



# DCA POLICY: **PARTNERSHIP**

December 2022

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## Abstract

The worsening climate crisis, global pandemics, frequent and protracted natural and man-made disasters, and a continuing growing gap between rich and poor reveal deep structural inequalities and injustices in our societies.

Hence the obvious and crucial need to join forces in partnerships across sectors for sustainable development and innovative solutions to the benefit of the world's poorest and people in need, and to promote a rules-based global order and foster global connectedness and solidarity with civil society.

Since DCA was founded in 1922, working in partnerships with civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and churches has been at the core of our way of working. At the same time DCA is committed to working together with a variety of other local, international and Danish partners within civil society, research institutions, private and public sector actors, investors and our popular and church-based Danish constituency. We are committed to acting as a bridge builder and facilitator between stakeholders and across sectors – engaging in innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships and connecting the dots to ensure greater impact in our programme countries and engagement in Denmark.

This Partnership Policy aims to embrace the diversity of DCA's partnerships and to serve two purposes:

- It outlines DCA's commitment to partnerships by providing guiding values, principles and commitments for the organisation and its staff for behaviour, actions, processes, and governance.
- It transparently informs existing and potential partners, and other interested stakeholders, about DCA's partnership approach and thus contributes to levelling expectations and holding DCA accountable for its partnership commitments.

The policy categorises the different types of partners and partnerships and outlines the core values, principles and commitments for our engagement with partners in Denmark and internationally. The policy outlines the main procedures and requirements when engaging with the various types of partners, and includes DCA's commitment to increased responsibility, transparency and quality in our partner-based work through a strengthened mandate for the Global Partner Group.

Within this Partnership Policy period, DCA is committed to:

- Strengthening local leadership and localisation among our civil society and faith-based partners.
- Developing and testing innovative, flexible, and safe models of supporting and resourcing informal social movements and activists.
- Scaling up innovative private sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships that are inclusive and locally led.
- Expanding the partner base and creating stronger relationships with existing partners and our church constituency in Denmark.

## Definitions

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships is a collaborative relationship between organisations and other formal or informal groups of actors. The purpose of this relationship is to work toward shared goals through a division of roles and responsibilities on which all parties agree.

### **Long-term Partnerships**

Long-term partnerships refer to multi-year, strategic collaboration between organisations, and other formal or informal groups of actors, aimed at transformational change, and in which there are shared values, trust, respect, equality and accountability.

### **Short-term Partnerships**

Short-term partnerships refer to collaboration between organisations and other formal or informal groups of actors. for an intended short(er) period of time. Such partnerships are often linked to time bound and specific activities, such as a project, an event, or a process.

### **Multi-stakeholder Partnerships**

Multi-stakeholder Partnerships refer to collaboration between three or more actors across civil society, the private sector, research institutions, donors and investors, and can be long-term and strategic, or short-time and activity-specific engagements.

### **Formal Actors**

Formal actors are registered and clearly defined organisations with formal structures, procedures and statutory or contractual purpose. They can include civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, networks, business associations and private companies, research institutions, and government institutions.

### **Informal Actors**

Informal actors are unofficial and non-registered networks and groups of people with unwritten, shared social rules, norms and values that are created, communicated and enforced outside of official channels. They can include social movements, patronage networks, customary institutions, protest- and activist groups, community groups and groups of human rights defenders.

### **Localisation**

Localisation is a process to shift power, decision-making and resources from international actors towards local actors and enable more locally led responses in development and humanitarian aid.

# 1. Introduction

Positive change is possible when civil society, states, the private sector and people work together in partnerships to achieve shared goals. And the challenges are many – the worsening climate crisis, global pandemics, frequent and protracted natural and man-made disasters, and a continued growing gap between rich and poor reveal deep structural inequalities and injustices in our societies. In addition, fierce critique of the international aid structure with demands for tangible outcomes is stronger than ever, and includes debates on decolonisation, anti-racism and anti-discrimination. At the same time the space for civil society actors continues to shrink in many countries with severe implications for civil society organisations and human rights defenders and other citizens in the form of surveillance, controls and restrictions. Part of this challenge includes the misuse of counter-terror legislation and demonising narratives of civil society to shrink democratic and human space.

