

# **Professional Activists or Active Professionals?**

**An Evaluation of Diakonia's Development Cooperation  
in Latin America 1999–2001**

**Anna Tibblin  
Örjan Bartholdson  
Agneta Gunnarsson  
Jocke Nyberg  
Birgitta Genberg  
Mikael Roman  
Teresa Valiente**

**Department for Latin America**



# Professional Activists or Active Professionals?

**An Evaluation of Diakonia's Development Cooperation  
in Latin America 1999–2001**

Anna Tibblin  
Örjan Bartholdson  
Agneta Gunnarsson  
Jocke Nyberg  
Birgitta Genberg  
Mikael Roman  
Teresa Valiente

**Sida Evaluation 03/07**

**Department for Latin America**

This report is part of *Sida Evaluations*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

Reports may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida  
S-105 25 Stockholm  
Telephone: (+46) (0)8 506 423 80  
Telefax: (+46) (0)8 506 423 52  
E-mail: [info@sida.se](mailto:info@sida.se)

Reports are also available to download at:

<http://www.sida.se>

Authors: Anna Tibblin, Örjan Bartholdson, Agneta Gunnarsson, Jocke Nyberg, Birgitta Genberg, Mikael Roman, Teresa Valiente

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 03/07  
Commissioned by Sida, Department for Latin America

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Registration No.: 2000-1489  
Date of Final Report: February 2003  
Printed by Elanders Novum  
Art. no. SIDA2181en  
ISBN 91-586-8502-2  
ISSN 1401-0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm  
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64  
Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9  
E-mail: [info@sida.se](mailto:info@sida.se). Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

# Table of Contents

<b>Resumen Ejecutivo .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Program Context .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Development challenges in Latin America .....	9
1.2 Diakonia in Latin America .....	9
1.3 Acknowledgements .....	10
<b>2 Evaluation Methodology .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 The theoretical framework .....	11
2.1.1 Approach and methods used in the evaluation .....	11
2.1.2 Definitions .....	12
2.1.3 Limitations .....	13
2.2 Previous monitoring and evaluation reports .....	14
<b>3 Findings .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Diakonia's role in Sweden .....	16
3.1.1 Diakonia and popular movements .....	16
3.1.2 Links between Sweden and programs in Latin America .....	17
3.2 The relevance of Diakonia's programs in Latin America .....	19
3.2.1 Diakonia's problem analysis and theoretical framework .....	19
3.2.2 Relevance in relation to Sida's action programs and strategies .....	20
3.2.3 Relevance in relationship to development contexts in Latin America .....	22
3.2.4 Relevance in relationship to added value for partner organizations .....	26
3.3 Diakonia's methods and strategies .....	29
3.3.1 Networking strategies .....	29
3.3.2 Other strategies used to strengthen partners .....	30
3.3.3 Methods for monitoring and follow-up of country programs .....	32
3.3.4 Strategies for mainstreaming gender equality .....	34
3.3.5 Inter-regional cooperation between Central and South America .....	36
3.4 Diakonia's organizational capacity .....	36
3.4.1 Diakonia's organization .....	36
3.4.2 Diakonia's competence and resources .....	37
3.4.3 Diakonia as a learning organization .....	39
3.5 The relationship between Diakonia and Sida .....	40
3.5.1 Background .....	40
3.5.2 Sida's different models of financing .....	40
3.5.3 Sida's follow up of Diakonia .....	41
<b>4 Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1 Diakonia's role in Sweden .....	43
4.2 The relevance of Diakonia's programs in Latin America .....	43
4.3 Diakonia's methods and strategies .....	45
4.4 Diakonia's organizational capacity .....	46
4.5 The relationship between Diakonia and Sida .....	47
4.6 General observations .....	48

<b>Annex 1: Terms of reference .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Annex 2: Terminology and theoretical definitions .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Annex 3: Description of country programs .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Annex 4: Discussion on stratification .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Annex 5: List of individuals met .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Annex 6: Field visit programs .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Annex 7: Literature list .....</b>	<b>73</b>

# Resumen Ejecutivo

## Objetivo y metodología de evaluación

El objetivo general de esta evaluación es analizar en qué medida los programas de Diakonia (ONG sueca para el desarrollo) en América Latina concuerdan con las estrategias y los programas de acción de Asdi. El equipo evaluador examinó especialmente las ventajas comparativas de Diakonia en relación a otros actores potenciales en su misma área de trabajo.

La evaluación analiza la cooperación para el desarrollo de Diakonia con América Latina entre los años 1999 y 2001 y toma en cuenta las actividades de cooperación financiadas con el aporte del Departamento Regional para América Latina, Asdi/RELA y del Departamento de Cooperación con las ONGs y Asistencia Humanitaria con Manejo de Conflictos, Asdi/SEKA.

El equipo evaluador se entrevistó con las organizaciones contrapartes y otros actores significativos dentro de la cooperación para el desarrollo en Colombia, Perú, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador y en Suecia. Los métodos principales de trabajo fueron entrevistas, análisis de documentos y talleres participativos tanto con Asdi como con el personal de Diakonia en los diferentes países.

## Contexto de los programas de Diakonia en América Latina

El compromiso de Diakonia con América Latina comienza muy modestamente en Colombia en el año 1974. Durante las dictaduras militares y las guerras civiles de los años ochenta los estrechos vínculos de Diakonia con sus organizaciones contrapartes facilitaron la canalización del apoyo financiero dirigido a la población civil afectada y a las organizaciones de la oposición.

Los cambios estructurales producidos en América Latina durante los años noventa significaron un nuevo reto para Diakonia. De haber sido una organización orientada hacia el activismo se convirtió en una ONG profesional para el desarrollo. Este proceso incluyó la introducción de nuevos métodos de planificación, mayor supervisión, seguimiento y evaluación, al igual que un aumento de proyectos y programas orientados hacia objetivos específicos. La actual Diakonia es el resultado de estos cambios, de esta profesionalización, que la convirtió en una organización diferente de lo que era hace cinco, diez o veinte años atrás.

El accionar actual de Diakonia abarca ocho países y un programa para cada país. Cada programa se basa en un contexto de desarrollo específico. Si bien la cooperación regional es importante, los programas se enfocan más a nivel de cada país en particular. Cada programa involucra a un número de organizaciones contrapartes a nivel local (municipal), regional (provincial, zonal, etc.) o nacional. Puede tratarse de organizaciones de base, movimientos sociales o étnicos, ONGs, redes, iglesias u organizaciones ecuménicas, etc. Diakonia ha elaborado una estrategia para cada país en base a un análisis de la problemática nacional. Esta estrategia define los lineamientos temáticos, la concentración geográfica y los objetivos específicos del programa.

En América Central Diakonia identificó ocho áreas de trabajo prioritarias: fortalecimiento de la sociedad civil; fortalecimiento de las instituciones democráticas a nivel local; coordinación y entendimiento a nivel local; cabildeo, grupos de presión o lobby; derechos humanos; resolución de conflictos y una cultura de paz; género y fortalecimiento institucional. En América del Sur las áreas temáticas son sólo seis: democracia local; fortalecimiento del trabajo por los derechos humanos; enfoque integrado de los

derechos humanos en base a los derechos económicos, sociales, culturales y de los pueblos indígenas; género; resolución pacífica de los conflictos y fortalecimiento institucional.

Para el período 2001-2003 Asdi/RELA financia la cooperación de Diakonia con 72 organizaciones en El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay y Perú, aportando 180 millones de SEK. Por su parte Asdi/SEKA contribuyó con 179 millones de SEK entre los años 1999 y 2001.

## **Conclusiones y recomendaciones**

### **Papel de Diakonia en Suecia**

- Diakonia enfatiza la importancia de su experiencia dentro del movimiento popular y de solidaridad sueco en el intercambio y colaboración con sus organizaciones contrapartes de América Latina. Sin embargo Diakonia no es demasiado clara al describir en qué consisten estas experiencias y de qué modo las aplica en el contexto latinoamericano. En la evaluación se recomienda a Diakonia que especifique más concretamente cómo se utilizan estas experiencias en la relación con sus contrapartes y que recién a partir de allí evalúe de qué modo esas experiencias significan una ventaja comparativa para Diakonia.
- Existen evidencias claras de que Diakonia tiene mucho para ofrecer en cuanto a apoyo organizacional en base a su experiencia de participación en asociaciones y congregaciones en Suecia. Sería interesante y quizás más provechoso para Diakonia, discutir y sistematizar esas experiencias en relación al trabajo en los diferentes países donde desarrolla actividades. El equipo evaluador considera que hay espacio para un uso más estratégico de las experiencias de los programas de América Latina en las tareas de cabildeo, formación de la opinión pública y concientización en Suecia.

### **Relevancia de los programas de Diakonia en América Latina**

- Una conclusión de la evaluación es que Diakonia carece de un marco teórico adecuado. Esta deficiencia tiene un impacto directo en varios niveles operativos: en el contexto y en el perfil de los programas, en los intentos de conectar las contrapartes entre sí, en las actividades y en la identificación de los beneficiarios de los programas. De este modo se le reducen las posibilidades de seguimiento y evaluación satisfactoria de sus actividades. Se sugiere que Diakonia forme un grupo de referencia para discutir y desarrollar estas teorías y conceptos con el objetivo de mejorar el análisis de contexto, los programas, la planificación y las actividades mismas.
- Diakonia sostiene que los grupos destinatarios principales son aquellos movilizados, o por lo menos abarcados, por las actividades de sus organizaciones contrapartes. A pesar de que el grupo destinatario principal es el objetivo último de toda la actividad de Diakonia éste no está definido en forma precisa. Como un medio para identificar más claramente los beneficiarios de los programas, los evaluadores recomiendan que Diakonia realice un estudio estratificado de los destinatarios principales.
- En las solicitudes presentadas ante Asdi para el período evaluado, Diakonia relaciona muy vagamente sus programas al objetivo principal de la cooperación para el desarrollo de Suecia, es decir la reducción de la pobreza. Los evaluadores argumentan que esta relación debe explicitarse con claridad para poder evaluar satisfactoriamente la relevancia y los resultados de los programas de Diakonia en América Latina.
- La mayor parte del trabajo y del apoyo de Diakonia se centra en ONGs y en organizaciones de base, las que conforman sus contrapartes. Actualmente el número de ONGs parece ir aumentando en beneficio de las organizaciones de base. En la evaluación se concluye que Diakonia necesita



discutir el balance de las organizaciones en relación a cada programa y considerar la posibilidad de aumentar las organizaciones de base a nivel local.

- Al mismo tiempo Diakonia debería seguir concentrando los programas. Algunas organizaciones contrapartes fueron seleccionadas en contextos políticos diferentes a los actuales y antes de que Diakonia hubiera desarrollado criterios para la selección de nuevas contrapartes. Algunas de estas contrapartes históricas no cumplen con los criterios actuales y deberían por lo tanto abandonarse progresivamente.
- La evaluación llega a la conclusión de que Diakonia tiene, en comparación con otros donantes potenciales, ciertas ventajas comparativas para ofrecer a sus contrapartes en América Latina. Sin embargo también es legítimo cuestionar el rol de intermediario de Diakonia, o de otras ONGs de Suecia o internacionales. En teoría Asdi podría apoyar a las organizaciones contrapartes de Diakonia sin canalizar los fondos a través de ésta. Desde esta perspectiva las ventajas específicas de Diakonia para sus contrapartes debería ser un tema de permanente análisis y discusión, dentro de Diakonia, de ésta con Asdi y con las organizaciones contrapartes.

### **Métodos y estrategias de Diakonia**

- El equipo evaluador tiene una visión positiva general de la ambición y habilidad de Diakonia para promover redes entre regiones y países, al igual que dentro de cada país. No obstante Diakonia podría beneficiarse con estrategias más elaboradas persiguiendo la colaboración con actores fuera de la esfera tradicional de las ONGs, como por ejemplo instituciones estatales relevantes.
- El apoyo de Diakonia al desarrollo institucional cubre varios aspectos y es apreciado por un gran número de sus contrapartes. Sin embargo la mayoría de los esfuerzos en ese sentido son respuestas a necesidades que van surgiendo, en vez de ser el resultado de una estrategia general de fortalecimiento organizacional. Se recomienda que Diakonia defina estrategias y métodos comunes para el fortalecimiento institucional, al igual que un plan general sobre cuándo y cómo implementar tal apoyo.
- Durante el período evaluado, Diakonia realizó esfuerzos considerables para desarrollar métodos y estrategias tendientes a aumentar la posibilidad de medir los resultados de los programas. Entre estos métodos se cuentan los diferentes estudios de línea basal ("base line studies") realizados en América Central y del Sur. El equipo evaluador considera que estos estudios, si bien constituyen esfuerzos loables, son deficientes en varios aspectos. Se recomienda que Diakonia continúe desarrollando instrumentos de línea basal, estudios de caso cuantitativos y otros métodos para aumentar la posibilidad de medir los efectos de sus programas. En esta tarea se debería reforzar al personal de Diakonia con la asistencia externa, por ejemplo de institutos de investigación u otras agencias especializadas.
- La cooperación entre América del Sur y América Central es un proceso nuevo. La evaluación considera que los esfuerzos actuales de intercambio de experiencias y conocimientos entre estas regiones son una forma positiva de fortalecer los programas de cada país. Por lo tanto los evaluadores creen que es importante y muy valioso contribuir a la cooperación y el intercambio entre contrapartes de estas dos regiones y de otras también, lo así llamado cooperación de Sur a Sur.
- Durante el período evaluado Diakonia ha hecho un intento ambicioso de integrar una perspectiva de género en todos los aspectos y niveles de su trabajo (mainstream). La mayor parte de estos esfuerzos se han realizado a nivel de planificación y policy. Pero a pesar de estos avances los programas de Diakonia aún no están impregnados de una política de género. Se recomienda que Diakonia sistematice sus experiencias de trabajo con grupos étnicos con sistemas de género alternativos. Este es un

campo donde Diakonia puede contribuir a un diálogo sobre sistemas y prácticas de género entre grupos étnicos de distintas regiones.

### **Capacidad organizacional de Diakonia**

- En América Latina se cuenta en este momento con por lo menos dos representantes por programa en cada país (uno de Suecia y uno local), al igual que coordinadores regionales y personal administrativo. Los permanentes movimientos del personal de Suecia han sido descriptos como un problema y continúa siendo un aspecto criticado por las organizaciones contrapartes por considerar que influye negativamente sobre la continuidad de los programas. Se recomienda a Diakonia evaluar si es verdaderamente necesario mantener el actual número, relativamente alto, de personal sueco en América Latina.
- Diakonia enfrenta el desafío de institucionalizar la competencia temática y la experiencia dentro de la organización. No parece haber ninguna solución simple de implementar pero la estrategia debería centrarse en el desarrollo de capacidades a nivel central para luego ir integrándolo sucesivamente en todos los niveles de los programas. Por ejemplo una medida concreta podría ser la promoción de estudios a distancia para el personal en áreas complementarias tales como metodologías de evaluación, democracia municipal, derechos humanos, etc.
- Diakonia es una organización activa y dinámica, abierta a los cambios. De todos modos en la evaluación se expresa cierta preocupación sobre el ritmo con el que se introducen los cambios dentro de la organización. Se corre el riesgo de que estos procesos sean demasiado acelerados y terminen perdiendo su base de sustentación. Diakonia al igual que Asdi deberían reflexionar, por lo tanto, sobre la influencia que ejercen los procesos de desarrollo y transformación organizacional sobre toda la capacidad institucional.

