

In faith and action for a better world

STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN'S
INTERNATIONAL WORK 2018–2022



Church of Sweden 

member of
actalliance

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With the right support, people can rise up from a disaster with greater strength. The Church of Sweden's international work ensures that people in refugee camps can be given emergency help and have a meaningful existence. Hawa in South Sudan, for example, underwent training to become a tailor, which led to her starting her own business.

Photo: Magnus Aronson

The Christian message of faith, hope and charity forms the basis of our work. Together with churches, faith-based development organisations and actors from the civil society, we aim to contribute to sustainable societies and defend people's dignity and rights.

The strategic plan for 2018–2022 as a whole can be read at www.svenskakyrkan.se.

Together for a just world

THIS IS WHAT WE ARE:

The Church of Sweden is an Evangelical Lutheran religious community which is borne by the belief in a God who makes a stand for those who are oppressed or vulnerable. Diaconia is a key part of our identity and is defined as God's love expressed through the church's care for fellow human beings and creation.

Our starting point is to defend all people's dignity and rights, regardless of their faith or origin. No person should ever be regarded as an object in need, dependent on the goodness of others, but always as an individual who has rights and an innate power to shape his or her future. It is a challenge for us in our international work to constantly strive to strengthen people's own abilities, responsibilities and participation. The aim is to promote fair and sustainable societies and amicable relationships with sister churches around the world.

The engagement of the parishes in Sweden is a condition for our work and gives expression to the participation in a global world and a worldwide church. Faith and action go hand in hand for us and can bring about changes to real life.





ORGANISATION Through local organisations, the Church of Sweden's international work supports women in India working to oppose violence against women. Here is a group of women in Bhubaneswar. Photo: Magnus Aronson

Being a church is a strength

THIS IS HOW WE WORK:

We work in partnership on a local and global basis. We believe in the strength to support local powers within civil society and to actively participate in global networks in order to bring about positive change. We are part of a worldwide ecumenical community, which is expressed, among other things, through our membership of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. The Church of Sweden is also a member of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together), one of the largest faith-based alliances in the world for humanitarian work, cooperation on development, and advocacy.

As a church, we have a broad anchorage and are part of a global network that has access to local actors at a grass-roots level. This allows us to support civil society organisations and vulnerable people living in areas that are difficult to access, where churches and other religious institutions are sometimes the only trusted actors in society.

We are convinced that religious actors have a great influence on work to bring about change around the world. Faith can provide the inspiration, courage and power to make a stand for people in vulnerable situations. Our work is governed by several important principles:

HUMAN RIGHTS: We regard every person as being created in God's image, with the right to live in dignity and with basic rights as expressed in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION: We believe in every person's ability and right to accomplish his or her own life. Participation is fundamental for people's ability to be key actors in their own and society's development.

DEMOCRATIC SPACE AND ORGANISATION: Our work involves maintaining, protecting and expanding the democratic space and strengthening conditions to allow people to organise themselves, and working freely for human rights. Every person should be free to change their life and their future.

RESPONSIBILITIES: As a church, it is part of our mission to take action against the misuse of power and to bring those abusing power to account. In order to ensure that human rights are protected, states and other actors need to be held to account both politically and legally.



EMPOWERMENT Josephine Sundqvist from the Church of Sweden's international work and LVF president, Bishop Musa Panti Filibus on a visit to a girls' school in Tanzania, with a focus on girls' empowerment. Photo: Alex Malasusa

Our role in all cooperation with local partners and grass-roots movements is to facilitate and enable. In our activities, people should be informed, know their rights and be able to participate in the work that affects their lives. We want to create good mechanisms for quality and responsibility in close cooperation with the people we work with.

Amicable relations between dioceses and parishes in Sweden and sister churches around the world are

something we actively promote. Our aim is to create an opportunity for people to share faith and lives, and we invest in particular in exchanges between young people through programmes such as The Young in the Worldwide Church.