Hence the obvious and crucial need for joining forces in partnerships across sectors for sustainable development and innovative solutions for the benefit of the world's poorest and people in need, and to promote a rules-based global order and foster global connectedness and solidarity with civil society in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17.



Meanwhile, there is a demand for a move from the classic partner approach of “capacitating” partners in the South to a more equal, inclusive and value-based approach, where power shifts in terms of resource and risk sharing and there is joint decision-making and advocacy for the advancement of a free, vocal, engaging and safe civil society space. This shift will require commitments and coordinated action for global cooperation and transformation.

DCA’s value-based partnerships can support these developments while responding constructively to the call and need for localised approaches and a global shift of power in humanitarian and development work. For example, a unique way to engage a greater proportion of Danes across political and social divides is via partnerships with faith-based actors and cooperation with Danish partners such as boarding schools, folk high schools and scout movements.

Hence, collaborating with partners and other actors in Denmark and globally is central to DCA’s vision and mission. We partner with civil society and faith-based organisations, social movements, alliances and networks, research institutions, donors, governments and private sector actors. These relations take on various forms and can be formal and informal, long-term and short-term, strategic and one-off; but central to all partnerships is a common goal and shared values.

## 2. Purpose – Overall Commitments to Partnerships

The current Partnership Policy serves two purposes:

- It outlines DCA’s commitment to partnerships by providing guiding values, principles and commitments for the organisation and its staff to guide behaviour, actions, processes and governance.
- It transparently informs existing and potential partners and other interested stakeholders about DCA’s partnership approach, and thus contributes to levelling expectations and holding DCA accountable to its partnership commitments.

Within this Partnership Policy period, DCA is committed to:

- Strengthening local leadership and localisation among our civil society and faith-based partners.
- Developing and test innovative, flexible, and safe models of supporting and resourcing informal social movements and activists.
- Scaling up innovative private sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships that are inclusive and locally led.
- Expanding the partner base and creating stronger relationships with existing partners and our church constituency in Denmark.

### DCA Values

DCA’s values are a compass at all levels of the organisation and guide priorities, decisions and daily actions and behaviour of both management and staff. In partnerships, DCA interprets the values as follows:

- **Compassionate**

We respect and welcome differences and are obligated to support our partners. We walk that extra mile with our partners and encourage dialogue whenever possible. We work hard to ensure that our partners have equal rights and are treated equally.

- **Proactive**

We create positive change for and with our partners by taking action when needed. We create space for innovation and are constantly curious about new ways of working. We seek engagement with partners to break new ground.

- **Responsible**

We are transparent and accountable in all actions and create sustainable solutions with and for our partners. We inspire trust in our partners by leading by example with integrity. We consider the bigger picture and develop solutions that will provide sustainable and effective development and localisation.

- **Respectful**

We respect the wishes and preferences of the partners we work with and act with fairness in all activities. We learn from our partners to strengthen our organisation.

### 3.1 DCA Commitments to Partnerships

Since DCA was founded in 1922, working in partnerships with civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and churches has been at the core of our way of working. It is embedded in our statutes as a fundamental principle and runs as a common thread through DCA Global Strategy 2023-2026,

policies, and working approaches, and is further cemented in our commitments to the Grand Bargain, the Charter4Change, the SDGs, the Core Humanitarian Standards and the Red Cross/Red Crescent and INGO Code of Conduct, and not least through the values and principles DCA has signed up to as a member of the ACT Alliance.

DCA sees its primary role in partnerships as one of supporting the agency of local and national civil society in the countries in which we work, including faith-based organisations, social movements and other groups of informal actors, as a means to promote human rights and democratic and just societies and as an end in itself.

At the same time, DCA is committed to working together with a variety of other local, international, and Danish partners within civil society, research institutions, private and public sector actors, investors, and our Danish popular and church-based constituency. We are committed to acting as a bridge builder and facilitator between stakeholders and across sectors – through engaging in innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships and connecting the dots to ensure greater impact in our programme countries and engagement in Denmark. We perceive partnerships based on shared values and trust, accountability and respect and on mutual learning and capacity strengthening as a key driver of sustainable change.