### **Relaciones entre Diakonia y Asdi**

- Actualmente el apoyo financiero para Diakonia es fragmentado y la división de roles entre los diferentes departamentos de Asdi es poco clara. La evaluación aprueba la actual discusión dentro de Asdi, sugiriendo que RELA tome la responsabilidad total de examinar y discutir los contenidos y la relevancia de los programas generales, mientras que SEKA debería tener a su cargo la evaluación organizacional de Diakonia y el control financiero. Una reforma de este tipo clarificaría los roles de los diferentes departamentos y aumentaría las ventajas comparativas de éstos.
- Para hacer un juicio más coherente sobre la relevancia de las solicitudes de Diakonia, se recomienda a Asdi/RELA y a Asdi/SEKA realizar una búsqueda y un aprovechamiento más activo de los conocimientos y las capacidades de otros departamentos de Asdi. Una sugerencia al respecto es que las solicitudes de Diakonia sean evaluadas por un grupo de referencia formado por representantes de los departamentos de Asdi relevantes para cada proceso de evaluación.
- El equipo evaluador observa cierta falta de claridad en cuanto a los criterios de Asdi para el seguimiento de los programas de Diakonia en terreno. Los evaluadores confirman lo observado en evaluaciones anteriores, que Diakonia y Asdi deberían tratar de mejorar su coordinación e intercambio de experiencias con el objetivo de asumir roles complementarios dentro de toda la cooperación sueca para el desarrollo.

# Executive Summary

## Objective and evaluation methodology

The overall objective of this evaluation has been to analyze how Swedish development NGO Diakonia's country programs in Latin America coincide with Sida's strategies and action programs. The evaluation team has particularly scrutinized Diakonia's comparative advantages in comparison with other potential development actors.

The evaluation has studied Diakonia and its development cooperation with Latin America 1999–2001. The evaluation takes into account development cooperation carried out with financial support from Sida's Regional Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA, and Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA.

The evaluation team met with partner organizations and other relevant development actors in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Sweden. The primary methods of assessment have been interviews, study of documents and participatory workshops with both Sida and Diakonia field staff.

## Program context

Diakonia began its Latin American involvement on a very modest scale in Colombia in 1974. During the military dictatorships and civil wars of the 1980s, Diakonia's close links to its partner organizations provided efficient means of channeling financial support to the affected civilian population as well as to the organized opposition.

In the 1990s, structural changes in Latin America placed new demands on Diakonia, who went from being an activist organization to a professional development NGO. This process included the introduction of new planning methods, increased monitoring and evaluation as well as more goal-oriented projects and programs. The Diakonia of today is, in part, a result of these professional changes which also compelled the organization to change radically as compared to what it was five, ten or twenty years ago.

Diakonia's activities in Latin America currently consist of 8 country programs, each using a specific development context as a point of departure. Although regional cooperation is important, program focus is at country level. Every country program includes a number of partner organizations at local (municipal), regional (county), and/or national level. These may be grassroots organizations, social or ethnic movements, NGOs, networks, churches, ecumenical organizations, etc. Diakonia's has elaborated a strategy for each country, based on a national problem analysis. This strategy defines thematic alignment, geographical concentration and specific program goals.

In Central America, Diakonia has identified eight prioritized working areas: strengthening of civil society, strengthening of democratic institutions at local level, coordination and understanding at local level, human rights, conflict management and a culture of peace, gender, advocacy, and institutional strengthening. In South America there are fewer thematic areas than in Central America: local democracy, strengthened human rights, integrated human rights approach based on economic, social, cultural and indigenous rights, gender, peaceful conflict resolution, and institutional strengthening.

For the three-year period 2001–2003 Sida/RELA will contribute a total of 180 MSEK to Diakonia's cooperation with 72 organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru. Financing from Sida/SEKA amounted to 179 MSEK for the period 1999–2001.

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Diakonia's role in Sweden

- Diakonia emphasizes the importance of its '*folkrörelse*' (popular movement) experience in its exchange of experience with its partner organizations in Latin America. Diakonia is not very clear, however, when it comes to describing what this experience actually consists of and how it is applied in a Latin American context. The evaluation recommends that Diakonia specify in more practical terms how this experience is used in their relationships with partner organizations, and thus assess how this constitutes a comparative advantage for Diakonia.
- There is ample evidence that Diakonia has a lot to offer regarding organizational support due to its experience of participation in associations and congregations in Sweden. It would be interesting, and most likely useful for Diakonia, to discuss and systematize this experience in relationship to their activities in program countries. The evaluation team also believes that there is room for a more strategic use of experience from Latin America programs in advocacy and awareness-raising activities in Sweden.

### The relevance of Diakonia's programs in Latin America

- The evaluation concludes that Diakonia lacks an adequate theoretical framework. This deficiency has direct impact on several operational levels: program contexts, outlining of programs, attempts to connect partners, in activities and also when identifying beneficiaries of programs. It also reduces the organization's chances of successfully monitoring and evaluating activities. It is proposed that Diakonia form a reference group to discuss and develop these theories and concepts in order to improve analysis of contexts, programs, planning and activities per se.
- Diakonia argues that the primary target groups are those who are mobilized or, at least, reached, by the activities of their partner organizations. Even though the primary target group is thus the ultimate target of Diakonia's entire operations, it is imprecisely sketched. As a means of more clearly identifying beneficiaries of programs, the evaluation recommends that Diakonia carry out a stratification study of primary target groups.
- In their applications to Sida for the time period evaluated, Diakonia only vaguely links its programs to Swedish development cooperation's overall objective of poverty alleviation. The evaluation argues that such links must be presented in order to successfully evaluate the relevance and results of Diakonia's programs in Latin America.
- The bulk of Diakonia's work and support is focused on the NGOs and grassroots organizations who make up their partner organizations. Currently, the number of NGOs appears to be increasing at the expense of grassroots organizations. The evaluation concludes that Diakonia needs to discuss the balance of organizations within country programs and consider increasing the number of local grassroots organizations.
- At the same time, Diakonia should continue to concentrate country programs. Some partner organizations were chosen in political contexts different from those of today and in a time before Diakonia had developed criteria for selection of new partners. Some of these historical partners do not fit Diakonia's current criteria for partner organizations and should thus be phased out.

- The evaluation concludes that Diakonia has, in comparison with other potential donors, a number of comparative advantages to offer its partner organizations in Latin America. However, the evaluation also concludes that it is legitimate to question the role of Diakonia, or other Swedish and/or international NGOs, as intermediaries. Theoretically, Sida could support Diakonia's partner organizations without channeling funds through Diakonia. According to such a perspective, the assessment of Diakonia's added value for partners must be a topic of constant discussion and analysis within Diakonia, together with Sida and with together with partner organizations.

### **Diakonia's methods and strategies**

- The evaluation team is generally positive to Diakonia's ambition and ability to promote networking between regions, countries and inside countries. Diakonia would, however, benefit from more elaborated strategies that seek cooperation with actors outside the traditional sphere of NGOs, such as relevant state institutions.
- Diakonia's support to institutional development covers several aspects and is praised by most of its partners. Yet efforts are mostly result of expressed needs and not of a generalized strategy of organizational strengthening. It is recommended that Diakonia define common strategies and methods of institutional strengthening, as well as a general plan concerning when and how to implement such support.
- During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has put considerable effort into developing methods and strategies aimed at increasing the measurability of their programs. Methods applied include various baseline studies carried out in Central and South America. The evaluation team has concluded that these studies, although commendable as an effort, show deficiencies in different regards. It is recommended that Diakonia continue development of their baseline instruments as well as other methods in order to increase measurability. Diakonia's staff should be strengthened with external assistance, for example from research institutions or other development agencies, in these activities.
- Cooperation between South and Central America is a new process. The evaluation regards ongoing efforts to exchange experience and know-how between the regions as a positive means of strengthening country programs in Latin America. The evaluation also believes that it is worthwhile to contribute to cooperation and exchange between partners in these two, as well as other, regions in so-called South-South cooperation.
- During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has made an ambitious attempt to mainstream gender equality issues into all aspects of activities, and most of this work has been completed on planning and policy level. In spite of this progress, Diakonia's country programs are still not permeated by their gender policy. It is recommended that Diakonia systematize its experience of working with ethnic groups with alternative gender systems. This is also an arena where Diakonia could contribute to a dialogue on gender systems and practices between ethnic groups from different regions.

### **Diakonia's organizational capacity**

- At present there are at least two program officers in Latin America per country (one Swedish and one local), as well as regional coordinators and administrative staff. Rapid turnover of Swedish staff has been described as a problem and continues to be a cause for complaint from many partner organizations, as it is perceived to affect the continuity of country programs. The evaluation recommends Diakonia assess the need for the relatively high number of Swedish staff in Latin America.
- Diakonia faces the challenge of institutionalizing thematic competence and experience within the organization. There do not appear to be any simple solutions to exactly how this is to be achieved,

however their strategy should most likely concentrate on building competence at central level and subsequently integrating this into all program levels. One possibility could be, for example, to promote distance studies among staff in complementary areas such as evaluation methodology, municipal democracy, human rights etc.

- Diakonia is an active and learning organization. The evaluation would, however, like to express concern about the rate at which changes are introduced in Diakonia. There is a risk that processes become too dynamic, thus losing their foothold. Both Diakonia and Sida should more closely reflect on how processes of organizational change and development affect overall institutional capacity.

### **The relationship between Diakonia and Sida**

- Currently, financial support to Diakonia is fragmented and role sharing between the different departments at Sida is somewhat unclear. The evaluation endorses ongoing discussion within Sida, proposing that RELA take full responsibility for scrutinizing and discussing the contents and relevance of the general programs, while SEKA takes charge of the organizational assessment and financial control of Diakonia. Such a reform would most probably clarify the roles of the departments thereby increasing their comparative advantages.
- In order to assess the relevance of Diakonia's applications more coherently, it is recommended that Sida/RELA and Sida/SEKA more actively seek knowledge and experience from other departments within Sida. One suggestion in this respect is that Diakonia's applications hereinafter should be assessed by a joint reference group consisting of representatives from different Sida departments with relevance to the assessment process.
- The evaluation has found that there is a lack of clarity regarding Sida's criteria for follow-up of Diakonia's program countries at field level. The evaluation team concludes, as previous evaluations have also stated, that Diakonia and Sida should mutually seek to improve this coordination and exchange of experience in order to develop complementary roles within overall Swedish development cooperation.

# 1 Program Context

## 1.1 Development challenges in Latin America

Latin America is characterized by the most unequal distribution of income in the world. Despite decades of social struggle – armed and unarmed, against dictatorships, economic reform programs, etc – political and economic power continues to be concentrated in the hands of a small elite. This elite has little political and practical interest in wealth redistribution as a means of increasing equality, diminishing poverty and enhancing democracy and human rights.

Recent statistics conclude that the situation is growing worse. In 2001, 214 million people, which is almost 43 percent of the Latin American population, lived in poverty.<sup>1</sup> Projections for 2002 suggest that the number of people living in poverty will rise by about 7 million, of which 6 million are indigents. According to ECLAC, there is a current regression in income distribution, which has once again pushed the region's poverty indices upward.

The situation is not, however, without nuances. Most countries have made important, although slow, progress in reducing extreme poverty. This includes the poorest countries such as Nicaragua, Honduras and Bolivia. Among the exceptions are Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela where levels of extreme poverty in 2000 were higher than those of 1990. Although democratic development can be noted in many areas, people cannot feed themselves on democracy alone. The lack of concrete and notable changes therefore poses a serious threat to continued democratization.

Latin America has little tradition of building democracy from below by means of, for example, membership-based organizations. Instead people organize in movements, often centered on a single core problem. These movements often tend to be dismantled when the problem is solved or when the context is changed. This lack of grass-roots based democracy has partly been compensated for by the emergence of innumerable non-governmental organizations.

There has been a veritable explosion of organizing and mobilizing since the 1980s when dictatorships were replaced by parliamentary democracies in country after country. Many of these organizations have been intermediaries, but there are also numerous grassroots organizations. These organizations have often, though, either been isolated from large segments of the poor population, or extremely unstable. Only rarely have these organizations succeeded in developing into stable social movements, with large mobilized bases.

One of the most important challenges in Latin America is therefore to contribute to the formation of organizations and social movements that can mobilize and empower the poor of all sectors. In order to achieve sustainability, such mobilization must focus not only on material demands but also on issues such as democracy, human rights, female empowerment and so forth. Diakonia Sweden places its emphasis on these issues.

## 1.2 Diakonia in Latin America

Diakonia has maintained a presence in Latin America for nearly 30 years. Activities that began in Colombia in 1974 in the form of financial support to a priest working with impoverished people living

---

<sup>1</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America 2001–2002.



on a garbage dump, soon came to focus on victims of repression in South America, and in the following few years in Central America.

There was little official Swedish development cooperation with Latin America at this time as the major focus was on Africa. Diakonia and a couple of other Swedish NGOs with roots in popular movements received funding for small solidarity projects within the framework of an ad-hoc committee for humanitarian assistance attached to Sida<sup>2</sup>. The Swedish Government established the committee to avoid possible criticism concerning political intervention in the internal affairs of other sovereign states. By channeling resources through NGOs, Sweden complied with international law. Diakonia (named Frikyrkan Hjälpers until 1984) maintained a strong position within this committee. Among the first beneficiaries were Latin American refugees, their families, victims of torture and human rights groups close to the Catholic Church in Chile.

During the military dictatorships and civil wars of the 1980s, Diakonia's closeness to its partner organizations provided an efficient means of channeling financial support to the affected civilian population as well as the organized opposition. Sida was eager to support Diakonia's involvement in Latin America, as funding through NGOs was considered to be the principal means of supporting democratic development during this period.

In the 1990s the peace processes, democratic developments and a changed global context, placed new demands on Swedish development cooperation. Diakonia, and also Sida, went through processes of professionalization including the introduction of new planning methods, increased monitoring and evaluation as well as more goal-oriented projects and programs. The Diakonia of today is, in part, the result of these professional changes also causing radical organizational changes as compared to five, ten or twenty years ago.

### **1.3 Acknowledgements**

The evaluation team would like to thank all of those who, despite busy schedules, took the time to meet with us and share their experience. We also wish to extend a special thanks to Diakonia's field staff for invaluable help with planning and logistics. Partner organizations in the countries visited are also gratefully recognized for giving their time and attention during the evaluation.

Finally, we would like to thank all Diakonia and Sida staff that participated in the field presentations in La Paz and Tegucigalpa, thereby providing important input for this report.

---

<sup>2</sup> "Beredningen för humanitärt bistånd" was a working committee within Sida. It consisted of representatives from Swedish political parties represented in parliament, the Swedish popular movement and independent experts. Diakonia received support under the budget item entitled 'African refugees and national liberation movements'.



## 2 Evaluation Methodology

### 2.1 The Theoretical framework

#### 2.1.1 Approach and methods used in the evaluation

The evaluation team has studied the development of the Swedish NGO Diakonia and the organization's development cooperation with Latin America 1999–2001. This report also refers to developments during 2002 when this has been considered relevant, although this is not formally included in the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation takes into account development cooperation carried out with financial support from Sida's Regional Department for Latin America, RELA, and Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA.

