

Läkarmissionen's policy for human rights-based work

Purpose and scope

This policy indicates the focus and objective of Läkarmissionen's aid and development activities and describes experiences and lessons learned, human rights and the human rights-based approach, as well as what this means in practice for Läkarmissionen's mission.

Responsibility

Läkarmissionen's project department and management are responsible for ensuring compliance with these guidelines in the projects.

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1. Objectives and contents of this document

This document is produced to clarify and indicate Läkarmissionen's direction and objective of its aid and development activities in Sweden as well as in other countries.

The policy describes Läkarmissionen's experiences and lessons learned, human rights and the human rights-based approach, as well as what this means in practice for the work of Läkarmissionen.

2. Background – Läkarmissionen's experiences and lessons learned

Läkarmissionen is a Swedish independent organisation with Christian fundamental values and a long tradition of carrying out aid and development efforts via local partner organisations. Läkarmissionen believes in the local organisation's ability to function effectively in its context, but collaborates with international organisations with local presence as well. Since 2010, Läkarmissionen implements a human rights-based approach to provide relevant and constructive support to partner organisations.

Lessons learned from the human rights-based approach

Läkarmissionen believes that identifying the root causes of poverty and oppression and addressing these are key aspects of human rights-based work. The foundation of the rights-based approach is a holistic view of the human being, their environment, and the view of a person as a basically social creature with a need to be included in a collective context. Human beings are also actors with their own ability to change their own life situation. In the rights-based approach, human rights are used as goals and tools in an effort to influence policy makers.

Läkarmissionen recognises that the rights-based approach is not merely about influencing authorities or being a watch dog, but also about the four elements of the approach (non-discrimination, inclusion, transparency, and responsibility - accountability) complementing each other. In projects with partner organisations, Läkarmissionen can see that those different elements take different positions.

Läkarmissionen strives to focus on development and results, emphasise the importance of realising rights, recognise the rights of the individual and groups as demands on (identified) duty bearers, assume that individuals and groups are able to claim their own rights, and that individuals are entitled to demand help as well as look for the structural root causes of problems.

An example of how organisational development from aid to the rights-based approach can look.

Aid	Target group needs	Rights-based
Focus on activities implemented	Focus on implemented activities and their results	Focus on development and results
Emphasises the importance of increased aid	Emphasises the importance of satisfying the needs of the target group	Emphasises the importance of realising rights
Recognises the moral responsibility of the rich world towards developing countries	Recognises the needs of poor people as valid demands	Recognises the rights of the individual and group as demands against (identified) duty bearers
Individuals are seen as victims of circumstances	Individuals risk being seen as objects in development efforts	Individuals and groups are able to claim their own rights
Individuals need help	Individuals deserve help	Individuals are entitled to demand help
How does the problem manifest itself?	What is the direct cause of the problem?	What are the structural root causes of the problem?

3. Basic documents from a human rights perspective

Vision and Mission

Vision: We shall, through developing and effective methods, support the desire and ability of vulnerable people to change their living conditions.

Mission: We shall, from a human rights perspective, fight poverty and contribute to sustainable development within our prioritised areas. We shall also encourage others to adopt the vision of Läkarmissionen by providing information.

Läkarmissionen works to achieve its vision and mission together with partner organisations from a human rights perspective. The aim of Läkarmissionen's anti-poverty projects is for vulnerable persons and groups to have their rights respected and fulfilled. When human rights are respected, individuals are given the opportunity to contribute to their own development by means of will and ability. The inability of nations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights leads to lack of freedom and deprives individuals of the chance to control their own life situation. Violations of these rights thus reinforce poverty and oppression.

Läkarmissionen's basic principles

Läkarmissionen's basic principles establish that the work is carried out from a rights perspective. Our Christian values mean that we believe in the equal value of all persons and respect the individual's intrinsic dignity, reason, and capability, as well as every human being's right to life, liberty, and sustainable development. An organisation with a religious background other than Läkarmissionen's is by no means disqualified from cooperation. It will be disqualified, however, if the organisation's views on human rights are inconsistent with Läkarmissionen's.

Areas of development

- Social care
- Training and education
- Self-sufficiency
- Humanitarian aid

In long-term projects with partner organisations, Läkarmissionen divides its efforts into three areas of development: Social care, Training and Education, and Self-sufficiency. In addition to our long-term efforts, Läkarmissionen also provides disaster relief and material aid together with partner organisations. A rights-based approach is applied in all these areas of development.

Core values

- Fighting poverty
- Human rights perspective
- Sustainable development
- Holistic approach
- Health

The core values of Läkarmissionen form the foundation of our cooperation with partner organisations to help give people from poverty and oppression a better future.