DCA is committed to placing a strong focus on securing locally led solutions through equal partnerships with civil society actors, including faith-based organisations. We recognise the need for addressing power imbalances in our own partnerships and within the global aid architecture in general. As part of this approach, DCA is committed to continuing to perform a leading role based on consultation and listening – to complementary as well as to critical voices – to advance the localisation of aid and power, and to share risks between international, national and local organisations and donors in our programme countries and globally. DCA is committed to advancing flexibility and agility in support of local actors to promote human rights, provide humanitarian assistance, and drive sustainable development. Working in and creating global alliances for change is part of this focus. Through DCA's active membership of ACT Alliance and ACT Forums, we are committed to coordinating and promoting joint action and solutions from local to national to global level. We are also committed to facilitating access for our local and national partners to engage in international coordination and advocacy.

DCA is committed to long-term partnerships with Danish church-based organisations, youth organisations, and educational institutions and to partnerships with other value-based partners, especially folk high-schools and junior folk high-schools. Building on a sense of global citizenship brought about by the global climate and justice movements, DCA is committed to strengthening relations between partners in our programme countries and our Danish constituency, particularly youth. DCA is committed to establishing more flexible alliances and collaborations with relevant groups, linking to social movements and other groups of informal actors, and to developing our relations with Danish private sector partners to mobilise even more Danes in local action for global change.

### 3.3 DCA Commitments to Localisation

DCA is committed to addressing imbalances and inequality in the global humanitarian system to the advantage of local and national actors and partners. As such, DCA was instrumental in driving forward the formulation of the Charter4Change in the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, which in many ways paved the way for the Grand Bargain (GB). The GB is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations which have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

DCA's approach to localisation and local leadership reflects a fundamental belief that the global aid architecture we are part of should promote the dignity, independence, capacity and agency of people

and communities together with the civil society actors who represent them. DCA finds a strong causal link between support for localisation and organisational development and a strong and vocal civil society that engages with duty bearers for inclusive democracy, accountability and just sharing of resources.

Localisation is not only a commitment at DCA country programme level, where DCA is committed to supporting civil society and faith-based partners, but also at Danish and global levels where DCA is committed to working with a broader range of partners across sectors to advance localisation and local leadership.

## DCA's Localisation Commitments

- **Investing in innovative, inclusive leadership models and governance structures**

DCA is committed to strengthening participatory decision-making structures, leadership and transparent governance for marginalised formal and informal civil society organisations and groups, especially women-led, youth-led, and faith-based. This includes leadership training, management capacity and governance systems that ensure staff and constituency involvement, and consortium models where partners and DCA have equal decision rights and where the lead role is rotational.

- **Strengthening people-centred accountability measures**

DCA is committed to advancing innovative and people-centred accountability measures through Local2Global Protection approaches, such as Survivor and Community Led Response (SCLR), as a means to give survivors and groups in communities affected by crisis the power and resources to take charge of their own response, and through development of partnerships between local and national partners and research institutions, social entrepreneurs, and innovation hubs, which can advance the safe use of online technology for accountability purposes. DCA is committed to fighting structural barriers that leave behind marginalised groups, such as women and youth, including addressing cultural and social norms, prejudices and unequal power relations that prevent these groups from access to fair information.

- **Resourcing institutional capacity strengthening and organisational development**

DCA is committed to developing and financing comprehensive long-term capacity and organisational development plans based on the priorities of local and national civil society actors, including capacity sharing and peer-to-peer learning, CHS self-assessment, mentoring, and joint learning initiatives through networks and alliances such as ACT Alliance and the online learning site Fabo.org. DCA is committed to scaling up support to strengthen robust, accountable and transparent governance and administration systems of local and national civil society actors.

- **Facilitating local civil society advocacy and coordination platforms**

DCA is committed to strengthening local civil society networks and advocacy platforms to strengthen resilience of local partners, community groups and individuals to open and maintain a dynamic political space, as well as enhancement of their engagement with duty-bearers for realisation of the SDGs, addressing human rights violations and promoting inclusive and accountable governance. DCA is committed to supporting new and emerging informal civil society actors to network, coordinate and gain greater advocacy skills.