The evaluation was carried out in three steps. In the first phase, the evaluation team read and discussed an extensive amount of documentation, covering developments before and during the evaluated time period. This included project appraisals, analysis documents, reporting, policy documents etc. Departing from the questions raised in the Terms of Reference<sup>3</sup> and the recommendations made in four previous monitoring and evaluation reports (summarized below in 2.2), a hypothesis was drawn up in relation to the findings in the documentation studied.

The purpose of departing from findings in previous evaluations was to study developments during the relevant time span and thus assess Diakonia's capacity to absorb observations and take appropriate measures to correct shortcomings. This phase concluded with the presentation of a detailed evaluation plan to Sida and Diakonia in August 2002.

In the second phase, September and October 2002, members of the evaluation team visited and assessed the Diakonia programs in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Nicaragua and Paraguay were not visited and any material on these countries is therefore entirely based on interviews and documentation. The evaluation has not attempted to compare the regions of South and Central America, but rather studied the Diakonia programs in relationship to each national development context.

The field visits emphasized the following aspects in the different regions in order to study a wider range of issues in more detail:

*Colombia:* The focus of this field visit was on human rights and how the work of Diakonia's partners for the promotion of human rights contributes to the alleviation of the consequences of the armed conflict for the primary target group. In addition how the partners, through networking, lobbying and advocacy in national as well as international forums, place pressure on the actors of the conflict.

*Peru and Bolivia:* This team specifically studied Diakonia's support to partner organizations that work with issues of local democracy and popular participation. Organized civil society's impact on local and national processes of democratization was also studied.

*Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador:* Diakonia's added value in supporting capacity building of partner organizations, support to national, regional and international networking and links between the programs in Central America and Diakonia's work on raising public awareness and lobbying in Sweden was studied in detail in Central America.

---

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to Annex 1.

The main methods of assessment and verification have been interviews with nearly 200 individuals who represent partner organizations and other development actors in Latin America, staff within Diakonia and Sida as well as other relevant sources<sup>4</sup>, combined with observations during the field visits in Latin America<sup>5</sup>. The interview method utilized was semi-structured, using a questionnaire based on open-ended statements and questions on different aspects of evaluation. Several group interviews were performed during the field visits. In addition, a one-day workshop was held in San Salvador attended by Diakonia regional office staff. The preliminary findings from field visits were then tested in a significant amount of interviews in Sweden, interviews with staff from Diakonia as well as other sources.

The third phase of the evaluation commenced in November 2002 with the presentation of a first draft report. The draft was discussed with Diakonia and Sida in Sweden, and subsequently in workshops in La Paz, Bolivia and Tegucigalpa, Honduras with the participation of Diakonia and Sida field staff and members of the evaluation team. Based on the input provided during these workshops, a final report was presented in January 2003.

The evaluation team consisted of Agneta Gunnarsson, Jocke Nyberg, Teresa Valiente, Birgitta Genberg, Mikael Roman, Örjan Bartholdson (team leader) and Anna Tibblin (team leader) from the consultancy firm Context. This report was written as a joint effort between the team members.

### **2.1.2 Definitions**

The evaluation team found that Sida, Diakonia and even Diakonia's partner organizations tend to define overarching terminology somewhat differently, an issue that will be further discussed in the findings section of this report. Hence, in order for the reader to understand the material in this report, the evaluation team has chosen to use the following definitions:

#### *Program level*

The Terms of Reference refer to Diakonia's activities in Latin America as one regional program, including both Central and South America. Diakonia does indeed present its activities in Latin America in one action plan with a set of common development goals. However, at a measurable activity level, goals are country and partner specific. In order to avoid confusion, this report will therefore use the term program when discussing Diakonia's activities at country level.

#### *Civil society, grassroots and NGOs*

There is no common understanding in existence among scholars on how to define the concept civil society<sup>6</sup>. For this reason, the evaluation team has attempted to avoid using the term altogether. When describing the sphere of development in which NGOs and grassroots organizations involved in Diakonia's programs currently exist, this will be specified.

#### *Networks and networking*

The term network can be understood as an extended group of people and/or organizations with similar interests or concerns that interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance or support. This does not, however, state anything about the stability or degree of interaction between the parties, suggesting that networking could be just about anything.

---

<sup>4</sup> A list of individuals interviewed is presented in Annex 4.

<sup>5</sup> Field visit programs are presented in Annex 5.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Bobbio 1989, Cohen and Arato 1992, Held 1992, Gellner 1995, Putnam 1993, Rueschemeyer et al. 1992.

The expression is more precise when used in Spanish, as the term '*red*' implies a network of more formal contours and participation, often intended to produce visible results such as e-mail bulletins or working papers. The term does not include informal experience exchange or the mere promotion of contacts between people and organizations. Diakonia uses the term in a wider sense, including both formal and informal interaction between people and organizations. This broader definition will be applied in this report, however, the level of networking will be specified whenever possible or relevant.

#### *Popular movement*

The term popular movement may refer to both the Swedish term '*solidaritetsrörelse*' and the term '*folkrörelse*'. These two forms of movements may coincide, but do not necessarily have to do so. Diakonia is definitely part of the loose network of '*solidaritetsrörelse*', and can also be considered to be a '*folkrörelse*'. '*Solidaritetsrörelse*' is a word with a broad signification. Its popular usage refers to organizations that strive to strengthen the position of the South, both economically and politically, and achieve a profound redistribution of income in favor of the poorest segment of the populations. The movement also tends to include organizations that demand special rights for minorities and indigenous people.

### **2.1.3 Limitations**

The evaluation assignment encompasses a broad range of issues and covers a time period when both Diakonia itself and the organization's programs in Latin America have undergone substantial changes. Consequently, the evaluation has considered many developments, problems and processes rather than studied a limited number of issues more closely. A more circumscribed Terms of Reference would have allowed for more in-depth analysis.

One topic for discussion between the evaluation team and Sida throughout the evaluation process has been article 4.5 in the Terms of Reference, which specifies the task of measuring the results of the Diakonia programs. Considering that Diakonia's current plan of action (2001–2003) is the first to include joint areas of work (results) for both South and Central America, including indicators to measure progress, the evaluation found that it would not be meaningful to measure developments after only one year of implementation.

Furthermore, the evaluation found that Diakonia's methods of measuring impact are still in need of further development (see Section 3.3.3). The evaluation concludes that it would perhaps be more efficient to await Diakonia's progress in this respect. The evaluation therefore recommends that an impact-oriented evaluation be performed in a few years time.

Although Sida agreed with these arguments, it was maintained that the evaluation team should report on any results that were "discovered" during the course of the study. The evaluation team has therefore chosen to present interesting experiences in separate boxes throughout this report. These boxes should be seen as a means of increasing the information content in the report, not as an attempt to measure the impact of the Diakonia programs.

The evaluation team has not studied cost efficiency or other economic/financial aspects in the country programs, as this was not within the scope of the evaluation mission. Nicaragua and Paraguay were not visited during the field visits and references to these countries are therefore based solely on available documentation and interviews.

## 2.2 Previous monitoring and evaluation reports

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the current evaluation departs from the problem analysis and recommendations made in four previous monitoring and evaluation studies<sup>7</sup>. The problems outlined in these reports, carried out between 1997–99, and their recommendations, are summarized below. Diakonia's compliance to these recommendations will be commented upon in the Findings section in this report. Each recommendation will be referred to according to the number given in the list below.

- 1: The overall control of Diakonia's activities was found to be unsatisfactory due to the lack of concrete and measurable goals on almost all levels. Diakonia was found to lack baseline data on local development contexts, thus making the task of assessing project impact difficult. It was also established that cost effectiveness was almost impossible to measure in the absence of indicators. It was therefore recommended that Diakonia take steps to increase measurability by elaborating more concrete goals, including indicators. It was also recommended that Diakonia should assist its partner organizations to formulate result-oriented goals.
- 2: Diakonia was found to lack a methodology for systematic analysis of results, as well as instruments to analyze project results related to overall objectives on a program level. There was also a lack of criteria for how to weigh results/goal achievement when reporting to Sida. It was recommended that Diakonia should elaborate analytical instruments in this respect.
- 3: Insufficiencies were noted in administrative routines, such as the lack of guidelines for how field staff should follow up on partner organizations' financial reporting and document such controls. Routines for finalizing projects and/or cooperation with partner organizations were also reported to be inadequate. It was recommended that Diakonia should improve administrative capacity in this sense. Other recommendations include the elaboration of job descriptions that define responsibilities and decision-making levels, and that a joint database should be set up in order to facilitate administration.
- 4: The elaboration of the Diakonia policy (1998) was recognized as important, but far from sufficient as a steering document. It was noted that the organizations' efforts covered a very wide area of topics, regions and forms of cooperation. It was recommended that the program be more focused (geographically and thematically), that Diakonia should promote linkages between partner organizations, and that national lobbying efforts should be reinforced as a means of strengthening overall impact.
- 5: One major difficulty pointed out was the lack of specialized professionals in many fields where partner organizations were active, thus making it difficult to provide the dialogue and liaison with Sweden that many of the partner organizations desired. Several recommendations were made: that Diakonia should attempt to recruit more professional staff, that the regional office in Central America be strengthened with a full-time director, and that permanent national coordinators be employed

---

<sup>7</sup> Juan-Enrique Bazán, Roberto Cuellar and Sara Martínez Bergström. *Diakonias arbete för mänskliga rättigheter och demokrati i Sydamerika*. Sida/RELA, September 1997.

Per Ångmo, Inga-Britt Sundin and Hans Törnqvist, Öhrlings Coopers & Lybrand. *Styrning och kontroll inom Diakonia*. Sida/SEKA, December 1998.

Nils Boesen, José Antonio Péres and Ingela Ståhl. *Diakonia's Programme for Human Rights and Democracy in South America, Second Monitoring Report*. Sida/RELA, May 1999.

Vegard Bye, Martha Doggett, and Peter Hellmers. *Diakonia Program for Democracy and Human Rights, the El Salvador Case*. Sida/RELA, July 1999.

in each program country. It was also underlined that a Swedish presence in Colombia should be given high priority.

- 6: Diakonia was found to have supported isolated gender activities rather than applying a strategy integrating gender concerns systematically into the different activities of the program. It was recommended that Diakonia take steps to promote equality in all activities, i.e. a mainstreaming approach.
- 7: Diakonia was found to lack clear criteria for selection of partner organizations. Diakonia was recommended to develop such criteria and also to apply a more proactive approach when identifying and seeking out new partner organizations.
- 8: It was recommended that Sida and Diakonia should mutually seek more field coordination in order to complement development efforts.
- 9: It was also recommended that Diakonia should more actively promote donor coordination in program countries as added value for partner organizations.

## 3 Findings

### 3.1 Diakonia's role in Sweden

#### 3.1.1 Diakonia and popular movements

Diakonia was founded by six non-conformist churches<sup>8</sup>, which constitute its executive board. In 1999, when this evaluation begins, there was a clear gap in existence between Diakonia and its founders. The Churches had, for example, limited Diakonia's collection of funds among the congregations to two weeks every spring. The continuous specialization of Diakonia was regarded with suspicion by some of the founders. It was feared that Diakonia would become too distanced from its base and also that its projects would compete with the Churches' own activities in developing countries.

In 2000, the founders and Diakonia initiated a discussion concerning their future relationship. An agreement was reached in late 2002<sup>9</sup> regulating the relationship between the Churches and Diakonia and broadening cooperation between the parties. In accordance with the new agreement, the Churches clearly indicate that they have accepted Diakonia's role as a professional development NGO, and also that they intend to benefit from their specialized know-how.

The new agreement gives Diakonia free access to the congregations of the founder Churches, not only with information but also for fund-raising collections. The increased access will no doubt have positive effects on Diakonia's financial situation, increasing the amount of organizational capital, although it is too early to speculate on actual amounts.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Organizational structure*

The links between Diakonia and its founders exist on executive, administrative and grassroots levels:

At executive level: Normally the board meets approximately every two months and discusses overarching issues, such as finances, policy etc. During the recent discussions mentioned above, the board and representatives of Diakonia have met more frequently. Furthermore, members of the board have participated in LFA planning workshops.

Diakonia's policy from 1998, in which the common ethics and standpoints of the Churches are expressed is the common denominator between the founders and Diakonia. This policy is based on, according to Diakonia a Christian ethic that is based on a particular reading of the Bible that coincides with Swedish mainstream development discourse.

The grassroots level: at congregation level, local contacts (ombud), represent Diakonia. These approximately 600 representatives, present in about one third of all congregations, constitute a relatively new phenomenon that Diakonia believes will strengthen their ties to the congregations. Their average age is high, however, and Diakonia considers it important to try to recruit younger people.

---

<sup>8</sup> Evangeliska Frikyrkan, Metodistkyrkan, Svenska Missionsförbundet, Svenska Alliansmissionen, Svenska Baptistsamfundet, Svenska Frälsningsarmén.

<sup>9</sup> The agreement was adopted at the Diakonia Annual Meeting in January 2003 and will be ratified at the consecutive meeting in May 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Diakonia receives financing from Sida, EU, other donors, and contributions from congregations and individuals.

Approximately 80 percent of Diakonia's overall activities in Latin America receive 100 percent funding from Sida's Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA. The remaining 20 percent are co-financed between EU, Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance – Sida/SEKA, and Diakonia's own collected funds.

Once a year, Diakonia organizes a tour to one of the program regions for 12–15 contacts from the congregations. During the time period evaluated, one tour went to South America, and another to Central America. According to Diakonia, this has proven to be a successful method used to strengthen the contacts' knowledge and commitment. The contacts visited some of Diakonia's partners and brought back impressions, experience and information, of both projects and countries generally. Over the years, Diakonia has sent approximately 125 contact people on tours to the different program regions in the world.

In order to provide support and to help maintain interest, all contacts are invited to Diakonia headquarters once a year to discuss the current situation in the program countries and the ongoing and future work in their congregations. The contacts also organize meetings and seminars among congregation members, providing information about the activities of Diakonia and its partners. Recently one person has been employed at Diakonia headquarters with the sole task of acting as liaison to the contact network, recruiting contacts and organizing seminars and training activities. In order to achieve the latter, Diakonia cooperates closely with a non-conformist churches' adult education association (Frikyrkliga studieförbundet).

Diakonia has, during the time period evaluated, noted an increased interest, especially among young people, in global development issues. Sometimes, these young people are members of congregations, but not always. Diakonia's Sweden Department is therefore examining how the organization will be able to soak up this interest and link it directly to international activities. One possibility being to introduce an open, individual membership in Diakonia which would be independent of religious affiliation.

Administrative level: Over the years, the founding churches have expressed infrequent demands that a larger percentage of the Diakonia staff should originate from the congregations. These demands have, however, faded especially since Diakonia introduced an organizational policy in 1999 that clarifies the decision-making process and division of responsibilities within the organization. This policy stipulates that Diakonia's Secretariat is in charge of the employment of new staff members. Currently, job ads published by Diakonia do not specify Church membership as an advantage.

However, the majority of the staff at headquarters still do belong to different congregations. Program officers at Diakonia headquarters are also, according to their job descriptions, expected to work with information and other activities directed to congregation members. Examples of such activities are accompanying partner organizations that visit Sweden, providing information about latest developments within the country programs, etc.

### **3.1.2 Links between Sweden and programs in Latin America**

#### *Information and advocacy*

When referring to popular movements ('folk rörelser') within the sphere of development cooperation, reference is often made to the group of approximately 15 Swedish development NGOs that absorb the majority of Sida's funding for activities in developing countries. Several of these organizations are present in Latin America and also work actively in Sweden with information, networking, advocacy etc.

