

Communication of Engagement (2021-2023) by *DanChurchAid*



Photo: Jakob Dall

Introduction

DanChurchAid (DCA) is a non-for-profit civil society organisation, working to support the poorest of the world in their struggle for a dignified life and help those most at risk. DCA provides emergency relief in disaster-stricken areas and long-term development assistance in developing contexts – with the objective of creating a more just, equitable and sustainable world.

The situation of each individual is the starting point for DCAs work, with respect for human rights and equality. DCA engages with popular and political forces and seeks to influence decision makers to improve conditions for the people most in need. DCA works closely with faith-based and other partners and breaks new ground in partnerships to make the greatest possible difference in the world. DCA shows leadership and maintains 100 years of tradition for action and innovation. In 2022 DCA marked and celebrated its 100th anniversary throughout Denmark and in the country offices around the world.

DCAs work derives from Christian values. DCA shows active compassion, shares with the world's poorest, and helps those in need. DCA acts courageously when injustice is committed against people and when human rights are violated. DCA cooperates with numerous local partners, other national and church organisations as well as international networks. By experimenting and testing new ways of working with volunteers, donors and partners, DCA helps people in poverty and distress to find a better life and have hope for a better world.

In 2022 DCA received a historic financial turnover that was close to DKK 1 billion. The broad scope of donors and financial partners gives DCA the opportunity to promote its work and strategic goals and make an impact in terms of improving the livelihoods and conditions for the most vulnerable people.

DCAs Global Goals are based on its vision and respond to the need for sustainable development and humanitarian action. All DCAs activities are carried out in support of one or more of these goals:

- 1. Save Lives**
- 2. Build Resilient Communities**
- 3. Fight Extreme Inequality**
- 4. Create Engagement**

Sustainable Development Goals

DCAs work is contributing to several of the Sustainable Development Goals. These have in the Global Strategy been defined in accordance with the organisation's global goals, as illustrated below.

Save Lives:



Build Resilient Communities:



Fight Extreme Inequality:



Create Engagement:



Responding to Emerging and Interconnected Crisis based on Fundamental Principles

The world is currently facing numerous crises and global challenges, making the need for DCAs work continuously relevant. The war in Ukraine, the energy crisis, the food crisis in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, and recurring climate disasters across the world were some of the crises DCA responded to in 2022. The global food crisis that came due to rising prices and hyperinflation has resulted in an urge to innovate and rethink the food systems.

In 2022 DCA altogether reached 34 million people indirectly and 4 million people directly. To set the pace for addressing the challenges facing the world of today, DCA developed and launched a new Global Strategy 2023-2026 “Hope and Action - in an Age of Disruption”.

DCA has significant technical expertise and experience to support its partners in achieving the four international goals. Together, through alliances, including DCAs global ACT Alliance, DCA can take tangible steps towards a world without hunger, poverty and oppression. DCA operates through its fundamental principles of being a multi-mandated, faith-based, human rights-based, and partner-based organisation. DCAs multi-mandate allows DCA to move beyond traditional silos and integrate immediate humanitarian assistance, long-term development, peacebuilding, and advocacy efforts to create sustainable and lasting change. DCA implements the Human Rights-Based Approach through the PANEL principles: Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Linking to Human Rights Law. DCAs approach to HRBA is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and UNDP’s framework for implementing a Leaving No One Behind approach. Furthermore, DCAs faith-based foundation implies an obligation to work with people of all backgrounds for a world with peace, justice, and care for the whole creation – led by hope in action for comprehensive transformation. DCA considers religion as one of the main drivers of change and recognises its responsibility to understand and engage with religious actors in the way of working and in who DCA works with. From DCAs fundamental principles, DCA also works through the cross-cutting commitments of gender equality, engagement of young people and climate and environmental sustainability.

Engaging with the Private Sector: Strengthening Responsible Business Conduct through Business and Human Rights Frameworks

DCA guides its private sector engagement work by the expectations set forth in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which describe States’ responsibility to protect and promote the rights of its citizens, businesses’ responsibilities to respect human rights in their operations, and the need to ensure effective remedy mechanisms in case of rights breaches.

Since 2021, DCA has continued and amplified its work with private sector partnerships through market and value chain development and multistakeholder dialogue. In this reporting period, DCA has started two new value chain projects through Danida Green Business Partnerships (DGBP) in Kenya and Palestine with Danish and local national private sector and civil society partners. DCA also maintains a strong focus on some of the key root causes of the global food crisis by promoting sustainable agricultural practices, food and market systems.

“Loss to Value” is a 4.5-year initiative funded by DGBP with the mission of uplifting horticulture in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties. The project’s core objective is to reduce food loss and waste (FLW) by implementing scalable cold storage solutions accessible to horticulture SHF. By offering flexible and sustainable financing and payment/loan options, the project aims to make cold storage accessible to farmers, cooperatives, and traders, benefiting 2,000 farmers, 4 trader associations, and 10 commodity aggregators in Nakuru and Nyandarua.

