allowed to adjust interventions as contexts evolve.</p>                   |                |

Diakonia applies relevant technical standards and good practices consistently. In addition, Diakonia provides training to its partners on the relevant technical standards, including CHS.

Although referrals of unmet needs to other actors occur in practice, the absence of formal procedures and documentation presents a risk of unmet needs being overlooked.

#### **Feedback from communities:**

Communities consider that Diakonia and its partners are impartial, and all people are welcome in the projects.

Communities share a deep appreciation for the assistance provided by Diakonia and its partners, stating that they feel satisfied with the quality of the work and the level of engagement in the monitoring process. Also, they state that Diakonia and its partners usually consult them during the assessments and implementation and adapt projects, if necessary, to their changing preferences, needs and capacities.

#### **Commitment 3: People and communities are better prepared and more resilient to potential crises.**

2.6

Diakonia demonstrates a coherent organisational approach and a strong commitment to reinforcing local capacities and supporting community-led resilience, as stated in the strategies and policies. The organisation supports both formal and informal community leadership and locally led initiatives, with stakeholders, community members and leaders confirming that Diakonia's programmes strengthen their resilience and enable them to cope better with their circumstances.

Some programmes support local capacities to anticipate and reduce risks of crises or disasters. However, this is not a practice in all the programmes.

Diakonia's programmes are designed and implemented to contribute to long-term positive effects on people's lives, livelihoods, the local economy, and the environment. The organisation also ensures that local ownership of resources and decision-making is supported from the outset, through participatory approaches and project co-creation with partners and communities.

#### **Feedback from communities:**

Community members confirm being better able to cope with their circumstances due to support and services from Diakonia and its partners.

Community members consider that Diakonia programmes have improved their lives, livelihoods and local economy.

Community members feel a sense of ownership over the resources provided and note that they are able to take decisions regarding their use.

#### **Commitment 4: People and communities access support that does not cause harm to people or the environment.**

2.2

Diakonia has a strong commitment to ensuring the safeguarding of the rights and dignity of people and communities, including the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. The organisation has established appropriate procedures for staff conduct and accountability and works to minimise both potential and actual negative impacts of its activities on individuals, communities, and the environment. However, not all the sampled projects had conducted gender, safeguarding or environmental assessments, creating a risk that potential harms may go undetected and unaddressed.

Diakonia has made progress in strengthening IT security and raising awareness among staff and partners regarding data protection. Some partners have reported that Diakonia has supported them in improving their data protection mechanisms and in complying with national data protection laws. However, this support is not applied across all country programs. Furthermore, the partner assessment process does not evaluate whether partners have adequate



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| data protection measures in place, and current partnership agreements do not include explicit requirements for partners to ensure data protection.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |
| <b>Feedback from communities:</b><br>Community members state that programmes have no negative effects.<br>Community members consider that their data is protected and safe.<br>Community members state that Diakonia and its partners share their commitment to ensure their project does not have negative environmental effects and to their safety, dignity and rights.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |     |
| <b>Commitment 5: People and communities can safely report concerns and complaints and get them addressed.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2.0 |
| <p>Diakonia has established a Complaints and Incident Response Mechanism (CIRM) to enable communities, partners, and other stakeholders to safely, confidentially, and appropriately share feedback, concerns, or complaints, including those related to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH). Also, this mechanism has a clear victim and survivor centered approach. However, the mechanism is not fully adapted to all local contexts, and most of the communities are not aware of the confidential manners to raise sensitive complaints.</p> <p>Projects and programmes include several ways to provide feedback, concerns, or non-sensitive complaints. However, not all the programmes and partners provide a way for the communities to raise sensitive complaints in a confidential and safe manner. In addition, Diakonia does not monitor whether these systems are implemented. Partners and Diakonia staff report that they share all the complaints with Diakonia—and staff provided several examples—but there is no formal obligation to report complaints in a timely manner, which creates a risk that Diakonia may not be aware of all complaints received.</p> <p>Additionally, Diakonia does not currently monitor, as part of its field visits, whether community members understand how to report complaints or how these will be addressed—particularly in relation to SEAH.</p> |     |
| <b>Feedback from communities:</b><br>Community members state that they have mechanisms in place to provide feedback, concerns, and complaints—such as face-to-face communication with Diakonia staff, partner staff, or community leaders. However, they are not aware of any way to submit complaints in a confidential manner, either through the Partner or Diakonia, and they are unfamiliar with Diakonia's Complaints and Incident Response Mechanism (CIRM).<br>While community members recall being provided with general information about CoC, standards of behaviour for staff and on how to raise complaints, other community members do not recall receiving this information from Diakonia or its partners.<br>There was a wider general understanding among community members about Diakonia's commitment to the prevention of fraud and corruption and SEAH.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |
| <b>Commitment 6: People and communities access coordinated and complementary support.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 3.0 |
| <p>Diakonia demonstrates a strong organisational approach to coordination, partnership, and support for local actors. The organisation ensures that its work is aligned with and complements locally led actions, community-based efforts, and the activities of relevant stakeholders. The new Partnership Policy promotes equitable partnerships based on shared decision-making and respect for each partner's roles and responsibilities, including commitments related to PSEAH. All partners are assessed using the Partner Assessment tool. Each partner has a partnership agreement with Diakonia, and clear funding and reporting agreements are in place for all the projects and programmes.</p> <p>Diakonia and its partners coordinate with other stakeholders on the programmes and PSEAH issues through membership to various local and international networks and by sharing information on various sector-related</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |     |