In this context, Diakonia has played a prominent role in Sweden. For more than a decade, Diakonia has either initiated or participated actively in all larger NGO policy networks, campaigns or information activities dealing with development issues. Several of these initiatives have links to their programs in Latin America. Recent examples are the Central America network (information sharing), the working group for follow up of the Stockholm Declaration (policy dialogue), the Colombia Network (information and advocacy), the international debt relief campaign Jubilee 2000 (where partners also participated), the EU Roundtable Discussions on Guatemala, etc.



Links between Sweden and Latin America also exist on local congregation level. After the devastation caused by hurricane Mitch in Central America, for example, a significant number of congregations were active in collecting funds and disseminating information, as well as receiving visits from partner organizations and traveling to Central America themselves to follow reconstruction efforts.

The Sweden Department at Diakonia has worked to link the experience of partners in developing countries to information work in Sweden, promote contacts with congregations and other Swedish grassroots organizations and promote political dialogue between partners and Swedish politicians and authorities etc. Although progress can be reported, several members of the Diakonia field staff, as well as partners, express frustration concerning what they regard to be weak links between partners' daily activities and the overall focus at Diakonia Headquarters.

**Result: Increased commitment for Colombia**

In the mid 90s, Diakonia contributed to the establishment of a network of five Swedish NGOs working with Colombia. One objective of the network was to promote interest in Sweden for the ongoing human rights crisis and to lobby for political action by the Swedish Government in international forums. Sida/RELA contributed to the network by financing a part-time coordinator, based at Diakonia, for a period of 18 months.

All stakeholders agree that the initiative, which had measurable goals in terms of activities and campaigns, did result in an increasing interest in, and commitment to, Colombia by both state actors (e.g. the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and a number of NGOs. Diakonia's partners in Colombia contributed inside information and also participated in events in Sweden. Diakonia's founding churches also took part in this effort by carrying out campaigns.

The evaluation finds that relevant contacts do exist between Sweden and the programs in Latin America, but that these contacts are often rather ad hoc in nature resulting from personal initiatives, rather than from an established strategy.

*Sharing democratic experience*

Diakonia and its main financial supporter Sida place great emphasis on the fact that Diakonia originates from a Swedish popular movement<sup>11</sup>. It is assumed that the knowledge and experience generated from this situation are used in Diakonia's programs in Latin America and contribute to Diakonia's ability to share ideas and experience regarding democratization and mobilization of partner organizations, their ability to form alliances etc.

There is no written account of how the '*folk rörelse*' ideals were applied during the period 1999–2001 and no record of how Diakonia uses these experiences appears to have been documented. The exchange that has taken place seems to have consisted of the Diakonia staff's individual experience from membership in congregations and other forms of Swedish associations.

Democratic association is, however, promoted through Diakonia's working methods. Diakonia is a democratically constituted organization that largely functions as an association. All staff at the regional and country offices participate in both general discussions and educational activities and discussions in the regions are held in Spanish. Democratic structures of decision-making are also applied in the meetings and in other interaction with partner organizations, although these aspects are not institutionalized within the realm of the organizational development that Diakonia offers its partners.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Diakonia's application to Sida/RELA for 2001–2003, Diakonia's application to Sida/SEKA for 2002–2003, Assessment memo Sida/SEKA/EO (2000-12-20), Assessment memo Sida/RELA (2000-12-07).



## 3.2 The relevance of Diakonia's programs in Latin America

### 3.2.1 Diakonia's problem analysis and theoretical framework

A vital part of the evaluation process has consisted of study of Diakonia planning, program and policy documents. A central conclusion is that the theoretical framework and interconnected concepts utilized by Diakonia demonstrate vagueness, certain deficiencies and lack of focus.

Throughout the work with this evaluation, the team has understood that Sida does not consider that the models and concepts utilized by Diakonia to theoretically frame its activities are important. Sida has its own theoretical agenda and places its trust in the results that Diakonia produces. Even so, the evaluation team believes that a discussion of Diakonia's own theoretical framework is important in order to understand the organization's overarching objectives and activities. Models fill important functions in order to explain, to justify, to mobilize support on various levels, to make interpretations and reinterpretations of activities, and to interrelate the often quite different interests and agendas of project stakeholders.

Diakonia has made considerable efforts to restructure its field of activities in order to achieve more coherent and thematically interconnected country programs. Such an ambitious project is in dire need of an elaborated theoretical framework. The evaluation team finds, however, certain disarticulation between practice, the models applied and the overarching theoretical framework. Consequently Diakonia's attempts to create coherent country programs are not primarily driven by theory, but still mostly by practice. There is a certain risk that Diakonia's theoretical model is primarily aimed at validating its position in Sida's overarching guidelines rather than at the orientation of activities in Latin America.

The evaluation team believes that Diakonia is in need of a revised theoretical apparatus, more accurate definitions and additional analytical measures. The organization's theoretical weakness has direct implications on a number of levels: for the outlining of programs, for attempts to connect partners, for their activities themselves and for the identification of the main beneficiaries of the programs. Furthermore, this weakness reduces opportunities to successfully monitor and evaluate activities.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Defining target groups*

Diakonia divides its target groups into two categories:

- The *primary target group* is defined as "people in the South who are poor, oppressed and subjected to different forms of violence".
- The *secondary target group* consists of partner organizations in the South, together with financial contributors, church denominations, as well as voters and decision-makers in the North.<sup>13</sup>

In the Diakonia application to Sida for 2001–2003, the primary target group is defined as "the most impoverished, in other words, socially, economically, politically and culturally marginalized people". Here, it is also stated that Diakonia works with yet another target group that does not sort under above-mentioned categories, consisting of those individuals that Diakonia and its partners are trying to influence, such as national politicians and decision makers<sup>14</sup>.

In the country programs, Diakonia supports partners and/or networks which work on national and international levels. At national level, the government and state institutions are important targets groups in order to increase political will and knowledge of specific issues. At international level, foreign governments and international organizations such as the World Bank, the UN system and the EU also form part of the secondary target group.

<sup>12</sup> A more thorough discussion on terminology and definitions used by Diakonia, is presented in Annex 2.

<sup>13</sup> Diakonia's policy (1998), p 29.

<sup>14</sup> Application to RELA 2001–2003, p 29.

However, in some instances, yet another level of target group also exists. In Colombia for example, some Bogotá-based organizations such as CINEP, Avre and ILSA, implement activities in rural departments and municipalities through other local organizations such as the Catholic Church and grassroots organizations. In these cases, leaders and church officials are also a target group, although not clearly defined as such. The same lack of clarity often applies to support to networks.

The evaluation team finds that the primary target group is so widely defined that it becomes both an analytical and an operative problem.<sup>15</sup> This may appear to be an academic play on definitions, but it is serious that Diakonia does not have a clear definition of the target group which is supposed to include the prime beneficiaries of their programs.

Commenting on Diakonia's application to Sida/RELA 2001–2003, Sida/POLICY<sup>16</sup> asserts that according to the description of the programs, the partner organizations appear as the real primary target groups. In other documents and in interviews Diakonia argues that the primary target groups are mainly those who are mobilized or, at least, reached by the activities of the partner organizations. It would be preferable for Diakonia to clarify its definition of its primary target group.

Diakonia aims to improve the life quality of the primary target via support to grassroots organizations, NGOs and networks. One question that ought to be answered is *which* of the wide array of strata and groups of the poor who the partners work with. There is, for example, a tendency that the majority of the people who are most active in grassroots organizations belong to the upper strata of the poor. There may thus be a limit to the term 'popular' in 'popular participation'. The poorest segment of the population may well still benefit from the activities of organization, but indirectly rather than directly.

The lack of stratification analysis may cause both analytical and operative problems. The issue of male and female participation in grassroots organizations, for example, has to be studied in relationship to stratification. A woman from a socially prestigious group might be treated in very different way to a woman who inhabits a low social position.

In interviews and discussions, Diakonia staff both in Latin America and at Headquarters in Stockholm seem aware of this problem, however, their experience is not reflected in policy, applications and other documents. The evaluation finds that Diakonia would benefit from a more elaborated distinction between different target groups, and a clear definition of how the primary target group is stratified<sup>17</sup>.

### **3.2.2 Relevance in relation to Sida's action programs and strategies**

Diakonia asserts that the underlying cause of poverty, oppression and violence is primarily the absence of democracy and the lack of respect for human rights. By addressing structural causes, Diakonia believes that long-term solutions to development problems can be found<sup>18</sup>. The main strategy used is to

---

<sup>15</sup> An example of this is the term "marginalized", where widely acknowledged research (Perlman, Janice. 1976. The Myth of Marginality) argues that on a whole, the poorer segments of the Latin American population do not have a marginalized position but, on the contrary, are well integrated economically and socially, albeit in structurally inferior and exposed positions. Most likely, only a small minority of Diakonia's primary target group consists of marginalized individuals.

<sup>16</sup> Sida/POLICY's comments to the project committee 25 November 2000.

<sup>17</sup> For a further discussion on stratification see Annex 4.

<sup>18</sup> The evaluation team has to emphasize, though, that general causal links between poverty and democracy have not been proven. On the contrary, there are a growing number of scholars who argue that authoritarian regimes often have the capacity to make structural economic reforms that would have been hard to achieve in a democratic system (e.g. Gunnarsson, C., Rojas, M. Tillväxt, Stagnation och Kaos). Causal links between democracy and increased levels of violence are also more complex than Diakonia's documents would have us believe. State repression has undoubtedly decreased greatly after the reinstatement of democratic regimes and increased local participation however violence related to crime has, on the other hand, increased rapidly in most countries in Latin America.

support empowerment of poor people by increasing their knowledge and influence in local, national and international decision-making and power structures.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from broad statements of how local democracy is linked to economic improvement for the poor population of Latin America, Diakonia does not link its programs to Sida's overarching goal of poverty reduction. This will undoubtedly constitute a great challenge for Diakonia in subsequent applications to Sida.

The overarching development goal for Diakonia's activities in Latin America is that:

*The target groups in the country programs possess the capacity and opportunity to improve their life situation by means of active citizenship in a democratic society.*

The immediate objective is thus formulated as:

*The target group has increased its qualitative participation in both democratic institutions and in civil society through Diakonia's efforts to strengthen a democratic culture and a culture characterized by equality.*<sup>20</sup>

Swedish development cooperation with Latin America is governed by two regional strategies, one for South America and the other for Central America and the Caribbean<sup>21</sup>. Countries prioritized for Swedish cooperation are Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Support to these countries is stipulated in specific country strategies.

The overall objectives of development cooperation with South America are reduced poverty and strengthened democracy. The strategy stipulates that Sweden's contribution to the development process will primarily include efforts in the fields of human rights and democracy, public administration and institutional development, education, research and economic cooperation. This cooperation will mainly take place via private Swedish organizations, multilateral agencies and public and private institutions.

In the strategy for development cooperation with Central America and the Caribbean, Sida states that the uneven distribution of economic resources and political power looks set to remain the basic constraint on sustainable development, in which the rights of the individual could otherwise be better fulfilled.<sup>22</sup> As a result of this analysis, two development goals are emphasized as steering instruments for Swedish development cooperation in the region, i.e. 1) economic and social equality, and 2) democratic social development.

Promoting democratic development is alleged to contribute to poverty reduction by increasing popular influence in public decision making processes, thus strengthening marginalized peoples' opportunities to demand their human rights.<sup>23</sup>

The strategy goes on to state that Sida will work to promote democratic development by focusing on the following areas:

- Popular participation in political processes, for example by supporting efforts to strengthen interaction between public institutions and civil society.
- Strengthened rule of law, including special focus on women's rights.

---

<sup>19</sup> Diakonia's policy (1998), p 24–25.

<sup>20</sup> Diakonia's application to Sida/RELA for 2001–2003, Central and South America, p 7.

<sup>21</sup> The time period evaluated encompasses two strategies for Central America, the first running from 1997–2000 and the second from 2001–2005. The regional strategy for South America relates to the period 1998–2002.

<sup>22</sup> Regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean 2001–2005, p 18.

<sup>23</sup> Regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean 2001–2005, p 20.

- Good governance, including support to processes that promote decentralization of economic resources and power to municipal governments.
- Conflict management and reconciliation.

This list of Swedish official priorities is almost identical to Diakonia's scope of action in Latin America, implying that the Diakonia and Sida strategies as well as action programs coincide quite neatly. There is no doubt that Diakonia's eight country programs not only share a focus that is fully compatible with official Swedish development cooperation objectives, they also make important contributions to several of the objectives within the stipulated Sida strategies.

Sida and Diakonia, as one of several Swedish NGOs with a presence in Latin America, are generally perceived to complement each other's efforts in the sum total of Swedish development cooperation in this region. Sida's analysis is also that strong national actors within organized civil society constitute a prerequisite for democratization. To achieve this, Sida is dependent of Diakonia and other Swedish development NGOs as intermediaries. A previous monitoring report stated that the perhaps most important result of Diakonia's programs is that they have permitted Sida to reach target groups that could not have been reached with bilateral aid.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.2.3 Relevance in relationship to development contexts in Latin America

#### *The structure of the country programs*

As previously clarified, Diakonia's activities in Latin America consist of 8 country programs, each departing from specific development contexts. Although regional cooperation is important, the program focus is at country level. The contents of a country program are:

- A number<sup>25</sup> of partner organizations at local (municipal), regional (county), and/or national level. These may be grassroots organizations, social or ethnic movements, NGOs, networks, churches or ecumenical organizations etc.
- One or several strategic partners, i.e. key organizations with specific knowledge or experience considered necessary for the implementation of the program. Examples are research institutions, networks or umbrella organizations.
- Diakonia's country strategy, based on a national problem analysis. This strategy defines thematic<sup>26</sup> alignment, geographical concentration and specific program goals.
- Diakonia's resources, consisting in financial support, staff presence and linkages to Sweden. Diakonia finances partners' programs and institutional strengthening. At present, Diakonia's staff includes one Swedish program officer per country, located at the regional office and with thematic responsibility. One national program officer is located in each national office. The Colombia office is an exception to this with one Swedish coordinator and two national program officers.

The logic of the country programs, as described in the application to Sida/RELA for 2001–2003, is that each partner has a working relationship with one or several other partners. A local/municipal partner is only included in the program if another partner works with the same issues at national level. In the same manner, partners working at national level must have cooperation and well-established links with partners at local/municipal level.

<sup>24</sup> Bazán, Cuéllar, Martínez Bergström (1997), p 27.

<sup>25</sup> The number and type of partners varies depending on the problem analysis in each country. Most country programs include between 10 and 20 partner organizations.

<sup>26</sup> The thematic focus is based on Diakonia's policy (1998). Activities are divided in four categories, all of which interrelate and are mutually dependent: 1) Democratization, 2) Gender, 3) Human rights, and 4) Economic justice.

The partners interact in seminars on specific topics and in other activities financed by Diakonia. The current situation, however, appears to differ greatly from country to country. While several partners in El Salvador work closely together, a number of partners in Guatemala did not know of each other's existence.

Previous evaluations found that Diakonia's efforts were widely spread and that consequently there was a need for the programs be more focused (geographically and thematically), that Diakonia should promote linkages between partners and that national lobbying efforts should be reinforced as a means of strengthening overall impact.<sup>27</sup>

The evaluation team finds that Diakonia has complied with these recommendations on the planning level, but that there is still work to be done in practice. Several country programs still lack focus, for example Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia.