- **Providing direct funding and locally led finance models**

DCA is committed to increasing direct transfer of humanitarian and development funds to local and national partners in line with the 25% target of direct funding to local actors in Charter4Change, and to advocating for donors to allocate direct funding and administration fees to local and national civil society organisations. DCA is committed to continuously testing locally led finance models, where local actors are responsible for distributing pooled funding to other local actors and community groups in an inclusive, transparent and accountable manner.

*DCA Local Leadership Strategy, 2021*



### 3. Scope – Working with Different Partners

For DCA, healthy partnerships are relationships based on mutually respected values such as universal human rights and the rule of law, non-discrimination, and accountability, and common principles of trust, respect and acknowledgement of each other's strengths and weaknesses. Recognising that the underlying reason for engaging in a partnership may vary from partner to partner, a shared goal or vision for the partnership must be agreed.

DCA understands that partnerships evolve over time. However, we do not see the development of the relationship as linear, and neither do we operate with a desired end-state of the partnership. As such, DCA is committed to long-term partnerships while also engaging in short-term partnerships and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The shared goal of the partnership and the type of partner(s) will most often determine the nature of the partnership, and how we work together.

**Short-term partnerships** are typically timebound relationships with a new partner or a partner with whom the purpose of the engagement is limited to a specific activity, event, project or process. This can include emergency response, delimited technical or financial support, a joint advocacy or campaigning drive, a joint research or co-implementation of a project. Such partnerships are usually based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or a Cooperation Agreement when they involve transfer of funds or assets which spell out the contractual obligations of DCA and the partner.

**Long-term partnerships** are typically multi-year, strategic engagements over and beyond a joint activity or project, where DCA and the partner work together with a shared vision of transformational, societal change. Such partnerships carry an institutional commitment based on a Partnership Agreement, or an MoU, outlining shared vision, values, and expected roles and responsibilities, and supported by an annual, strategic partnership meeting.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships** across civil society, the private sector, research institutions, donors, and investors are typically strategic engagements for sustainable and locally led solutions that can be taken to scale, or timebound collaborations through a consortium model for the implementation of large projects and programmes. Bringing together various actors provides synergies of expertise and context, co-creation, innovation, leverage, and opportunities for scale. DCA leads and joins consortia, when possible, to maximise impact and scope globally, with a particular focus on developing joint solutions to address humanitarian needs, promote inclusive development and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

DCA is committed to implementing its country programmes with partners. Depending on the context, the nature of the work, the capacity of civil society, or the urgency and scale of the humanitarian needs, DCA may apply a flexible approach to the implementation of its programmes, ranging from purely community and partner-led implementation, through co-implementation, to DCA direct implementation. These different implementation modalities may be applied simultaneously in any given country and may change or alternate over time. The decision to engage in direct implementation should always be for a limited amount of time and with a strategic intention to gradually enhance local capacities of partners, in line with DCA's Charter4Change and localisation commitments.

Below is a categorisation of the different types of DCA partners, which highlights key characteristics of the partners and the typical purpose of the partnership, including DCA's specific commitments related to each type of partner.

#### 4.1. Civil Society Organisations

The core of DCA's partnerships is with formal and registered local and national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), that carry a mandate from or

represent communities, groups of rights-holders and their constituencies. CSOs form the majority of DCA's partners.

The CSOs that DCA partners with are expected to be committed to and fight for human rights, empowerment, participation, inclusion and diversity, representation of rights-holders, and to have a high degree of downward accountability. DCA and our CSO partners share core values and have common goals toward transforming society to advance the social, economic, and political needs and rights of poor and marginalised people. Faith-based organisations, as part of civil society, are locally embedded and often organise groups of women and youth – and are thus key to promoting localisation, youth engagement and women's leadership.

### **DCA Commitments**

In programme countries, DCA is committed to long-term partnerships with CSOs as a first priority, with a particular focus on women-led/women-rights and youth-led organisations. These partnerships should build on equitable relationships involving sharing of power, risks and resources, and hence DCA is committed to strengthening cooperation and decision-making approaches, accountability, language and communication, as well as governance systems. Tangible actions to support localisation, organisational development, capacity strengthening, and advocacy are agreed upon in Partnership Agreements and followed by funding.