platforms. The ability to continuously coordinate its work and collaboration is a key ingredient of Diakonia's continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning. Diakonia and its partners work closely with the relevant local government agencies at the field level, enabling them to complement existing community-led actions while avoiding duplication of activities.

Diakonia is a member of the ACT Alliance and actively contributes to learning and innovation within this and other networks in which its staff and partner organisations participate.

#### **Feedback from communities:**

Community members recognise Diakonia's commitment to coordination and collaboration in its work with other stakeholders, which reduces the demand for their time and resources.

Community members perceive that Diakonia, and its partners have been able to deliver more effectively in their mandate as a result of its work being complementary to locally led community actions.

Community members highlight that Diakonia, and its partners always coordinate with them on all activities and consider the assistance and programme activities to be coherent, without unnecessary demands on their resources.

#### **Commitment 7: People and communities access support that is continually adapted and improved based on feedback and learning.**

2.4

Diakonia has a strong commitment to continuous learning and improvement in its work through availing opportunities for gathering feedback from communities in various organisational policies and guidelines, including the PMEL Handbook, which is harmonised with the operational support system FixIT. At the time of this audit, Diakonia is developing an operational support system for managing programmes and projects. The tool aims to facilitate project management. The new system is expected to be launched this year.

Regular feedback and disaggregated data collected provide a useful source of learning to improve future programming.

Diakonia shares the learning from monitoring feedback and complaints within the organisation and with the relevant stakeholders in different coordination and collaboration forums. However, Diakonia does not always share the learning from feedback and monitoring with communities.

#### **Feedback from communities:**

Community members acknowledge that Diakonia collects data and feedback from them, which has been used to improve programme delivery and operations.

Community members have identified positive changes in projects overall.

Community members do not recall that Diakonia and its partners have shared learning and innovation with them.

#### **Commitment 8: People and communities interact with staff and volunteers that are respectful, competent, and well-managed.**

2.9

Diakonia demonstrates a strong organisational culture of quality, accountability, and ethical conduct, upheld by both leadership and staff across all levels. Diakonia has put in place policies and structures that ensure staff are motivated and have adequate capacity to carry out their role. The Global Human Resource Handbook, Code of Conduct, the Anti-corruption Policy, and the Accountability Framework are among the policies and guidelines that speak to the expected staff behaviour and their management.

The organisation has clearly articulated its zero tolerance to SEAH and provides a safe and accessible complaints mechanism for related complaints. The Code of Conduct prohibits any form of exploitation, abuse, harassment or discrimination against people. Diakonia ensures that all employees are adequately trained on all relevant policies and procedures. Staff must undergo mandatory safeguarding training.