#### *Thematic focus*

One of the thematic areas within Diakonia's country programs are economic, social and cultural rights. Support within this area ranges from participation in international advocacy, such as the SEJ program, to national campaigns, like the Colombian network Plataforma DESC that conducts campaigns for the right to health, education, etc., and work at local level, e.g. for minority ethnic groups' access to municipal resources and internally displaced persons' right to education.

Many partner organizations – not least in Colombia where economic, social and cultural rights are more or less absent from the political agenda at the same time as deep structural inequalities are considered to be one of the main causes of the conflict and also one of the driving forces for its continuation – consider these rights to be extremely important. One professional NGO states that, with the introduction of an IMF stabilization program in the country and increased poverty due to the economic crisis, economic, social and cultural rights are becoming more important every day.

From their local perspective, grassroots organizations in Colombia agree. The Afro-Colombian organization Acia claims, for example, that due to prevailing social injustice it is not possible to work for peace alone. The indigenous organization OIA, who works for indigenous rights in parts of Antioquia which are extremely exposed to violence from the different actors in the armed conflict, states that economic development, not only humanitarian support, helps people to resist pressure from guerilla and paramilitary groups and prevents people from leaving their communities.

On a more general level, applicable in all Diakonia's program countries, experience from many development programs demonstrate that in order for people to be prepared to participate in e.g. local decision-making or organize around issues such as women's or children's rights, it is important for them to have basic material security at the very least.

Diakonia, however, states that the organization works to enhance economic, social and cultural rights by supporting increased knowledge of, and understanding for, these rights – not income generating activities among target groups. Diakonia's philosophy has been that since financing for economically oriented projects (such as *microempresas*) is perceived to be abundant among other donors, Diakonia should continue to focus on training and awareness raising activities. This is because this sort of support is harder to come by and in a field in which Diakonia feels that it can contribute.

The evaluation team agrees with Diakonia's definition of the role the organization is best equipped to play. However, the evaluation also finds that Diakonia many times lacks understanding of the target groups' situation when defining thematic focus in country programs. One exception is Peru, where

---

<sup>27</sup> Recommendation no 4 (see pages 7–8).

Diakonia has tried to place its specialized support within larger programs in which other donors contribute to income generating activities.

The evaluation therefore suggests that Diakonia should consider a stronger focus on economic, social and cultural rights. There might also be possibilities for closer links between this area and other thematic areas, as well as between work for economic, social and cultural rights at the local, national and international levels. Such links should contribute to more focused activities and greater impact.

#### *Choice of partner organizations*

Previous evaluations concluded that Diakonia lacked clear criteria for selection of partners. It was recommended that Diakonia develop such criteria and also show a more proactive approach when identifying and seeking out new partners.<sup>28</sup>

Diakonia has since then developed criteria for choosing partner organizations. The most important criterion is, according to Diakonia's policy, that the organization in question works for the improvement of the primary target group's situation and that the organization's activities are firmly rooted within the target group. Other criteria include democratic structure and that the organization has included a gender perspective in its work. Also, when selecting new partners, Diakonia emphasizes that they should contribute something new to the program.

One problem in this respect is that a considerable number of partners have formed part of Diakonia's programs for many years. These organizations, which Diakonia sometimes refers to as historical partners, were chosen in an entirely different political context and long before Diakonia had developed criteria for selection of new partners. The evaluation finds that Diakonia's ties to these partners may sometimes hinder new thinking within programs. The evaluation found examples of this in Guatemala and Colombia, where some of the partner organizations clearly do not fulfill Diakonia's established criteria.

Diakonia's country programs are based on interaction between partners at national level, such as urban-based NGOs, and local/municipal NGOs and/or grassroots organizations. In the case of Colombia, this is a key issue in the work to promote commitment by the international community to support human rights, international humanitarian law and peace through a negotiated agreement. Members of grassroots partners, such as Acia and Orewa, act and live in areas severely affected by the armed conflict and

#### **Fewer partners led to increased focus in Colombia**

In the late 1990s, the Colombia Program expanded rapidly, both in terms of financial resources, number of partners and geographical scope. This was possible because of an additional application to Sida (1998) for support to internally displaced persons (IDPs). In late 1999, three separate programs – human rights, democracy and humanitarian assistance to IDPs – provided support to approximately 40 different organizations in almost every department of Colombia. Many activities, such as housing construction and credit systems, were completely new to Diakonia. Without any allocation for extra personnel in Bogotá, the situation became chaotic in terms of quality monitoring.

Many narrative and financial reports did not arrive within stipulated time frames, neither did auditing reports. Diakonia's staff did not have enough time to visit all partners even once a year. It was very difficult to construct a clear picture of what actually was being supported, even more impossible to think in terms of a country strategy or program. From late 1999, Diakonia began to reduce the number of partners to the present 19. This was a painful process, for partners, as well as for the inexperienced (in these matters) Swedish staff at the regional office in La Paz and for the national program officers in Colombia.

<sup>28</sup> Recommendation no 7 (see pages 7–8).



are victims of, as well as witnesses to, human rights violations. Consequently, they are important sources for the international lobbying of the Bogotá-based NGOs and networks. This relationship also works the other way around; the national NGOs work to strengthen the grassroots organizations' capacity in different ways by means of training, technical assistance etc.

Diakonia does not, however, apply any general rule stating that a certain type of organization should be more represented than any other. Instead, such decisions are taken within the framework of each country program. The percentage of NGOs and grassroots organizations thus differs from country to country.

The evaluation team finds that the Diakonia strategy to link grassroots organizations and NGOs at different levels (national, international) is relevant in all countries studied. However, at present the grassroots organizations are in minority. In Honduras, a discussion has started on whether Diakonia has the capacity to continue supporting the three grassroots organizations that are currently part of the program (of a total of eleven partners), as they have weak organizational and administrative capacity and are very time-consuming contacts. In Honduras, Diakonia states that their relationship with these partners is actually limiting Diakonia's capacity to search for new ones, thus hindering the development of the program. Similar problems were encountered in several other countries.

The evaluation finds that Diakonia needs to discuss these issues on a strategic planning level. Many of Diakonia's partners are generalist NGOs with broad agendas. Still, the grassroots organizations are important. Several Diakonia field staff interviewed have stated that without grassroots organizations in the country programs, Diakonia would lose the sense of the community. The grassroots organizations provide important contributions to Diakonia's analysis, thus enabling the Swedish NGO to be in closer touch with reality.

Consequently, one reason for maintaining close links to local grassroots organizations is that they provide information and insights about how political reforms, economic changes and other new developments are experienced by poor people in the cities and the countryside, among minority ethnic groups, etc. In countries as segmented as Latin American ones are, access to this information by urban middle-class based NGOs is limited.

Another more long-term reason is that support to, and organizational development of, grassroots organizations can contribute to stronger membership-based organizations where poor and disadvantaged groups are represented by themselves, not by intermediary NGOs. In the long run this should enhance popular participation and contribute to the building of democracy from below.

Consequently, it is the opinion of the evaluation that Diakonia should continue to work with grassroots organizations as partners. In some cases there might even be reason to consider increasing the number of local grassroots organizations within the country programs.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Methodological and thematic relationships between country programs*

In their application to Sida for 2001–2003, Diakonia developed an overall problem analysis for different program countries in Latin America. The analysis is the result of an LFA process<sup>30</sup> involving all partner organizations in an extensive bottom to top planning exercise.

---

<sup>29</sup> A brief description of the country programs is presented in Annex 3.

<sup>30</sup> The application for 2001–2003 was defined by means of an LFA process including 115 partner organizations in 8 countries. This extensive and quite unique planning process was carried out in order to meet Sida's demands that Diakonia present its activities in Latin America on a regional program level. Sida considered this necessary in order to render possible monitoring at a level where Diakonia's efforts as an organization could be assessed. Diakonia thus presented an application with goals, results and strategies for activities in Central and South America, respectively. The analyses on project level are made by Diakonia's partner organizations in accordance with instructions in Diakonia's project manual.

Diakonia has not found any intrinsic value in presenting an identical problem analysis for both Central and South America, although this is the first application that encompasses both regions. The country programs thus share the same theoretical approach and working methods – but present different wording regarding development contexts. In their application, Diakonia identifies eight prioritized areas of activities<sup>31</sup> (results) for Central America and six for South America<sup>32</sup>.

In Central America, the Swedish program officers have, since the end of 2001, held regional thematic responsibility<sup>33</sup>. These program officers come together at monthly planning meetings, where one of the subjects on the agenda is exchange between the programs. There is thus a constant discussion on how to achieve possible synergy effects between partners. Diakonia seeks to achieve such effects by arranging workshops and seminars including partners from different countries. Discussions in such seminars and exchanges include a wide variety of topics, such as gender, administrative routines, etc.

It is the impression of the evaluation team that Diakonia is currently working to develop new methods to strengthen thematic and methodological relationships between the different country programs – as well as between the country programs and activities in Sweden. The evaluation emphasizes that this should be considered a priority issue, as there is a visible need for further development of both content as well as concrete and measurable goals in this respect.

In relation to this, several of the Diakonia field staff commented on the need for more support and coordination from Stockholm Headquarters concerning the thematic specialization in the programs. The field officers expressed frustration over the fact that there is no defined program or information officer at headquarters with responsibility for the themes focused upon in the country programs, i.e. local development, democracy and human rights, gender, etc.

#### **3.2.4 Relevance in relationship to added value for partner organizations**

A previous monitoring report (1999), based on findings in El Salvador, concludes that while Diakonia would like to be perceived as having something more to offer their partners than a traditional donor-recipient relationship, little could be found to substantiate this.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Methodological exchange between countries**

In November 2001, Diakonia organized a seminar in Peru on the topic of 'Local Development and Democracy, Methods and Strategies'. In addition to partner organizations from both South and Central America, representatives from the Swedish municipal government in Farsta (a suburb of Stockholm) also participated and shared their experiences.

This initiative was followed up by more focused workshops in both South and Central America. One such workshop was held in September 2002, where Honduran partner organizations visited sister organizations in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, to see, learn and discuss similarities and differences between work with local development in the two countries. The workshop was widely appreciated by the participants. In this case a Salvadorian partner organization working on educational issues, *Equipo Maíz*, also participated with the task of documenting the experience in order to disseminate results to a broader audience.

<sup>31</sup> 1) Strengthening of civil society, 2) strengthening of democratic institutions at local level, 3) coordination and understanding at local level, 4) human rights, 5) conflict management and a culture of peace, 6) gender, 7) advocacy, and 8) institutional strengthening.

<sup>32</sup> 1) Local democracy, 2) strengthened human rights work, 3) integrated human rights approach based on ESC and indigenous rights, 4) gender, 5) peaceful conflict resolution, and 6) institutional strengthening.

<sup>33</sup> At present the regional program officer for Guatemala is also thematically responsible for gender issues at regional level. The program officer for El Salvador is in charge of issues regarding local development, and the program officers for Nicaragua and Honduras share thematic responsibility for the SEJ program, i.e. social and economic justice.

<sup>34</sup> Bye, Doggett, and Hellmers (1999), p 32–33.



An overwhelming majority of the Diakonia partner organizations interviewed in the course of this evaluation give a different picture. The partners stated that their relationship with Diakonia is in most cases ‘more’ than financial. The partners not only portrayed Diakonia as “a special friend”, but also listed several factors describing how Diakonia delivers an added value in its development cooperation. Partners mentioned the following examples:

- Professional (transparent, reliable) administration of funding is in itself added value.
- Diakonia shares the same political view and analysis, i.e. is perceived as an allied rather than traditional donor.
- The long-term commitment, several partners have received funding for more than 10 years.
- Diakonia’s financial support to operating costs and institutional capacity building (administrative training etc), features hard to find among other donors.
- Diakonia stays faithful to its thematic focus, while many other donors are said to change working areas more often. Human rights are highlighted by many partners as such an area.
- Diakonia is open to innovative ideas, new project constellations etc.<sup>35</sup>
- In Colombia, Diakonia is commended for providing important information about developments and events on the international agenda, in Sweden, the EU, etc.
- Regarding Diakonia’s working methods, partners appreciate the fact that Diakonia has a clear policy “which all organizations do not have”.
- The opportunity to participate in the planning of joint activities, facilitating mutual learning.
- The opportunity to participate in experience exchanges with Diakonia in Sweden as well as with partners in other countries, through the SEJ program, for example.
- Last but not least, partner organizations highlight Diakonia’s “special style”. When asked to explain they did not refer to exactly the same thing – clarity, flexibility, willingness to co-operate and listen, etc. – but always to positive qualities.

#### *Comparative advantages*

If we use the needs and will of the partner organizations as a point of departure and presume that they could, in reality, choose alternative financing sources – would the partners choose differently? Might other development actors deliver equivalent or perhaps even better service to partner organizations than Diakonia? And what about Sida; could the agency achieve equivalent or better results in relationship to stipulated development goals by investing in other actors and/or activities?

Applying a so-called South perspective, where the overarching goal is to meet the needs and interests of the target population as *defined by* this target population, it is legitimate to question the role of Diakonia, or other Swedish and/or international NGOs, as intermediaries. Theoretically, Sida could support Diakonia’s partner organizations without channeling funds through Diakonia.

According to such a perspective, the assessment of Diakonia’s added value for partners must be a topic of ongoing analysis – and a guiding criterion when Sida decides on funding for Diakonia’s programs. The evaluation finds that it is in Diakonia’s own interest that the organization becomes better in “marketing” its own value in relationship to other, possible development actors competing for the same funds, such as other Swedish or international NGOs, private consultants or UN programs. Sida, on the other hand, must also improve its motivation as to why Diakonia is chosen before other possible actors.

<sup>35</sup> One example mentioned in Colombia is a fund for human rights activists and other people who are threatened and need to leave their home regions.

The evaluation has summarized what are generally presumed to be Diakonia's comparative advantages – as presented in applications, reports and also as perceived by Diakonia's staff. The evaluation has tested these assumptions in the interviews performed with the various actors. The assessment is presented in the table below.