In Denmark, DCA is committed to long-term partnerships with church constituencies, schools, scouts, and faith-based organisations. Our church-based and popular civil society partners form the core of our engagement with the Danish public in promoting positive change for the world's poorest and people in need, and in reaching the SDGs. DCA is committed to playing a key role in involving faith actors and networks in relevant development agendas and topics raised by partners in DCA country programmes and linking CSO partners in Denmark and in the countries where we work. DCA is committed to engaging in partnerships with other Danish civil society organisations for knowledge sharing and joint agenda setting and advocacy.

## **4.2. International Non-Governmental Organisations**

DCA typically partners with International NGOs (INGOs) to leverage advocacy and media campaigns, and to fundraise for and implement large projects and programmes in consortia whose partners bring together different and complimentary skills and resources. The INGOs DCA partners with work in multiple countries and operate within the same humanitarian, development and peace contexts as DCA. The partnerships can be one-off engagements or continuous collaboration based on an MoU with strategic intent, such as is the case with the Danish Family Planning Association, the Swiss-based HEKS/EPER, and not least Norwegian Church Aid with whom DCA currently has four Joint Country Programmes – in Palestine, Myanmar, Malawi and Zambia.

### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to exploring cooperation and partnerships with international ACT members and other INGOs to advance common agendas and undertake joint advocacy and media campaigns as well as to engage in joint programming and consortia for leverage and scale. In programme countries, DCA is committed to linking local and national partners to its INGO partners and including them in consortia to ensure the advancement of locally led priorities and solutions.

## **4.3. Social Movements and Other Groups of Informal Actors**

DCA supports social movements and other groups of informal actors, such as community groups, activists and human rights defenders, because they play an important role as change agents for reform in areas of democracy, civic space, human rights, gender equality, climate change and youth inclusion

in national agendas. These groups of informal actors are typically not registered legal entities, have no paid staff, and are often time-bound and event or issue driven. They often consist of many different stakeholders unified by a common interest or goal and come from a wide range of ideological positions. While recognising that some groups of informal actors use violence or can be highly politicised and (mis)used by authorities, DCA works with and supports social movements and other groups of informal actors that are non-violent and aligned with our values. As these groups are often intimidated by or even considered illegal in their country of origin, partnership operational modalities must be flexible and administratively 'light' compared to those with formally registered organisations, and associated risks must be managed.

### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to developing innovative, flexible and safe models of supporting and resourcing social movements and other groups of informal actors in programme countries in close cooperation with progressive back donors. Such models can include DCA's Human Rights Defenders Fund, Small Grant Facility, community cash grants via survivor and community-led response, as well as support to NGOs that support these groups. DCA's focus will be on enabling access to flexible funding as well as training in emergency and preventive safety and security measures, including safe tech solutions and digital connectivity to amplify voices and key messages, documentation and use of alternative safe media and SoMe platforms. It is not the intention of DCA to push these informal actors into becoming formal organisations but rather to support their immediate needs to organically grow and amplify their voice and influence for positive, transformational change locally and globally.

In Denmark, DCA is committed to engaging in new partnerships and alliances with social movements and other groups of informal actors on shared agendas such as the SDGs, climate change and promotion of a rules-based global order, which have the potential of setting the agenda and mobilising Danes to engage in meaningful actions on issues that are relevant to the people and partners we work with globally.

## **4.4. Private Sector Actors**

DCA partners with private sector actors with a view to promoting inclusive and sustainable business models that work for the benefit of the poor and are founded on responsible business conduct principles and practices. Private sector partnerships are not a goal in themselves but a means to develop innovative and scalable solutions to achieve DCA's goals and the SDGs. DCA seeks collaboration with one or multiple private sector actors based on an intelligent match between our core values and competencies. The different types of private sector partners include local, national and international social enterprises, financial institutions, small and medium sized companies, and multinational companies.

### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to promoting responsible business conduct in partnerships with private sector actors by combining the key principles of 'doing good', in line with the SDG objectives, and 'doing no harm' following the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. DCA is committed to developing and maintaining sustainable and innovative solutions to climate change, and inclusive market development and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, by engaging local, global and Danish companies and investors as knowledge partners in driving new solutions to global challenges. DCA is committed to linking local, Danish, and international private sector actors to promote a pro-poor approach to rural farmers' access to local, national, and global value chains and markets.