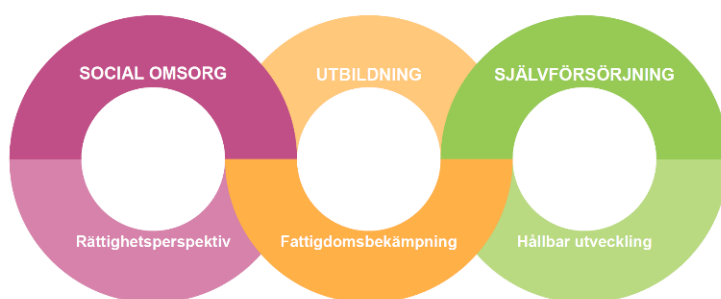
The human rights perspective is based on each individual having equal and indisputable rights. When human rights are respected, individuals are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of themselves and their families by means of will and ability. The inability of nations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights leads to lack of freedom and deprives individuals of the chance to control their own life situation. Violations

of these rights thus reinforce poverty and vulnerability, which in turn helps to ensure that the causes of poverty and oppression remain unchecked.

Läkarmissionen's development chain

Läkarmissionen's work is based on a holistic view of human beings. In our efforts, we view the above mentioned areas of development (social care, training and education, and self-sufficiency) as interconnected components that reinforce each other. Efforts are pervaded by our core values: human rights perspective, fighting poverty, and sustainable development. The right to the best possible health is central to Läkarmissionen and preventive health efforts are integrated in all projects. Our areas of priority and core values reinforce each other and create long-term effect.

One of the strengths of Läkarmissionen's development aid is that we can link the various efforts into a chain of integrated components. Läkarmissionen calls this *Läkarmissionen's development chain*.



Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct contains the ethical standards and values produced by Läkarmissionen with which partner organisations are expected to comply. The Code of Conduct deals with issues of governance and management of the organisations, financial management, corruption, human resources management, personnel health and safety, environment, gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as humanitarian aid. The Code of Conduct clearly states that the human rights of the target group must be respected and that the target group must be treated with respect and dignity.

Läkarmissionen's policy for partner cooperation

The policy for partner cooperation has been approved by the Board of Directors. The document is produced to clarify and indicate the direction and objective of Läkarmissionen's relationships with organisations in the development cooperation, humanitarian efforts and development of approaches in which Läkarmissionen participates. The partner cooperation policy largely specifies with whom Läkarmissionen will cooperate while this policy specifies in which manner cooperation will take place.

4. About human rights

The UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Human rights are based on the respect for every human being – both as an individual and as part of a community – having a unique worth and an inalienable human dignity. They establish that all human beings are born free and equal in worth and rights. Human rights are universal. They apply throughout the world regardless of country, culture, or context. Economic, political, civic, social, and cultural living conditions allow people to live humanely and worthy in the society in which they live. Since 1948, many conventions have been added to the general declaration. There are also conventions at regional level.

Human rights cover many aspects of a human being's life. They aim at giving all people the opportunity to live a decent life and therefore include rules on people's possibility to survive, including food and housing,

on people's right to their innermost thoughts and beliefs, on protection of families, freedom from torture and slavery, on the right to education, freedom of expression, and the right to participate in decision-making. Human rights regulate the relationship between the state and the individual. They constitute a limitation of the state's power over the individual while also establishing certain obligations for the state towards the individual. States are required to respect international law. Each country has a responsibility to translate its human rights commitments into national law. The individual human being included in Läkarmissionen's projects is primarily referred to his or her national court when his or her rights are violated. When applying a rights-based approach, knowledge of national law is therefore important and countries' national legal systems are addressed in the advocacy.

5. About the human rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach includes two main groups of actors: rights holder and duty bearers. The rights holders are the people who make up the target group, those whose situation the project or effort intends to change. The target group has one or more rights that are being violated. The duty bearers are those with responsibility to ensure that the rights holders' rights are respected. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the state is the main duty bearer. At each level – local, regional, and national – it is the state that has formal power and responsibility. The rights-based approach is a method that provides understanding of how power, opportunities, and resources are allocated in society, and to, based on this understanding, be able to plan content, target group, and purpose of the project. In addition to legal duty bearers, there are also moral duty bearers who are responsible for individuals' poverty and oppression and the fulfilment of human rights. These may be parents, church leaders, companies, or traditional local leaders.

Power and the lack thereof are important and complex elements of the rights-based approach. Often, different interests and power structures interfere with each other; national law may conflict with human rights (for example, sexual orientation), a locally established and practiced custom may conflict with national law (for example, genital mutilation). A human rights-based approach involves an active citizen engagement and making visible conflicts and unequal situations, as well as seeking constructive relationships between rights holders and duty bearers in order to find solutions.