In 2023, DCA co-hosted a multistakeholder dialogue for key actors in East Africa with the overall objective of progressing on business and human rights policy development and implementation. More than 100 people participated in the event from 10 different countries. Subsequently, DCA was invited to host a session at the Africa Business and Human Rights forum in Addis Ababa, which focused on embedding a multistakeholder approach. DCA is determined to continue to shed light on key business and human rights related issues, such as land rights, combatting child labour and ensuring proper remedy mechanisms for victims of corporate activity, as well as promoting the multistakeholder approach to strengthen national policies and due diligence mechanisms.

DCA Principles of Engagement with the Private Sector

DanChurchAid (DCA) works to empower the world's poorest in their struggle for a dignified life. Our global goals are to save lives, build resilient communities and fight extreme inequality. We want to secure the right to food, active citizenship, and income of people living in poverty by working for a just distribution and sustainable use of resources. Working in partnerships is our most important asset in making the changes we wish to see in the world, both with local civil society organisations, international organisations, governments and local authorities, resource institutions, private sector, and other actors.

DCA's work derives from Christian values and the humanitarian imperative. We show active compassion, and share with the world's poorest. We help those in need, regardless of race, religion and political affiliation. We act courageously when injustice is committed, and speak up when human rights are violated.

DCA is a member of the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance. We are certified in accordance with the Core Humanitarian Standards. DCA is a signatory to the UN Global Compact, and a member of the multistakeholder alliance, the Danish Initiative for Ethical Trade.

The following principles establish the principles for DCA's engagement with private sector actors:

1. DCA is an independent non-profit organization.
2. As a human rights-based organisation, DCA is committed to ensuring that human rights and gender equality are an integral part of all our work. DCA works from a human rights-based approach through the five PANEL principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Equality, Empowerment, and Legality).
3. DCA's aim of engaging private sector actors is to promote respect for human rights and sustainable development. DCA works in accordance with international human rights and labour standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and ILO Core Conventions. DCA also supports the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
4. DCA expects business enterprises and their suppliers to respect human in line with these international minimum standards. Corporate Partners are expected to be committed to actively prevent, address and mitigate any actual or potential negative impacts on human rights in their own operations, and with their suppliers. Part of this responsibility involves policy commitments and operational management systems in place to ensure respect for human rights.
5. DCA recognizes that ensuring respect for human rights is a continuous improvement process, and not a quick fix solution. DCA therefore engages constructively with business Partners to exchange knowledge and learning on practical ways to ensure proper human rights due diligence. In return, DCA expects the engagement to be based on the principles of mutual trust, accountability, transparency, and commitment to take action.
6. DCA will continuously monitor and evaluate Partnerships and outcomes of our engagements with corporate actors, and may at any point of time decide to initiate concrete dialogue on interventions of the company, which might have a negative social or environmental effect, or discontinue the engagement.

Human Rights Principles

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Human rights are at the very centre of all DCAs work, while HRBA shapes its programmes and projects guided by the PANEL principles that promote Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Linking to Human Rights Law (PANEL). In 2022, all CPs and 76% of all DCA project interventions were rights-based and integrated the PANEL principles. This means that as an organisation that combines service delivery, advocacy and capacity sharing in reaching its global goals, DCA maintains a continuous focus on non-discrimination, inclusion, and pluralism.

As part of DCAs commitment to Tech for Human Rights, DCA initiated the formation of an Action Coalition on Content Moderation to fight online violence, harassment, and silencing of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) under the Tech for Democracy initiative of the Danish government. This involved tech platforms, states, and civil society organisations (CSOs) working to improve protection of WHRDs. Below are two highlighted activities DCA has undertaken during the reporting period.

Revising DCAs Human Rights Policy

DCA is currently working on updating its human rights policy, which was adopted in 2018. It is the hope to have it adopted by the end of year. One of the key objectives of the revision is to align it to DCAs new global strategy.

Business and Human Rights Dialogue in East Africa

DCA co-hosted the first East Africa Business and Human Rights Conference in Kampala in June 2023, and in September 2023 hosted a session at the Africa Business and Human Rights Forum on how to embed a multistakeholder approach for various actors in the region. DCA is currently finalising a publication with recommendations related to a multistakeholder approach to enhance business and human rights policy and practice.

Labour Rights Principles

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

DCA holds a long-time tradition for collective bargaining and democratic engagement with the staff union representations in Denmark. Contracts in DCA focal countries are negotiated based on local laws but guided by the overall values and organisational policies of DCA.

All staff are required to sign the Code of Conduct and take mandatory e-learning modules (e.g., Anti-Corruption, Complaints Handling, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, Human Rights, Child Safeguarding, and Risk Management etc.). In all DCAs vacancies, it is underlined that DCA is an equal opportunities workplace and encourages all qualified and interested candidates irrespective of gender, age, religion, or ethnic affiliation to apply.

To ensure transparency and compliance with DCAs labour rights principles, complaints related to staff welfare and working conditions can be submitted through the staff unions, the working environment committee and the cooperation committee to the DCA Complaints System and Whistleblower Scheme.