DCA is committed to forming value-based partnerships with relevant Danish private sector actors, business associations and unions to advance joint agendas such as climate and sustainability and the protection of a rules-based global order, and to mobilise consumers in local action for global change.

## 4.5. ACT Alliance and Networks

DCA is an active member of the ACT Alliance and will continue to engage in and support national ACT Forums and ACT globally. The ACT Alliance is a unique global platform for church and faith-based organisation members who share values, beliefs and visions for promoting sustainable development and human rights and for facilitating cooperation at national and global levels.

DCA is also a member of other faith and non-faith-based networks and alliances with whom we share common goals. These include the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance, World Resources Institute, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), VOICE, the CALP Network, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and others. DCA further engages with UN clusters and working groups, international and national NGO Forums in DCA programme countries as well as networks like Climate Action Network, and trade and business associations and unions.

In Denmark, DCA is a member of several networks and alliances, including Globalt Fokus, Etisk Handel Danmark, Global Compact Network Denmark, Access2Innovation, ISOBRO and others.

Common to DCA's membership in and engagement with all networks and alliances is the purpose of engaging in strategic, multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation, knowledge sharing, and leveraging voice and influence on humanitarian, development, peace and sustainability agendas in Denmark and globally, through joint advocacy and agenda setting.

### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to its continued active engagement and contribution to the ACT Alliance through representation in its governance structures at country level, EU and global levels, through ecumenical cooperation as well as through knowledge sharing, learning and joint advocacy, fundraising and emergency response.

DCA is committed to actively engaging in and making resources available to the networks and alliances of which we are a member. Here, at all levels, we facilitate participation and inclusion of local and national partners in relevant and influential networks and alliances to promote local priorities and agendas and to push for sharing of power through access to knowledge and influence.

## 4.6. Legal and Moral Duty Bearers

DCA engages, and sometimes enters into partnerships with legal and moral duty bearers to push for human rights and systemic change. The *legal duty bearer* is the state, in practice represented by the responsible government authorities at local, regional, national and international levels, who have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people. Non-State actors can act as *de facto* duty-bearers e.g., in armed conflict settings, refugee camps and other fragile contexts with weak or no government presence. The *moral duty bearers* relevant to DCA's work also have a key role in pushing and advocating for systemic change. These duty bearers are typically national and international faith-based actors (organisations, umbrella networks etc.) who hold positions of power and outreach and are working to support rights-holders. Other moral duty bearers can include multilateral institutions, donor agencies, private sector actors and development and humanitarian organisations. At the community level, targeted moral duty-bearers include traditional leaders, chiefs, local courts, religious leaders, men, teachers etc. who play a key role in engagement with local legal duty bearers on how laws are enforced.

### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to active engagement with legal and moral duty bearers at local, national, and international level to advance humanitarian access, inclusive and sustainable development, and the approval, enforcement and monitoring of just legislation, laws and policies. When needed, DCA is

committed to partnering with local and national legal duty bearers in our programme countries – to ensure protection in humanitarian settings to build capacity and support delivery of social services and to strengthen local markets and value chains, and to advance progressive climate policies and implementation.

DCA is committed to supporting rights-holders in engaging with legal duty-bearers and enhancing their understanding of the legal obligations of International Humanitarian Law, human rights and good governance, in monitoring the implementation of commitments and policies, and in demanding transparency and access to information for rights-holders. A further key commitment for DCA is to apply a conflict-sensitive, impartial, proactive and transparent approach with duty bearers, which ensures that rights-holders are involved, safe and protected in their engagement with duty bearers.

DCA is committed to partnering with moral duty bearers, including traditional leaders, churches and other faith-based organisations and networks, to enhance the role of moral duty bearers for dialogue, value formation, mobilisation and behavioural change. DCA is further committed to connecting faith partners in our programme work with faith partners in our Danish constituency – for mutual learning, challenging debate and engagement.