Rättighetsbaserat arbetssätt

The four elements of a rights-based approach are non-discrimination, inclusion, accountability, and transparency.



6. Consequences for Läkarmissionen based on human rights-based work

Rights-based efforts are based on the four elements: non-discrimination, inclusion, accountability, and transparency. Below is a review of how that work is done. Please note that the extent of the four elements varies between projects.

Non-discrimination



Non-discrimination

Human beings have the same rights and may not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or health status. As many people as possible must be able to benefit from the improvements resulting from the efforts, and priority must be given to vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Läkarmissionen will act to ensure that:

- Partners indicate in their application how they work to avoid discrimination against people with different religious affiliation, gender, age, ethnical background, sexual orientation, and disability.
- Partners demonstrate how they work for an even balance between women and men in both governing positions and among employees.
- Läkarmissionen prioritises women and children. This may lead to positive discrimination against these groups.

Inclusion



Participation

Efforts are based on people's own perspective, in order for their living conditions to change in the long term. People included in Läkarmissionen's projects are rights holders and must be involved in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. The goal is for them to be empowered, gain a stronger voice in the community, and have ownership of their own development. Läkarmissionen also works continuously with its own culture and structure in

order to develop and promote broad and active participation within the organisation.

Läkarmissionen will act to ensure that:

- Partners demonstrate in their application how the target group has been included in planning the effort.
- Criteria for selecting the target group are specified in the application.
- Partner organisations must involve authorities in the implementation of projects.
- Läkarmissionen must review partner organisations' supporting methodology.

Transparency



Transparency

Transparency is a prerequisite for active participation and effective accountability.

Transparency and access to information about decisions, finances, and results provide donors, partners, and rights holders with the opportunity to review and audit Läkarmissionen's work.

Läkarmissionen works for state transparency in our project countries in order to review to what extent a state, region, municipality, or agency assumes its responsibility as a legal duty bearer. In Läkarmissionen's projects, regional and local decision-makers are often the ones

representing the state and the ones addressed in the rights-based approach.

Läkarmissionen will act to ensure that:

- Basis for decisions and decisions on projects are sent to partner organisations.
- Läkarmissionen's annual reports are produced in Swedish and English. The report is sent to partners and made available on the website.
- Information about Läkarmissionen communicated at each project visit (how Läkarmissionen is run and funded).
- Läkarmissionen gets access to partners' annual reports, bylaws, and audit documents.
- Partner organisations' annual reports are published on their website (if available).
- All projects include a component describing what local authorities do and what funds they have at their disposal, in order to avoid duplication, etc.

- The target group has access to the activity plan and budget during the project period.
- Those who work with partner organisations comply with Läkarmissionen's Code of Conduct.
- Representatives of the target group, partner, and Läkarmissionen are included in the Advisory Committee or equivalent.

Responsibility – accountability



Responsibility means that duty bearers are identified, addressed, and take responsibility for ensuring that human rights are fulfilled. Läkarmissionen's work seeks greater responsibility from legal and moral duty bearers at different levels. Accountability is thus an important task, as well as raising awareness and empowering rights holders to claim their own rights and be active and involved citizens. Increased responsibility is also achieved by Läkarmissionen and partners cooperating with and communicating new knowledge to duty bearers.

Läkarmissionen will act to ensure that:

- A meeting with the target group to communicate what has been done and how much it cost will be held after the completion of each project. This should be an element of the project evaluation.
- The partner organisation follows up on what local authorities have done with the funds available to them.
- It is clarified why Läkarmissionen (and not the state) should carry out the effort – in principle, it is always the responsibility of the state to give people a life of fulfilled human rights.
- Reporting of completed projects is done properly.

7. Other organisations' work

In producing this policy, Läkarmissionen has viewed the following documents:

The Swedish Mission Council's policy for the human rights perspective, 13/3/2014

Handbook in project planning, Forum Syd 03/2015

Aid policy framework – the direction of Swedish aid,

Government Communication 2013/14:131, Aid policy framework, 13/3/2014

<http://www.sida.se/English/partners/resources-for-all-partners/methodological-materials/human-rights-based-approach-at-sida/> 2017-01-26

End of instruction.

Further reading

Approved by

This document has been approved by the Board of Directors on 20/3/2017.

Revisions

Please note when the document was created and changed. Add your signature and, if relevant, who approved the revision.

Date	What has been changed/added/deleted?	Sign.	Approved by
8/5/2017	Introduced at LM-Kollen. Vs 2017.0.	CF	
20/3/2017	Approved by the Board after a minor change.	CF	JL, ST

For instructions about revisions, new versions and archiving, see L-K-1-1.