<b>Diakonia's comparative advantages in relationship to other development actors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diakonia is a Swedish organization, which implies shared values, etc</li> <li>• Diakonia focuses on programs and long term processes, not short term interventions</li> <li>• Diakonia works to strengthen local processes, as defined by local actors and in response to the interests of the beneficiary population</li> <li>• Diakonia attempts to build bridges between its base in Sweden and partners in Latin America</li> <li>• Diakonia has a horizontal relationship with its partners, promoting a relationship based on common values</li> <li>• Diakonia has 30 years' experience of working in Latin America and continues to maintain a long term commitment</li> <li>• Diakonia has no profit motive</li> <li>• Diakonia is a non-governmental organization, implying an autonomous role in relationship to state actors, no bilateral dependency etc.</li> <li>• Diakonia enjoys credibility among local organizations, which may not be the case for a UN agency or other semi-official international organization</li> <li>• Diakonia possesses the experience and capacity to administer and follow up small grants</li> <li>• Diakonia can raise issues that are considered too sensitive by Sida and might be too dangerous for partners</li> <li>• Diakonia has a thematic focus based on the organization's policy and linked to their membership base in Sweden</li> <li>• Public opinion polls show that Swedish tax payers have more confidence in Swedish NGOs than in Sida</li> </ul>	<p><u><i>Northern development NGOs with like-minded policies and programs</i></u></p> <p>As a Swedish organization with well-established platforms for advocacy and information work as well as an active membership base, Diakonia has comparative advantages in Sweden and in relation to Swedish development cooperation.</p> <p>Few larger development NGOs work as closely with its partners as Diakonia does and even fewer have such long experience in Latin America. Diakonia thus offers closeness to primary target group, as well as long-term commitment.</p>
	<p><u><i>Other Swedish development NGOs active in Latin America and with administrative and financial capacity comparable to Diakonia</i></u></p> <p>In general terms, Diakonia is not necessarily better equipped or more efficient than other Swedish NGOs. Instead, with few exceptions, no other Swedish NGO works in the fields where Diakonia is active, thus entailing little or no competition for NGO funding in this area.</p>
	<p><u><i>Private consultants, Swedish, other national or international</i></u></p> <p>One important asset in Diakonia's work is the personal commitment from their staff, an aspect described as an added value by partner organizations, as well as Sida. Personal commitment is most likely difficult to privatize.</p> <p>Diakonia's long-term commitment is also a fundamental aspect of the confidence built with the partners.</p> <p>As a development NGO and non-profit organization Diakonia possesses a level of credibility that could not be achieved by a private consultant. On one hand Diakonia does not have a profit motive, but on the other hand, Diakonia takes no financial risks.</p>
	<p><u><i>Programs through multilateral agencies, such as the UN system</i></u></p> <p>Sida finances UNDP based programs in several countries, with varying results. This development approach has been proven to be successful in some instances. Diakonia's comparative advantages therefore depends on the specific context.</p>
	<p><u><i>Sida direct financing of national NGOs, social movements, interest groups, etc</i></u></p> <p>Sida field offices generally do not have enough human resources to administer small-scale funding, which is often the reason why such contacts are turned over to Swedish development NGOs. In Central America, however, established practices differ between the embassies in the region. The field office in Guatemala does not generally finance NGOs etc, while the field office in Nicaragua maintains direct collaboration with a significant number of NGOs, interest groups etc, including Diakonia's partner organizations.</p> <p>Subsequently, Diakonia's administrative and monitoring capacity is sometimes considered to be a comparative advantage, depending on Sida's analysis of the development context in each particular country or region.</p>

### 3.3 Diakonia's methods and strategies

#### 3.3.1 Networking strategies

There appears to be clear differences in Diakonia's ability to support and promote connections and networking between regions and countries and between cities and more remote areas. The evaluation is overall positive to Diakonia's efforts in this respect in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Bolivia and Peru, but believes that more focus is necessary in Guatemala if networking is to be regarded as one of Diakonia's main strategies for building country programs.

Partner organizations situated in the Andean Highland in Peru, most remote from the country office, stated that Diakonia's networking efforts were not satisfactory. A little more than half of the partners in Peru declared that they would like Diakonia to pay more attention to this area. The evaluation team notes, however, that this discontent may in part be explained by traditional feelings of distrust between the highlands and the capital of Lima.

The partners in Bolivia also stated that they thought that Diakonia could support networking more in the future. Even though the organized civil society of Bolivia consists of a wide array of organizations on different levels, it is quite fragmented. There is an evident lack of strong and sustainable networks. The partners themselves made proposals as to how networking could be improved. Among other things, they proposed that a database could be constructed where organizations that work with similar themes could identify each other.

In Guatemala, several partners stated that they did not know what other partners made up in the country program, nor did they understand what relationship they were expected to have with them. This program is the largest in Central America consisting of approximately 20 organizations, where several have been Diakonia partners for many years. Diakonia is aware that the number of partners will have to be decreased in order to achieve a more coherent program and discussions are currently underway in this regard. The difficult political situation in this country requires new strategies for organized civil society on the whole, not only in relationship to Diakonia's partners.

Although the evaluation team encountered some partners who felt that Diako-

#### **Result: Sustainable networks in El Salvador**

In 1999, some of Diakonia's partner organizations in El Salvador established *La Red para Desarrollo Local* with the objective of strengthening coordination on decentralization and local development issues. The members of *La Red* work on different aspects of local development such as research, democracy training, support to popular participation, advocacy on national level, technical assistance to local authorities etc.

At present, *La Red* consists of five members, all of which have been Diakonia partners for up to a decade. *La Red* has, by invitation of El Salvador's president Flores, participated in the development of a national strategy for local development and is widely considered an important actor in the democratization process in El Salvador.

*La Red* works closely with several other Diakonia partners such as COMURES, the organization for the country's mayors. COMURES is an important link between different municipalities, between political parties and between state authorities and organized civil society. The success of COMURES has been described as a result of the fact that the mayors have found that the serious problems facing their municipalities bind them together in a way that transcends political affiliation, class and geography. The members of *La Red* assert that Diakonia's long-term commitment has been essential in order to sustain the network, not primarily regarding financing but as an allied discussion partner in past years.

nia lacked a defined strategy on how to link the partners towards common goals in all the countries visited, the majority expressed that they saw this program building effort as a joint task between the partners themselves and Diakonia.

In all countries where Diakonia carries out programs, there are innumerable NGOs and grassroots organizations who work with numerous issues at all levels in society. In very general terms, overall civil organization and mobilization must be described as both fragmented and weak. Civil society normally receives little attention in national media, its influence on national level is limited and the unequal structures, which determine the distribution of power and resources within the society, remain unchanged. Considering this, the promotion of networking and cooperation between organizations is an essential strategy in relation to Diakonia's objectives.

It is important, however, to analyze why organized civil society is so fragmented and under what circumstances organizations, both grassroots and NGOs, succeed in forming sustainable networks and coalitions of various sorts. In order for the networks to have maximum impact there is a need for a constant discussion on strategies and working methods. Diakonia should more actively seek actors outside the traditional sphere of NGOs who could become involved, lessons should be learned from other countries or opportunities for a more fruitful dialogue with relevant state institutions explored.

Regarding networking and coordination, previous evaluations recommended that Diakonia should more actively promote donor coordination in their program countries as an added value to the partners. The evaluation finds that such coordination often forms part of the country programs in a natural manner, by means of already existing networks of, for example, northern development NGOs. However, such networks normally stop at information sharing, while coordination regarding financing and reporting routines appears to be very rare. This is unfortunate, especially considering that Diakonia is in most cases one of several donors supporting the same organization.

### 3.3.2 Other strategies used to strengthen partners

#### *Partner participation in planning*

In all program countries, Diakonia invites its partner organizations to joint planning meetings<sup>36</sup>. In South America, these meetings have gained an institutionalized character, while they have been held more sporadically in Central America. As of 2001, at least one annual meeting among all partners has been held in each program country, as stipulated in the current program of activities.

The evaluation agrees that the fact that people can meet and discuss common interests is a valuable result *per se*. Diakonia creates arenas for reflection and many partners praised Diakonia for its educative ambitions and willingness to let partners take part in the outlining of joint activities. The partners

#### **Result: Increased donor coordination**

In 1999, the Swedish NGOs Diakonia, Forum Syd, Swedish Save the Children and the Swedish Cooperative Centre, initiated an international network among NGOs in donor countries involved in reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch in Central America. The objective was to share information, as well as to support each other in watchdog functions towards governments and development agencies in donor countries. These functions were a means to support partner organizations in Central America. A direct result of the network is increased coordination and information sharing among northern NGOs, on policy as well as operative level.

<sup>36</sup> These meetings are referred to by different names in different regions, such as *mesas de contrapartes*, *asambleas* etc.

almost unanimously stated that these meetings went well beyond the traditional relationships they had established with most other donors.<sup>37</sup>

There are, however, also critical views and suggestions for improvement. Meetings have lacked in focus and there is a desire for Diakonia to more actively define specific agendas. Some partners also remarked that the fact that their financing comes from the same source does not necessarily mean that they have anything else in common. Most of the interviewed partners, however, find the activities that are jointly agreed upon relevant and meaningful. Some of them, however, stated that these activities generate a lot of extra work that comes on top of the partner organizations' ordinary – and already very busy – schedules.

### *Partnership*

Diakonia uses several methods in order to strengthen its partners, the first being the mutual relationship itself. This relationship, defined as partnership, or '*acompañamiento*' in Spanish, is described as a relationship based on mutual confidence, understanding and flexibility and is appreciated highly by the partners interviewed.

Diakonia's physical presence bears special importance in Colombia due to the insecurity that faces many partners. The grassroots organizations in Chocó, for example, expressed their gratitude for Diakonia's frequent visits, since they are extremely exposed to violence and need all the protection they can get.

The evaluation team believes that Diakonia's model of partnership permits a closer understanding of the partner organizations – and their actual needs – than would be the case in most donor-recipient relationships.

### *Institutional strengthening*

The other main method applied in order to develop partners is institutional strengthening. This can include a wide array of such as bookkeeping skills, training in in-house democracy, communication skills or seminars on LFA planning. The situation, however, differs from country to country. The Diakonia office in Colombia, for example, admitted that organizational development and support was "a weak area". The last initiative in Colombia that covered all their partners was a training-course in administration that took place on request from the regional office.

In Honduras, practically all partner organizations interviewed had received support for institutional strengthening from Diakonia and many described this as either more or equally important than specific program funding given by other donors. These partner organizations identified Diakonia's support to institutional strengthening as both unique and valuable for the more long-term sustainability of the organizations themselves.

The major part of the institutional strengthening in Peru and Bolivia consists of offering partner organizations courses in basic administrative knowledge and budgeting. Diakonia uses local auditors to educate accountants in budgeting and auditing and demands that partner organizations receiving support employ competent administrators. One of the services offered to partner organizations is that Diakonia can help them to hire competent administration staff. Diakonia has also initiated several courses and workshops focusing on follow-up processes and evaluations.

---

<sup>37</sup> The director of an NGO in Colombia mentioned another partner with which this NGO is now cooperating in a project financed by Diakonia and stated: "If it had not been for the *asamblea* we would not have known each other". Another NGO director in Colombia remarked that the organization has been cooperating with another big European NGO for decades but until recently he did not know which the other Colombian partners of this NGO were.



In addition to funding aimed at institutional strengthening, Diakonia finances administration costs. Other donors tend to restrict financial support to projects alone, while Diakonia helps cover costs for office rent, computers, printing of books and reports and even cars. Such support facilitates the activities of the partner organizations, but ideally it should be complemented with structured and planned practices in order to develop the organizations.

Yet Diakonia's support to institutional strengthening cannot be regarded as part of an overarching general strategy of organizational development. No organizational assessments of partner organizations strengths and weaknesses were, for example, reported to have taken place in Colombia during the last two years<sup>38</sup>.

In Central America, activities aimed at institutional strengthening of partner organizations, were, until 2001, financed by means of an open fund. Activities were implemented according to needs occurring. One result of the baseline-study in Central America is that Diakonia has more comprehensive knowledge of the institutional capacity of its partners. This has led to more structured interventions, such as the administration project, where partners from several country programs took part in joint training activities during 2001. More strategic planning regarding institutional strengthening of partner organizations is currently under development at the regional office in Central America.

### **3.3.3 Methods for monitoring and follow-up of country programs**

#### *Visits and reporting*

The staff from the country offices visit partners on a regular basis. In Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala, these visits occur about every two months according to the partner organizations interviewed. In Lima and San Salvador, the national program officers are reported to visit partners more frequently. As previously noted, visits to the hinterland of Peru were far scarcer, however.

Several partners have expressed that the Diakonia staff, particularly in Peru, are too few to have the capacity to really get to know the partners. Such opinions were also aired in Colombia. Diakonia is sometimes perceived to be "too few and too far away". This situation could entail that fundamental problems within an organization go undetected, or unattended, for lengthy periods of time.

Furthermore, all partners are requested to send in narrative semi-annual reports and an annual report where results, and deviations from planned results, are described. Financial reporting is also required every six months. From a sample that the evaluation team has briefly reviewed, we have the impression that these reports are reasonably well developed and give a good picture of the work that has been undertaken.

Some partner organizations, however, do not use the structure that Diakonia promotes for narrative reports and confuse activities with results. This makes the assessment of development impact difficult. As this is a common difficulty, training partners in planning and reporting method is often included in Diakonia's institutional strengthening activities.

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

Previous evaluations found that the overall control of Diakonia's activities was unsatisfactory due to the lack of concrete and measurable goals on almost all levels. It was therefore recommended that Diakonia take steps to increase measurability by elaborating more concrete goals, including indicators. It was

---

<sup>38</sup> One method of organizational assessment, the Octagon, which was developed by Diakonia and other Swedish NGOs in co-operation with Sida, was piloted in Bolivia in 2001 but has, since then, not been applied. Partner organizations expressed no knowledge whatsoever of Octagon.

also recommended that Diakonia actively help its partner organizations to formulate result-oriented goals.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, previous evaluations stated that Diakonia lacked methodology for systematic analysis of results, as well as instruments to analyze project results on a program level related to overall objectives. There was also a lack of criteria for how to weigh results/goal achievement when reporting to Sida. It was recommended that Diakonia should elaborate analytical instruments in this respect.<sup>40</sup>

The evaluation acknowledges Diakonia for making considerable efforts to comply with the above-mentioned recommendations. The evaluation finds that the overall stringency of the Diakonia programs has increased during the evaluated time period, resulting in a more coherent program cycle from early pre-planning to final reporting of activities. This has also included geographical concentration and a more thematic focus of country programs.

Coherency has furthermore increased by the implementation of goal-oriented planning, using adapted LFA methods. In addition, partners have received training in LFA planning and other methodological instruments. The extensive LFA planning process leading up to the application for 2001-2003 is also acknowledged as an important lesson learned in this respect.

During this period Diakonia has carried out three studies, so called baselines. These studies have several objectives: to describe local and national development contexts (points of departure) against which it will be possible to measure change, to develop indicators in order to measure program results, and not least for both Diakonia and its partner organizations, to learn more about how to measure the impact of democracy and human rights programs.

The first study was carried out in Central America in 2000 and included a survey of each program country, describing the development context in which the partners exist, the situation of the primary target groups, as well as the partner organization's internal structure, visions, degree of gender consciousness etc – including indicators to measure change. This extensive exercise was complemented with two best practice studies.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the partner organizations interviewed in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras stated that the baseline study was challenging in terms of time consumption and methodological problems. The majority of these organizations also expressed that the study led by Diakonia was just one of several similar efforts carried out by other donors and that it therefore felt somewhat meaningless. Despite this criticism, a majority stated that the study had helped the organization to improve their focus when planning activities.

Diakonia requires its partner organizations in Central America to use some modified indicators from the baseline study in their reporting. Diakonia is, together with a specialized partner organization in El Salvador, planning to further develop the study before repeating the process.

In South America, the regional office has developed two baseline studies:

- *Baseline 1* intends to measure activities and results within five of the thematic areas – local democracy, civil and political rights, social, economic and cultural rights, gender and culture of peace. Indicators, mostly of quantitative nature, using the logical framework as a point of departure, were developed for each of the thematic areas.

---

<sup>39</sup> Recommendation no 1 (see pages 7–8).

<sup>40</sup> Recommendation no 2 (see pages 7–8).

<sup>41</sup> One on the development of the Diakonia financed Network for Local Development in El Salvador (*La Red para el Desarrollo Local*), and the other about an interdisciplinary university course in Nicaragua, involving several of Diakonia's partner organizations.