DCA is committed to engaging international duty-bearers, such as relevant UN and EU institutions, the Danish parliament, ministry of foreign affairs and other relevant ministries, to advance political action, legislation and initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, principled aid prioritisation, the protection of a rules-based global order, and create conditions for and sustainable solutions to fight poverty and injustice in DCA programme countries.

#### 4.7. Research and Resource Institutions

DCA partners with research institutions, think-tanks, universities and professional associations to improve evidence-based documentation, impact measurement and learning, as well as to qualify fundraising processes, support technical implementation of projects and programmes and gather evidence for advocacy interventions, including when testing new approaches or thematic intervention areas. Such partnerships are often founded in an MoU.

##### **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to expanding its partnerships with research and resource institutions, with a particular focus on locally rooted scientists and research institutions, to facilitate closer collaboration between research and implementing partners, and to generally promote equal access to research production, data and results for the benefit of our local and national civil society partners and rights-holders.

#### 4.8. Donors

DCA partners with many donors who contribute to the achievement of our common goals through strategic partnerships, framework agreements, grants and other forms of resource contributions. Common to these partnerships is a relationship built on mutual trust, transparency, accountability, shared goals and ambitions for the future direction of the aid and humanitarian sector. DCA works with government, multilateral donors and private foundations and also receives resources from members of the ACT Alliance. Common to all our donor partnerships besides the financial contributions to DCA's work is that we strive to have a strategic dialogue – formal and informal – about the political and socio-economic context, progress, challenges and learning from reviews and evaluations. We also engage in joint visits and encourage dialogue through bilateral meetings, conferences and round tables whenever possible.

## **DCA Commitments**

DCA is committed to accountability, transparency and compliance with donor requirements. At the same time, DCA is committed to engaging in dialogue with its donor partners for continued knowledge sharing, learning and design of innovative and new approaches and modalities of financing for development.

Recognising the high levels of polarisation and the increasing pressure on civil society, DCA is committed to pushing for increased risk willingness among its donor partners, while striking the right balance between compliance and flexible funding modalities.

DCA is further committed to advancing the localisation agenda among its donor partners, including opening spaces for dialogue and direct feedback loops between local CSO partners and donors as well as inviting local and national actors into DCA's donor partnerships.

## 4. DCA Partner Group – Advice and Accountability

As an organisation, DCA is part of Danish civil society and has a wide Danish constituency ranging from volunteers, congregations, scouts and schools to different faith-based groups and networks, and sports and cultural associations. Via their representation in the DCA council and the board of directors, these partners govern, influence and advise DCA on strategic and political matters to keep DCA relevant and true to its vision and mission, and thus connected and accountable to its Danish constituency.

To further increase accountability and the relevance in our international work, DCA's work is guided by our local and national partners through the Partner Platform meetings, where issues of governance, accountability, and strategy is discussed, while contextual and programmatic issues and developments are discussed during the annual Country Programme Critical Reflection Workshops prior to adjustment of the country programme Theory of Change.

At the global level, and in line with DCA statutes, DCA is committed to strengthening the mandate and role of the new **Global Partner Group** to contribute to increased responsibility, transparency and quality in DCA's partner-based work. The global partner group will advise the DCA board of directors and international management on specific issues related to partner-based work.

At the country programme level, DCA is committed to gathering experience and learning from the current Partner Platforms and Critical Reflection Workshops, and consequently piloting and testing new **Local Partner Groups** or **Local Advisory Groups**. The ambition is to ensure ownership, relevance and accountability to the commitments outlined in this Partnership Policy and DCA's Local Leadership Strategy.

The details of the Global Partner Group and the Local Partner/Advisory Groups – mandates, tasks, operationalisation – will be further elaborated in separate guidelines.



## 5. Procedures and Requirements

This section provides guidance on implementation and adherence to the Partnership Policy, as well as steps to end partnerships when necessary.

### 6.1 Implementation of the Partnership Policy

In order to ensure adherence to the DCA Partnership Policy and implementation of its commitments, a number of steps are in place to guide DCA management, staff and partners, as spelled out in DCA online Programme and Project Manual (PPM). These must be followed at all times, including the use of relevant tools and formats for assessments, cooperation agreements, MoUs, partnership meetings and partnership agreements. However, in order to stay flexible and innovative, DCA is committed to regularly reviewing and adjusting the PPM requirements to cater for new and different types of partners and partnership modalities.