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <p>Diakonia has an accessible and secure Complaints and Incidents Response Mechanism (CIRM) and response timelines are well articulated.</p> <p>Diakonia is currently undergoing an organisational restructuring, which has resulted in changes in staff roles and overall structure. As a result, some staff feel overworked, and there is still uncertainty about how some of the roles previously handled by the regional office will be dealt with going forward.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     |
| <p><b>Feedback from communities:</b></p> <p>Communities consider that Diakonia staff treat them with respect, dignity and compassion.</p> <p>Communities perceive Diakonia staff as highly competent and technically proficient.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |
| <p><b>Commitment 9: People and communities can expect that resources are managed ethically and responsibly.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2.8 |
| <p>Diakonia demonstrates that it has the necessary capacity and resources to meet its commitments effectively and sustainably. Diakonia manages the resources with integrity, accountability, and transparency, minimising the negative impact on the environment. The Administration Handbook, Anti-corruption policy, procurement guidelines, and the Environment policy are examples of documents that illustrate this commitment.</p> <p>The Global Fundraising Policy lays down guidelines on ethical resource mobilisation and how Diakonia can accept funds without jeopardising its commitment and values.</p> <p>Diakonia applies uniform global Administration and procurement policies which have not been adopted to the local context in some of the countries to align with country-specific regulations, and operational realities</p> <p>Regular monitoring and reporting by programme staff, grant compliance advisors, and external audits ensure that resources are managed responsibly and in line with good practice. Diakonia and its partners have embraced risk management as evidenced by regular risk management reports.</p> <p>Diakonia has developed a toolbox for integrating an environmental and climate perspective into strategies, programmes, and projects. The organisation has implemented environmental conservation measures at the administration and operations level to counter climate change.</p> |     |
| <p><b>Feedback from communities:</b></p> <p>Community members state that Diakonia secures enough resources for its work and that the resources are managed well.</p> <p>Community members confirm having been trained and being involved in various environment conservation activities during their project implementation.</p> <p>Community members state that they have not experienced any incidents of corrupt activities or extortion from staff.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |

\* Note: Commitments are scored by taking the mean average score of the requirements, i.e. the sum of all the requirement scores in a commitment divided by the number of requirements in that commitment. Except when a major non-conformity/weakness is issued, in this case the overall score for the Commitment is 0 (CHSA Verification Framework – Scoring Grid, 2024).

## 5. Summary of non-conformities

| Corrective Action Request (CAR)                                                                                                                                                              | Type  | Status | Resolution timeframe      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------------------|
| 2025-1.2: Diakonia does not ensure that the staff and its partners share the relevant information regarding PSEAH and expected behaviour in relation to PSEAH of staff with the communities. | Minor | New    | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |



|                                                                                                                                                                 |       |     |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|---------------------------|
| 2025-2.2: Diakonia does not ensure that its partners conduct impartial assessments of needs in order to design and implement appropriate humanitarian projects. | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| 2025-3.2: Diakonia does not support local capacities to anticipate and reduce risks of potential crises or disasters.                                           | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| 2025-4.3: Diakonia does not ensure that the data and information collected by its partners are managed safely.                                                  | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| 2025- 5.1: Diakonia does not provide safe, accessible and appropriate ways to report complaints related to SEAH in all the communities.                         | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| 2022-5.3. Diakonia does not regularly monitor if communities understand how to report concerns and complaints related to SEAH and how these will be addressed.  | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| 2025-7.4: Diakonia does not ensure that learning from feedback and monitoring are shared with the communities.                                                  | Minor | New | By the 2028 Renewal Audit |
| <b>Total Number of open CARs</b>                                                                                                                                |       | 7   |                           |

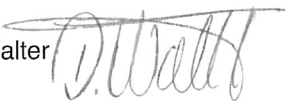
\* *Note: The CARs are completed by the audit team based on the findings. The audited partner is required to respond with a Management Response for each CAR to HQAI before a certificate is issued (reference: HQAI Procedure 114).*

## 6. Lead auditor recommendation

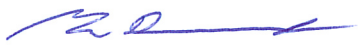
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CERTIFICATION</b><br><br>In my opinion, Diakonia Sweden demonstrates no major non-conformities in its application of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.<br><br>I recommend certification. |                                                          |
| <b>Name and signature of lead auditor:</b><br><br>Jorge Menéndez Martínez<br><br>                                                    | <b>Date and place:</b><br><br>Buenos Aires, 26 June 2025 |