- *Baseline 2* deals with democracy at local level. Indicators grouped into four areas – political will and intention, relationship between those in power and voters, tolerance, respect and solidarity and equality – were developed.

All partners in this region were requested to use the Baseline 1 format in their annual reports for 2001. The objective was to assess if and how partners' activities are contributing to the fulfillment of the program goals. Baseline 2 was carried out in one city in each of the countries Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Paraguay.

Many partners who the evaluation team spoke to, particularly in Peru, seemed to regard these baseline instruments as a symbol of a new, stricter surveillance of their activities. In Bolivia, however, the team came across several partner organizations that showed more positive attitudes towards the method, stating that the indicators contributed to creating improved focus in activities as well as of problems and how they are related to the local context. The criticism from partner organizations in Colombia, regarding Baseline 1, was rather devastating. One partner dismissed the study, saying: "All donors come up with something like that".

According to reporting to Sida, Baseline 1 provides interesting information on activities but very little on impact and no analyses of the "results". Diakonia does, however, have the stated intention that the Baseline 1 format should continue to be used by partners in their annual reporting.

The results of Baseline 2 are also questioned by the evaluation team. The study hardly contributed anything of value to people already familiar with the program countries and even less so to partners already working in the four cities. Diakonia intends to use Baseline 2 again in order to obtain an idea of how the partners' work has progressed. The evaluation does not, however, believe that this is possible considering the vagueness and subjectivity of the indicators. The fact that the indicators deal with changes at macro level (e.g. "has political participation in the city changed?") will also make it impossible to measure impacts or partners' work which only affect parts of these cities or distinguish these impacts from other changes that take place concurrently.

The baselines are, above all, quantitative studies, measuring everything from participation of different categories in decision-making bodies of different kinds to practical actions. One serious aspect that Diakonia does not seem to have considered is the partners' potential struggle for scarce resources, that is, external financial support. There is a risk that partner organizations might be tempted to exaggerate participation and actions, believing that this will benefit their organization. Diakonia does not mention how they would be able to check such potential quantitative flaws.

Diakonia is recognized for taking on the methodological challenge connected to designing and carrying out these studies. All the same, the evaluation finds that the results of the studies fall short of the stipulated objectives. Although Diakonia stresses that the baseline studies have been important learning experiences, the evaluation questions if this is sufficient to justify the time the partner organizations put into this effort, or the resources that Diakonia invested.

### **3.3.4 Strategies for mainstreaming gender equality**

Previous evaluations found Diakonia to have supported isolated gender activities rather than applying a strategy that integrated gender equality systematically into the different activities of the program. It was therefore recommended that Diakonia take steps to promote gender equality in all activities, i.e. a mainstreaming approach.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Recommendation no 6 (see pages 7–8).



Formerly, Diakonia's partners were engaged in projects that aimed at strengthening women's participation and women's rights. Cooperation and experience sharing between the partners was, however, scarce. Neither did the two regional Diakonia offices at the time cooperate. This changed in late 2000 when the first seminar on gender and peace culture was held with the participation of partners from Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Paraguay.

During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has made efforts to mainstream equality issues into all aspects of their work, and most of it has been carried out as far as planning and policy is concerned. A working group on gender was formed at Diakonia's Headquarters in 2000, and two years later Diakonia's Policy for Equality was approved by the organization.

This initiative encompasses a vision, a policy, strategies, new resources, development targets and indicators. The core of the policy includes the following three strategies:

- Diakonia and its partners will integrate a gender perspective into all activities, i.e. in planning, realization and evaluation of programs and projects.
- Diakonia will give priority to activities aimed at supporting women within the primary target group, i.e. creating awareness, increasing self confidence, improved judicial protection, promoting improved health, etc.
- Men will be integrated into the work for gender equality.

These strategies contain a number of methods, which must be implemented at different organizational levels, from Diakonia's Board, to the management, the field offices to partners and targets groups.

According to this policy, one of the central criteria for selecting partners is that organizations emphasize gender equality in their activities. Gender equality is also a central part in the dialogue concerning projects after partners have been selected. Diakonia and its partners are obliged to regularly carry out analysis of how gender equality is reflected in the activities of the partner organizations, in the organizations that these partners may collaborate with and in the social context of the country at large. These analyses should include information about power relationships between genders, resource distribution plus data on violence and discrimination against women.

The evaluation received the impression that the gender policy and the strategies attached to it have not yet been fully embraced by Diakonia's entire staff in Latin America. This is understandable, considering its quite recent implementation. It is more surprising, however, that Diakonia's country programs are not permeated by the gender policy. There are still 'black holes' – Guatemala is one example – where partners pay little attention to this policy.

Experience to date has, however, demonstrated that Diakonia's gender strategies are sometimes resisted by some of its partners. Approximately 95 percent of Diakonia's partner organizations are headed by males, and since male dominance, *machismo*, is the prevailing ideology among most people in Latin America, the risk that some partners will try to avoid gender equality in practice is high.

Colombia is the only country where Diakonia has initiated systematic training sessions for gender activities to the vast majority of its partners. In 2002, Diakonia hired a local consultant, Sinergia, and invited all partners to participate in a two-year training program. The same year, Diakonia elaborated a manual in Spanish, combining a theoretical approach with practical applications for analyzing and changing gender inequality, particularly in partners' organizations<sup>43</sup>.

---

<sup>43</sup> 'Instrumentos para la incorporacion, monitoreo y evaluacion de la perspectiva de genero'

Even though Diakonia works in several countries with a high percentage of indigenous people, the organization does not give any account of the particular notions of alternative gender systems of indigenous people. In the Andean highlands, for example, Andean cosmology and social structure is permeated by a complementary gender system, instead of Western gender equity. There is a tendency that many projects that are led by *mestizos* treat indigenous social, economic and political structure and organizations as archaic remnants rather than potential opportunities to achieve gender equality and sustainable female empowerment.

In practice Diakonia supports partners that incorporate indigenous gender systems and practices in their gender perspective, and Diakonia's staff is aware of these efforts. The evaluation team suggests that Diakonia systematizes its experience of working with ethnic groups with alternative gender systems. This is also an arena where Diakonia could contribute to a dialogue on gender systems and practices between ethnic groups from different regions.

### **3.3.5 Inter-regional cooperation between Central and South America**

Diakonia's work in South and Central America has until quite recently been organized around regional offices in Bolivia and El Salvador, without any greater coordination. This can mainly be explained by specific political developments in the two regions.

In early 1999 Diakonia initiated a comprehensive reorganization process, including decentralization of decision making to regional offices and a closer cooperation between South and Central America. One result of this process was that the two desk officers in Stockholm began to work more closely together. It was consequently decided that Central and South America would produce a joint application for a Latin America program for the period 2001–2003.

Cooperation between the two regions is still very new and the process leading up to the joint application is considered to be a major step forward. There are still noteworthy differences between Diakonia in the two regions, such as a different use of terminology, emphasis on different aspects within programs, etc.

In terms of replicating best practices, there are several examples of how experience in one of the regions has been passed on to the other. Methods for planning, reporting and monitoring, including the first baseline study, were for example something that the staff and partners in Central America had worked to develop. The organizational model from South America, with national offices and program officers, has recently been implemented in Central America, etc.

It is the opinion of the evaluation team that well defined efforts aimed at exchanging experience and know-how between partners in the two regions will strengthen Diakonia country programs. In this respect, it would be interesting to further develop cooperation and exchange with partner organizations in other regions, so called South-South cooperation. This is currently underway within the scope of the so-called SEJ program that gathers partners from different regions as concerns global justice issues.

## **3.4 Diakonia's organizational capacity**

### **3.4.1 Diakonia's organization**

The administrative structure of Diakonia's activities in Latin America can briefly be described as follows:

- In each of the eight program countries, Diakonia has a national office with at least one national program officer and, in some cases, administrative staff. The national program officer is responsible for day-to-day follow up, contacts with partners, meetings, coordination of activities etc.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> There is one Swedish program coordinator and two national program officers in Colombia. In Central America, national offices staffed by national program officers were opened in late 2001.

- In La Paz and San Salvador, Diakonia has regional offices. A Swedish coordinator has overall field responsibility in each region. One Swedish program officer per program country is stationed at the regional office. The regional offices also employ program assistants and other national administrative staff.
- At headquarters in Stockholm, two program officers, one for each region, have overall planning responsibility for programs in Latin America.

Compared to other Swedish development actors in Latin America, Diakonia has a large field presence with a considerable infrastructure. This is especially true regarding the large number of Swedish staff<sup>45</sup>. Diakonia finds that this is necessary in order to build bridges with Swedish and other parties that form, or could form, part of the programs.

In Central America, the model including national program officers in each country has been recently implemented and the division of responsibilities is a topic still under discussion. Previously one Swedish program officer, stationed at the regional office, was responsible for each country program. The Swedish program officers are currently expected to assume a regional thematic responsibility, as previously described in this report.

The efficiency of centralizing planning to the regional offices, as well as the comparatively large number of Swedish staff was questioned by some of the parties interviewed during the course of this evaluation. The organizational model including Swedish program officers stationed at the regional office, combined with national program officers in each country is, however, a conscious choice according to Diakonia. In past years the different country programs have been rather isolated, developing in their own national contexts.

By increasing coordination and joint planning, Diakonia has found that it is easier to achieve synergy effects within and between the different country programs. Examples are training activities where partners from different countries are found to complement each other's experience, etc.

In the case of Colombia, Sida pressured Diakonia to recruit a Swedish representative to work at the national office. This was considered necessary as a means payoff playing a more active role in a very complex conflict situation, creating links to Sweden and increasing coordination with other development actors in the country. In 2001, a Swedish program officer was stationed in Bogotá.

There is a difference of opinion about this within Diakonia. While some feel that a Swedish representative will further contribute to the improvement of the program and increase direct and indirect protection to several partners, others fear that Diakonia's program in Colombia is, to an increasing degree, living its own life as a satellite in the regional context. Diakonia is currently evaluating this model.

Regarding overall administrative capacity, the evaluation finds that Diakonia has complied with the reporting and other routines demanded by different departments at Sida. Concerning Diakonia's ability to efficiently channel humanitarian assistance, such as after hurricane Mitch in Central America, Diakonia has shown aptitude to rapidly adjust to changing needs. The relatively large number of field staff is no doubt an important factor in this sense.

### **3.4.2 Diakonia's competence and resources**

Diakonia's partner organizations were very expressive as concerns Diakonia's organization and resources, both human and financial. Partners interviewed in all countries visited by the evaluation team

---

<sup>45</sup> In November 2002, a total of 11 Sweden-employed staff were working in Central and South America. Diakonia also employs a total of 9 national program officers in the two regions.

shared the impression that Diakonia's thematic competence depended on who was employed at the time. The main objection stated concerned what several described as a constant change of Swedish staff.

Previous evaluations found that Diakonia lacked specialized professionals in many fields where their partners were active. It was recommended that Diakonia should recruit more professional staff, that the regional office in Central America be strengthened with a full-time Director, and that permanent national coordinators be employed in each program country. It was also underlined that Swedish presence in Colombia should be given high priority.<sup>46</sup>

The evaluation finds that Diakonia has taken this criticism seriously and several measures have been applied during the time period evaluated in order to improve the overall professional capacity of the staff. In job ad specifications, Diakonia requires an academic degree, relevant experience in development issues and knowledge of the themes with which Diakonia works. This change in recruitment policy has been notable. Diakonia currently has, for example, a gender expert in each of the regional working teams. Diakonia has thus succeeded in recruiting professional staff, but the challenge consists of institutionalizing thematic competence and experience.

In late 1999, Diakonia employed a full time Regional Coordinator at the office in San Salvador. All parties interviewed state that this has been essential in order to coordinate efforts and develop the capacity of the regional working team. A local administrator was also employed at this time. National program officers have been recruited for all program countries as of 2001. The same year, a Swedish Program Coordinator was placed in Colombia.

Diakonia has taken several measures to improve the situation regarding the rapid turnover of Swedish staff, but it remains difficult to recruit qualified personnel and succeed in overlapping procedures. Diakonia says that they are fully aware of the problem of staff turnover, but they have no solution to offer.

In South America, the model including national offices in each program country, run by a local Program Officer, has proven important for continuity in the country programs. This makes the programs less sensitive to the high levels of staff turnover among the Swedes. Because of the concern expressed by partners, Diakonia should take all opportunities to discuss if further measures can be taken to improve continuity in program countries. This discussion must also include the possibility of decreasing the number of Swedish staff and instead employing local program officers.

Previous evaluations also found insufficiencies in administrative routines, such as the lack of guidelines for how field staff are to follow up on partners' financial reporting. It was recommended that Diakonia improve administrative capacity in this sense. Other recommendations include the elaboration of job descriptions that define responsibilities and decision-making levels, and that a joint database should be set up in order to facilitate administration.<sup>47</sup>

The evaluation concludes that these recommendations have been satisfactorily fulfilled. A project manual, stipulating routines, was elaborated in 1999. The same year a policy on the decision-making process and division of responsibility within Diakonia was also approved. This policy (delegationsordning) also includes job descriptions. A joint database, PHS, began functioning in late 2002.

---

<sup>46</sup> Recommendation no 5 (see pages 7–8).

<sup>47</sup> Recommendation no 3 (see pages 7–8).

### 3.4.3 Diakonia as a learning organization

Diakonia and its programs in Latin America have been subject to several external evaluations and monitoring missions during the past few years. These missions have presented a substantial number of recommendations. There is no doubt that Diakonia has shown genuine will to improve their overall work, absorbing the suggestions considered relevant. Sida also notes this in the various decision documents regarding Diakonia.

In their 1999 annual report, Diakonia writes that an organization that does not learn will stop in its development. This is of course true, but the evaluation would like to reflect over the speed at which Diakonia implements change. During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has gone through a considerable reorganization process, not only regarding its Latin America programs. This has been combined with considerable efforts, especially in Latin America, to develop methods for result assessment, thematic exchange, regional cooperation, etc. Not only Diakonia itself, but also Sida, should reflect on how processes of organizational change and development affect overall institutional capacity.

For several years, Diakonia has been working actively with evaluation tools in order to assess developments within partner organizations. Diakonia's evaluations of partners are used as means of gathering strategic input and many recommendations from previous evaluations have been incorporated into their country programs.

#### *Diakonia's institutional memory*

Diakonia keeps an archive for each partner organization at the relevant regional office. Copies of especially important documents, such as audit reports, are also filed at Headquarters in Stockholm. Diakonia has established criteria concerning the type of information and documents that must be archived. These include agreements, work plans, annual and semi-annual reports, memos about important telephone calls and meetings, etc. During the time period evaluated Diakonia has developed an entire set of administrative routines, described in their project manual.

#### **Result: More efficient humanitarian assistance**

Diakonia played an active role in Swedish reconstruction efforts after hurricane Mitch, a disaster that devastated large parts of Central America in 1998. Diakonia channeled 38 MSEK in humanitarian assistance to several Honduran and Nicaraguan partner organizations that worked directly with the population affected. When the most acute needs were resolved, Diakonia and the partner organizations together decided to concentrate on programs that combined work for local democracy with reconstruction efforts, programs such as rebuilding houses, schools, rehabilitating agricultural crops etc. By promoting the organization of the population affected, local ownership was created thus enabling more efficient results. Reconstruction after Mitch also enabled Diakonia to activate many of its 1 800 local congregations to work in support for Central America.