A first and key step when developing a country programme is the requirement to conduct a thorough context analysis including civil society and stakeholder mapping to identify relevant civil society and faith-based organisations and other formal and informal actors with whom DCA may partner.

Prior to engaging in partnerships with civil society, including faith-based organisations, social movements and other groups of informal actors, and whether local, national or international, DCA carries out a partner assessment to assess any potential risks and guide any subsequent capacity strengthening and organisational development needs of the partner.

Partnerships with private sector actors are based on a due diligence process, including a company screening to ensure alignment with the highest international standards on responsible business conduct principles and practices, to identify any actual or potential risks linked to the company, the sector, or the proposed activities.

Hence, when private sector actors as well as research institutions or other new types of partners receive funding for implementing activities in a partnership, they are considered as partners, not as service providers.

Partners receiving funds from DCA must be subject to a financial capacity assessment and must sign a Cooperation Agreement clearly spelling out terms and conditions of the grant. However, partners who do not have the capacity or the possibility of complying with these requirements, such as social movements and other groups of informal actors, can access financial support from DCA through other lighter modalities, including the Flexible Financial Support or the Human Rights Defenders Fund.

Long-term partnerships with civil society and faith-based organisations are further guided by Partnership Agreements emphasising the strategic intent of the partnership and followed up by annual partnership meetings. Short-term partnerships with private sectors actors, alliances, international NGOs and similar, which do not (necessarily) entail the transfer of funds, will typically be guided by an MoU highlighting the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

Dialogue with primarily civil society and faith-based partners concerning programmatic progress, learning and challenges as well as contextual, operational and policy issues takes place during annual Partner Platforms.

DCA will monitor and report on the commitments of the Partnership Policy and the support to our partners through the DCA Global Results Framework and our annual Grand Bargain and Charter4Change reporting. In addition, DCA conducts an annual Partner Satisfaction Survey through which partners provide feedback to DCA with the aim of improving and building stronger partnerships.



*Together with the DCA board and management, the Global Partner Group will have a specific mandate and responsibility to monitor and review the implementation of the Partnership Policy, the Local Leadership Strategy, as well as the DCA Localisation Framework in DCA programme countries, supported by the Local Partner/Advisory Groups in-country.*

## 6.2. When DCA-Partner Relations Transform

There will be situations when DCA-partner relations change due to various internal reasons or external factors, and result in DCA and the partner ending the partnership. Internal reasons for ending a partnership by either DCA or the partner can be organisational changes, restructuring, changes in strategic direction; or when trust in a relationship is broken due to e.g., fraud; abuse of power, violations of the Code of Conduct, or continuous failure to live up to agreed roles and responsibilities. External factors to end a partnership can be contextual changes, such as government restrictions, disasters, safety and security issues, and reduced or lack of back donor funding.

DCA is committed to continuous dialogue with its partners to prevent such incidents in reaching the stage of conflict or arbitration or resulting in premature termination of any partnership. In unavoidable cases, however, the termination process will follow terms and conditions stipulated in signed agreements.

In cases when long-term partnerships have to come to an end due to external factors, DCA will strive to communicate in due time and will design a phase-out strategy together with the partner, including support for organisational development, fundraising and linking the partners with networks and possible new partners and supporters.

Partners in the case of grievances are always encouraged to use DCA's Complaints Mechanism when necessary.

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## 7. References, Related Resources, and Appendices

“Local Leadership Strategy”, November 2021, enclosed with SPA application to Danida, DanChurchAid.

“Human Rights Policy”, December 2018, DanChurchAid.

“Thematic Evaluation number 2: Strengthening in the Global South”, September 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danida.

“Study on Danish Support to Informally Organised Civil Society and Social Movements in Developing Countries”, July 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danida.

Papers and inputs from Globalt Fokus thematic workshop re. “Localisation and local partnerships”, April 2021.

“Global Localisation Framework 2021/2022”, March 2021, DanChurchAid.

“Definitions Paper IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team”, January 2018, Localisation Marker Working Group.

“Organisational Development Guideline”, June 2018, DanChurchAid.