Update of organisational policies

Besides the focus on DCAs global goals and the SDGs, DCA is also working within the framework of Decent Work, Green Jobs, and the Sustainable Economy (ILO, 2015). Through this framework, DCA aims to secure a socially and economically sustainable job creation in livelihood programmes and private sector value chain engagements. The framework is used when relevant and applicable.

Environmental Principles

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Climate and environmental sustainability continue to be a key focus for DCA, as the countries DCA operates in are some of those experiencing severe negative impacts from climate change. DCA collaborates with partners and alliances to foster environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient organizations. In 2022, DCA took lead in developing a carbon footprint

accounting guideline for Danish civil society, in conjunction with fellow Global Focus members. Additionally, DCA spearheaded the creation of a knowledge-sharing platform for the ACT Alliance Climate Programme Community of Practice. Furthermore, DCA broadened its carbon footprint reporting scope to encompass operations in Cambodia, Denmark, Libya, Nepal, and South Sudan. To facilitate green procurement and logistic decisions, DCAs Logistics Manual was updated and the 'Go Green' online resource site, which includes a Green Product Catalogue and a Green Checklist, was developed and launched to DCA staff globally.

DCA and partners increasingly support communities to address climate change and environmental degradation. Last year, 45% of all projects integrated climate and/or environmental action (which was an increase from 37% in 2021). Of these projects, 56% primarily focused on building resilience and 30% focused on humanitarian action, illustrating how DCA is also advancing climate and environmental sustainability work in fragile contexts. Below are a few highlights from actions taken during the reporting period.

“Turning the Past into Action”

In addition to compensating for DCAs international flights, which has been done since 2013, DCA has taken an initiative to take responsibility for the estimated emissions of the organisation's full lifetime. Through the past 100 years, DCA has emitted around 165,000 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere through its humanitarian and development work, also including its engagement in Denmark around e.g., second-hand shops. This is equivalent to around 280,000 trees, which will be planted through forestry and agroforestry activities in some of the most climate-exposed areas in Uganda. The programme applies a full landscape approach meaning that climate adaptation and market development is also incorporated into the design of activities.

Revising DCAs Climate Policy

DCA is currently revising its Climate Policy with the purpose of set the ambition, provide direction and guide DCAs efforts to address the climate, environment, and biodiversity crises at organisational and programmatic levels in Denmark and internationally. Therefore, the policy will have an enhanced scope that will also encompass other environmental considerations besides GHG reduction emissions. The revision of the policy builds on DCAs previous and on-going efforts and aims at providing clearer targets and direction to accelerate climate and environmental action in internal operations, humanitarian and development programming and DCAs engagement work in Denmark, while continue mobilising others to do the same.

Anti-corruption Principles

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

It is DCAs declared vision to help and advocate for oppressed, neglected and marginalized people in poor countries, and to strengthen their opportunities to live a life in dignity. To reach that goal, DCA is entrusted with funds from a variety of donors. Therefore, DCA holds a great responsibility towards donors and people supported by DCA to avoid corruption and to ensure that the funds we manage are spent correctly and transparently and reaches the right people. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, the countries that DCA operates in are among the countries in the world most prone to corruption. DCA must secure that the funds do not end up in the wrong hands and are managed according to procedures and policies.

Revised Anti-corruption Policy

To further strengthen DCAs work with anti-corruption, the anti-corruption policy was revised in June 2023 based on recommendations from donors or other requirements (i.e. audits) to align with international standards. DCAs anti-corruption work is based on the following three principles:

1. DCA believes it is important that all its employees have a proper understanding of corruption and anti-corruption
2. DCA can and must talk about the dilemmas we can sometimes find ourselves in
3. Transparency and accountability must permeate DCAs work, also in relation to anti-corruption

Corruption is defined in DCAs policy as "misuse of entrusted power for private (or organisational) gain". The anti-corruption policy 2023 now contains seven principles (after adding tipping off as a new type of corruption) that promote anti-corrupt behaviour and guidance on how to handle corruption, should it occur:

1. Conflicts of interest
2. Abuse of power and extortion
3. Fraud and Embezzlement
4. Bribery and Facilitation Payment
5. Tipping off
6. Nepotism and favoritism
7. Gifts

The revised anti-corruption policy is available in the main three languages; English, Arabic and French. DCA is currently updating its Anti-Corruption course on FABO (DCA's e-learning platform) to reflect the changes in the revised policy. The course is mandatory for all employees in DCA to complete within the first 3 months of employment, with the aim of raising awareness and preventing potential misconduct.

DCA was part of founding the collective action initiative called FAFPI (Fight Against Facilitation Payment initiative) which was launched in 2018 and has initiated its work in 2019. It is a cross-sector initiative, between the private sector and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), and DCA has committed to its membership.

DCA Complaints System and Whistleblower Scheme

In 2021 DCA established a whistleblower scheme to complement the existing complaints system. DCA has zero tolerance for fraud and corruption. DCA employees are obligated to follow the anti-corruption policy and report any suspicion, rumors or confirmed breaches of the Anti-corruption policy. All corruption incidents in DCA, partner organisations or other incidents related to DCA activities must be reported to the DCA Complaints System or the Whistleblower Scheme. Annual reports on complaints are also developed and shared on DCA's homepage.