We regard investing in theological education as a linchpin for forming tomorrow's leaders in the church and in society.

We build sustainable societies

THIS IS WHAT WE WORK WITH:

The Church of Sweden's international work includes humanitarian work, long-term development work, church collaboration and advocacy. Areas of special priority are:

THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: We work to protect all persons' basic freedom of religion or belief. We participate with churches and religious actors all over the world in our work to bring about change and seek to strengthen churches' ability to work to safeguard human rights through theological education, reflection and exchange.

JUST PEACE: We work to ensure that people live their lives in security and that conditions are in place to prevent and manage conflicts. We seek to strengthen the resistance and ability of individuals and societies to recover from war and protect particularly vulnerable social groups and refugees.

Interreligious dialogue and cooperation are important methods for this. We also give priority to highlighting the participation and perspectives of women and children in all our work to ensure just peace. As a church, we also play a special role in preventing religious radicalisation and extremism.

GENDER JUSTICE AND EQUALITY: We adopt a clear position on injustices on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. With theology as the starting point, we work to ensure the same conditions exist for all people to make their voices are heard in society and the church.

We fight against sexual and gender-related violence, as well as harmful customs such as child marriage. By working with religious actors, we have access to important forces for change in society, where religion greatly influences people's lives and can exercise direct power in matters of marriage and family law.

SRHR: We work to safeguard people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. We work, among other things, for improved access to maternal care, preventive health-care for women and children, sexual education, and to facilitate family planning as well as legal and safe abortions. In our work we place special emphasis on children's health during their first five years.

People's views of SRHR, relationships, the family and equality are often strongly influenced by religious traditions and norms. We therefore collaborate with local



ORGANISATION We support local forces to achieve change, for example, in Colombia. There we cooperate with DiPaz, an initiative of churches and faith-based actors working for peace. Photo: Anna Vogt. Monica

Antimilitarismo y Noviolencia
Bogotá 8 al 11 de abril de 2015
Reconciliación
DiPaz

FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL



THEOLOGY Nursing students outside the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, where the Church of Sweden supports the development of functioning healthcare. We also support local partners in the region who work tirelessly for human rights, peace and reconciliation. Photo: Magnus Aronson

churches and religious actors working for change, to strengthen their knowledge of and capacity for working with SRHR.

FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY: We see that creation is threatened by the current human impact on the planet and want to work towards a sustainable development, where people take responsibility for their life style and effect on nature, the climate and the environment.

We work for sustainable production and consumption, and to ensure that everyone is able to participate in the economic development on fair and sustainable conditions.

The earth is a gift to be shared fairly between us who are living here now and future generations. Responsible

business practices and climate justice are required for this to be made possible. Together with local grass roots and within global alliances, we work on ambitious and necessary climate measures.

HUMANITARIAN WORK: In its humanitarian work the Church of Sweden seeks to contribute to saving lives, preventing and alleviating need and maintaining human dignity and human rights in emergency situations.

We take a psycho-social approach, which ensures that people have their own resources and the ability to manage the situation and recover.

We believe in the power of local ownership in humanitarian initiatives and prioritise working especially for the participation of women and children.

The Church of Sweden's International work seeks to contribute to:

1. The realisation of people's right to freedom of religion or belief in church and society.
2. People's opportunity and capability to interpret the church's mission and vocation, and their contribution to the realisation of human rights, including social protection in church and society.
3. People's access to improved human security, ability and empowerment to prevent and manage conflicts and participate in peace and reconciliation processes.
4. Improved conditions and opportunities for women and men's equal participation, voice and leadership in church and society.
5. People's right to physical and sexual integrity in church and society.
6. People's sexual and reproductive health and rights are upheld.
7. People living in poverty are empowered and their economic, social and cultural rights are upheld.
8. People and communities have improved capacity to adapt to and manage the effects of climate change.
9. Saving lives, preventing and alleviating suffering and upholding human dignity and human rights in emergency situations.

(FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN)