## 7. HQAI decision

|                                         |                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Final decision on certification:</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issued<br><input type="checkbox"/> Refused |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                               |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Start date of the certification cycle: 2025/09/09<br>Next audit before 2026/07/02                                                                             |                                                    |
| <b>Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:</b><br><br>Désirée Walter  | <b>Date and place:</b><br><br>Geneva, 02 July 2025 |

## 8. 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:<br><br><i>If yes, please give details:</i>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No                                                                            |
| Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:<br><br>I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit<br><br>I accept the findings of the audit                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No<br><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>Name and signature of the organisation's representative:</b><br>MATTHIAS BRUNANDER<br> | <b>Date and place:</b><br>Stockholm<br>23 September 2025                                                                                       |

## Appeal

In case of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 workdays after being informed of the decision.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the appeals process requirements. The Chair will then constitute an appeal panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will strive to come to a decision within 45 workdays.

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

## Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale\*

| Scores | Meaning for all verification scheme options, including self-assessment and third-party audits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Guidance for scoring requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0      | <p>Your organisation does not currently meet the requirement and indicates a major issue that is so significant that the organisation's ability to meet the commitment is compromised.</p> <p><b>For third-party auditing schemes:</b></p> <p>Independent verification: A major weakness.</p> <p>Certification: A major non-conformity that compromises the integrity of the commitment which leads to a major corrective action request (CAR).</p> | <p>To give a score 0, <b>not all</b> of the measurable components of the requirement are verified to be in place <b>and</b> the issue(s) identified are so significant that the organisation's ability to meet the <b>commitment</b> is compromised.</p>   |
| 1      | <p>Your organisation does not currently meet the requirement.</p> <p><b>For third-party auditing schemes:</b></p> <p>Independent verification: A minor weakness.</p> <p>Certification: A minor non-conformity that compromises the integrity of the requirement which leads to a minor corrective action request (CAR).</p>                                                                                                                         | <p>To give a score 1, <b>not all</b> of the measurable components of the requirement are verified to be in place.</p>                                                                                                                                      |
| 2      | <p>Your organisation currently meets the requirement, but there is an opportunity for improvement that deserves attention so that the requirement is not compromised in the future.</p> <p><b>For third-party auditing schemes:</b></p> <p>Independent verification: Requirement is met with an observation.</p> <p>Certification: Conformity with an observation.</p>                                                                              | <p>To give a score 2, <b>all measurable components</b> of a requirement are verified to be in place, however, one or more opportunities for improvement are observed which deserve attention so that the requirement is not compromised in the future.</p> |



|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b> | <p>Your organisation meets the requirement, with organisational systems ensuring it is being met consistently throughout the organisation.</p> <p><b>For third-party auditing schemes:</b></p> <p>Independent verification:<br/>Requirement is met.</p> <p>Certification: Conformity.</p>                                                                                                                                             | <p>To give a score 3, <b>all measurable components</b> of a requirement are verified to be in place.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>4</b> | <p>Your organisation meets the requirement in an exemplary way, demonstrating innovation and/or special recognition of performance, and organisational systems ensure this high quality throughout the organisation.</p> <p><b>For third-party auditing schemes:</b></p> <p>Independent verification:<br/>Requirement is met in an exemplary way.</p> <p>Certification: Conformity in an exemplary way.</p>                           | <p>To give a score 4, <b>all measurable components</b> of a requirement are verified to be in place.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, the following must be verified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organisational system (or systems) that demonstrate an innovative approach to meeting the requirement at a high standard throughout the organisation are in place.</li> </ul> <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation has been awarded special recognition of performance in relation to meeting the requirement at a high standard, and this is built into organisational systems so that the high quality is ensured throughout the organisation.</li> </ul> |
|          | <p><b>Guidance notes for scoring commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitments are scored by taking the mean average score of the requirements, i.e. the sum of all the requirement scores in a commitment divided by the number of requirements in that commitment.</li> <li>• Except when a major non-conformity/weakness is issued, in this case the overall score for the Commitment is 0.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

\* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Framework 2024