When El Salvador was struck by two earthquakes in early 2001, Diakonia was fast to channel nearly 3 MSEK in humanitarian assistance via partner organizations. Soon after that, Diakonia also decided to apply for temporary enlargement of the ordinary country program and received slightly more than 6 MSEK in funding from Sida/RELA. The chaotic situation after hurricane Mitch had taught Diakonia and its partners the great importance of coordination in emergency situations. Another lesson was that rapid measures had to be taken to avoid political polarization among organizations and authorities competing for development cooperation funding. Diakonia channeled their funds to existing partners in a limited geographical area and within the scope of an already existing program aimed at strengthening weak local authorities. This support increased probability that funds, both governmental and those provided by international development agencies, reached those most affected by the disaster.

When asked to describe the organizations' institutional memory, the Swedish staff in Central America referred to the local staff at the regional office. One of the Salvadorian program assistants has been working with Diakonia for more than a decade, making her an invaluable asset for the Swedish short-term staff.

### **3.5 The relationship between Diakonia and Sida**

#### **3.5.1 Background**

Diakonia's activities in Latin America during the 3-year period evaluated, 1999–2001, are presented in no less than 9 different applications to Sida/RELA and Sida/SEKA respectively.<sup>48</sup> The reasons for this multitude of documents with preceding planning processes are several.

When Sida's Project Committee<sup>49</sup> in December 1996 considered Diakonia's Central America application for 1997–98, it was decided that Diakonia had to increase the level of impact measurability as a prerequisite for future funding. During the successive program period, Diakonia thus decided to carry out an extensive LFA planning process among their partner organizations in all Latin American program countries.

While awaiting the results of this exercise, Diakonia was only permitted to submit a one-year application for 1999. Diakonia then presented an application for the period 2000–2002. Again Sida/RELA decided to approve financing for one year only i.e. 2000. This time the reason was budget cuts in Sweden, resulting in a reduction for Diakonia of almost 40 percent compared to the year before. In December 2000, Sida/RELA approved a 3-year application for 2001–2003.

The time period evaluated has thus been administratively heavy, but also quite dynamic, bringing about considerable change in Diakonia's programs and internal structures.

#### **3.5.2 Sida's different models of financing**

Diakonia's country programs in Latin America receive financing from the Sida departments RELA and SEKA. Diakonia states that there is no difference in content between the activities and partner organizations that are financed by different departments.

Diakonia is, however, dependent on receiving the 100 percent financing that RELA offers. Support from SEKA requires that one fifth of the total sum is made up of the organizations' own collected funds. Diakonia, however, has quite limited resources, thus increasing dependency on full financial support from RELA.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to funding for country programs in Latin America, Diakonia also has a frame agreement with the Department for Humanitarian Assistance, SEKA/Hum. This agreement enables Diakonia to channel humanitarian assistance up to the amount of 1 MSEK<sup>51</sup> within a 24-hour period. These grants are reported directly to SEKA/Hum according to a stipulated format and do not form part of the annual reporting that Diakonia presents to SEKA and RELA.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> This does not include applications for humanitarian assistance in connection to disasters of different sorts.

<sup>49</sup> The Project Committee, consisting of expert staff from different departments within Sida, reviews financial applications that exceed 50 MSEK. The committee then presents its recommendations to the agency's Director General.

<sup>50</sup> Sida/SEKA support to Diakonia during 1999–2001 amounted to 179 million SEK. Sida/RELA finances the 2001–2003 application with 180 MSEK.

<sup>51</sup> Diakonia's frame agreement for 2002 amounts to 7 MSEK.

<sup>52</sup> During 2001, Diakonia channeled 4.3 MSEK in humanitarian relief to Latin America. This consisted of nine separate disbursements to El Salvador (earthquakes), two to Honduras (flooding) and one to Peru (earthquake).



It would, however, be interesting if Diakonia could produce one overall annual report including humanitarian assistance, as well as other Sida support with relevance to country programs in Latin America such as financing for information and advocacy via Sida's information department, Sida/INFO. Such a report would provide a more coherent description of their overall activities.

Diakonia has previously discussed the possible advantages of having one overall financial window at Sida as a means of coordinating applications, reporting etc. However, now that Diakonia has succeeded in integrating their activities into one working plan and application, such centralization on Sida's behalf is no longer considered necessary.

### *The roles of SEKA and RELA*

Diakonia and Sida itself express discontent with the partial blurring of the roles between the regional department RELA and the sector department SEKA. There is also a certain lack of coordination between these and other departments regarding Diakonia, leaving few Sida program officers with a macro view of Diakonia's overall work. Although all program officers at different departments working with Diakonia funding<sup>53</sup> take part in an information network that meets once or twice every year, the high staff turnover at Sida has affected the regularity and efficiency of these meetings, as well as limiting institutional memory.

More serious, however, is the fact that the routines and criteria for assessment of Diakonia also vary between the different departments at Sida. While SEKA, as the department specialized in cooperation with NGOs, works according to guidelines for organizational assessment, RELA, as a geographically specialized department, lacks guidelines on how the department should deal with applications from Swedish NGOs.

The evaluation team considers that, in order to more coherently judge the relevance of Diakonia and other support to NGOs, both RELA and SEKA need to more actively seek knowledge and experience from other departments within Sida. One suggestion in this respect is that Diakonia's applications hereafter should be assessed in a joint reference group consisting of representatives from different Sida departments.

In this context, the evaluation endorses the ongoing discussions regarding possible reforms. RELA could take full responsibility for scrutinizing contextual relevance and discussing all overarching programs, while SEKA would be in charge of the organizational control and the financial control of Diakonia. With such a reform the roles of the departments would be clearer and the comparative advantages of the departments would be increased.

At present, Sida/SEKA is developing common criteria for how the entire agency is to deal with applications from Swedish NGOs. The evaluation welcomes this initiative, considering such criteria to be of major importance in order to institutionalize procedures and guarantee the same qualitative assessment at all departments within Sida.

### **3.5.3 Sida's follow up of Diakonia**

Sida's follow up of Diakonia consists of reporting, occasional visits and four meetings per year. These are the annual decision making meeting in Stockholm, the semi-annual consultative meetings in Central and South America, involving field staff within the two organizations, and finally the quarterly meetings between Sida's country field officers and the equivalent at Diakonia.

Currently, the interaction between Sida and Diakonia (and other Swedish NGOs) in Latin America differs from country to country. Although the evaluation team received the impression that the relation-

---

<sup>53</sup> RELA, SEKA/EO, SEKA/Hum, DESO, DESA, AFRA, Asia and Health.



ship between Sida and Diakonia is based on mutual confidence, much could be improved regarding field cooperation. This refers to exchange regarding specific topics (everything from human rights and democracy to auditing), coordination of efforts and mutual learning.

Sida's field staff often applies a macro perspective on regional development and possesses a wide range of contacts that Diakonia does not have access to. Sida should therefore put more effort into building bridges between different development actors, not only Swedish, with the purpose of creating synergy effects *in the functioning of* the overall objectives of Swedish development cooperation. Sida should, for example, promote contacts between Diakonia and employees within the World Bank, the IDB, UN organizations, etc. The objective is not to increase control of Swedish NGOs, but rather to more actively seek common benefits.

In order to avoid confusion on what is expected and of whom, the evaluation finds it necessary for Sida to establish common criteria for field follow up of, and its relationship with, Diakonia. Previous evaluations have recommended that Sida and Diakonia should mutually seek more field coordination in order to complement development efforts<sup>19</sup>. In this respect, the evaluation team finds that although efforts have been made on behalf of both parties, no common criteria appear to have been elaborated.

---

<sup>54</sup> Recommendation No 8 (see pages 7–8).

## 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Diakonia's role in Sweden

Diakonia emphasizes the importance of its '*folkrörelse*' experience when it comes to exchanging experience with its partner organizations in Latin America. Diakonia is not very clear, however, when it comes to describing what this experience consists of and how it is applied in a Latin American context. In order to successfully use this experience as a comparative advantage, Diakonia will need to define it more closely.

There is ample evidence that Diakonia has a lot to offer regarding organizational support based on experience from participation in associations and congregations in Sweden. It would be interesting, and most likely useful for Diakonia, to discuss and systematize this experience in relationship to activities in program countries. The evaluation team also believes that there is room for a more strategic use of experience from the Latin America programs in advocacy and awareness raising work in Sweden.

#### *Recommendation:*

- 1: The evaluation recommends that Diakonia specify more concretely how its '*folkrörelse*' experience is used in relationships with partner organizations in Latin America, and thus assess how this constitutes a comparative advantage for Diakonia.

### 4.2 The relevance of Diakonia's programs in Latin America

The evaluation concludes that Diakonia lacks an adequate theoretical framework. This deficiency has direct impact on several operational levels: program contexts, outlining of the programs, attempts to connect partners, in activities and when identifying beneficiaries of the programs. It also reduces the chances of successfully monitoring and evaluating activities. The evaluation thus believes that Diakonia would benefit considerably from a defined theoretical framework.

In their applications to Sida for the time period evaluated, Diakonia only vaguely links its programs to Swedish development cooperation's overarching goal of poverty reduction. Although Sida has not questioned this paucity in their assessment processes, the evaluation argues that such links must be presented in order to successfully evaluate the results of Diakonia's programs in Latin America.

In order to discuss and decide upon theoretical definitions, Diakonia could, for example, form a reference group consisting of relevant scholars and key members of Diakonia staff. Program officers from other Swedish development organizations could also be invited. Relevant scholars to participate in such a dialogue could, for example, be reached through The Center for Development Studies in Uppsala, and the Latin American Institute in Stockholm.

The bulk of Diakonia's work and support is focused on the NGOs and grassroots organizations in Latin America that form their partner organizations. Diakonia, however, argues that their primary target groups are those who are mobilized or, at least, reached by the activities of these partner organizations. Even though the primary target group thus is the ultimate aim of Diakonia's entire operation, it is imprecisely sketched. There is no stratification analysis whatsoever, which makes it hard to understand the motives for peoples' actions.

Diakonia would benefit from a stratification study of the primary target group. Such a study should be able to answer a number of questions: which economic and social strata exist within the group, how do

the members of the group perceive these differences, is membership in grassroots organizations spread among all strata, is leadership of grassroots organizations spread among all strata, how does strata membership affect gender distinctions, which social tensions exist, if any, between the distinct strata etc.

The evaluation team concludes that the thematic focus of the country programs is highly relevant. Topics such as economic, social and cultural rights, local democracy, gender and institutional strengthening of partners are of almost equal importance in all countries. Others, such as the promotion of a culture of peace and civil and political rights, have a particular relevance in the Colombian context.

The evaluation team believes, however, that there are strong reasons to focus even more on economic and social rights, since these often constitute a basis for the other programs. Such a focus could possibly help Diakonia to concentrate thematic efforts further within the scope of country programs.

Diakonia's strategy to link grassroots and NGOs at different levels is found to be relevant in all countries studied. Currently, however, grassroots organizations constitute a minor part of all partners and there is no general rule or discussion of how the balance between NGOs and grassroots organizations should be managed.

The evaluation argues that Diakonia should continue to have grassroots organizations as partners. In some cases there might even be reasons to consider increasing the number of local grassroots organizations within country programs. The reasons for this broadened support would be manifold: To increase participation among the poor, to increase impact at large among the primary target group and to create links to the poor population. This can then be used as a source of information in order to check if strategies and activities are relevant. However, every country program must be analyzed in its specific context.

The necessity of Diakonia continuing to concentrate country programs should also be reflected in their choice of partner organizations. A considerable number of these organizations have been included in Diakonia's programs for many years. Organizations, which Diakonia sometimes refers to as historical partners, were chosen in entirely different political contexts and long before Diakonia had developed criteria for selection of new partners. Diakonia's links to these partners may sometimes block development within their programs.

A previous monitoring report concluded that Diakonia had little to offer its partner organizations but financial resources<sup>55</sup>. This evaluation team, however, found that a majority of the partners did not share this view. On the contrary, they mentioned a number of contributions in addition to from financial support that Diakonia had to offer.

However, the evaluation also concludes that it is legitimate to question the role of Diakonia, or other Swedish and/or international NGOs, as intermediaries. Theoretically, Sida could support Diakonia's partner organizations without channeling the funds through Diakonia. According to such a perspective, the assessment of Diakonia's added value for partners must be a topic of constant discussion and analysis, within Diakonia, together with Sida and with the partner organizations.

#### *Recommendations:*

- 2: Diakonia is recommended to use analytical theories and concepts that correspond to academic research and writing and thus decide on a common definition for central themes within the field of the organization's activities. It is proposed that Diakonia form a reference group to discuss and develop these theories and concepts in order to improve analysis of contexts, programs, planning and activities per se.

---

<sup>55</sup> Bye (1999).

- 3: As a means of more clearly identifying the beneficiaries of programs, the evaluation recommends that Diakonia carry out a stratification study of the primary target group. Such a study would ideally be implemented in one country in South America and one in Central America.
- 4: It is recommended that Diakonia develop the thematic and methodological relationships between the different country programs. Diakonia is encouraged to seek thematic and methodological expertise outside of the NGO sphere as well inside it.
- 5: It is also recommended that Diakonia assess and specify what the proportion between grassroots organizations and NGOs ideally ought to be. The evaluation team argues that Diakonia, contrary to the current tendency, should often try to increase the number of grassroots partners in country programs.
- 6: Diakonia should carefully scrutinize the role of all the partners in their programs and gently phase out financing of partners who do not fit in the current programs according to Diakonia's own established criteria for selection of partner organizations.
- 7: It is recommended that Diakonia continually assess the organization's added value for partner organizations, as a means of clarifying its identity and role as a northern donor. Discussion on such aspects should be presented in reporting to Sida and form part of ongoing discussion and analysis both within Diakonia and together with partner organizations.

### **4.3 Diakonia's methods and strategies**

The evaluation team is generally positive to Diakonia's ambition and ability to promote networking between regions and countries and inside countries. Promoting networking and cooperation between organizations is no doubt an essential strategy in relationship to Diakonia's objectives. Diakonia would, however, benefit from more elaborated strategies as a means of increasing potential impact. One such strategy could be to more actively seek cooperation with actors outside the traditional sphere of NGOs, such as relevant state institutions.

Diakonia's support to institutional development covers several aspects and is praised by most of its partners. Yet efforts are mostly the result of expressed needs, and not of a generalized strategy for organizational strengthening. The evaluation team suggests that Diakonia should develop such a strategy in order to make more efficient use of resources as well as increase impact.

During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has put considerable effort into developing methods and strategies aimed at increasing the measurability of their programs. These methods include the different baseline studies produced in Central and South America. The evaluation team has concluded that these studies, although commendable as an effort, show deficiencies in different regards. Their methodological basis is in need of further development in order for them to become useful instruments. The evaluation team recommends that Diakonia seek external experience and assistance, for example from research institutions or other development agencies, in their continued methodological development.

However, the evaluation would like to caution Diakonia regarding what is required from partner organizations at this point, so that increased demands for professionalism do not lead to an increase of the number of NGOs in country programs at the expense of grassroots organizations. Diakonia also needs to balance the time spent on development and utilization of planning and other methods in relation to time and effort dedicated to other areas of work.

Cooperation between South and Central America is a new process. The evaluation regards the ongoing efforts to exchange experience and know-how between the regions as a positive means for strengthening

country programs in Latin America. The evaluation also believes that it is worthwhile to contribute to cooperation and exchange between partners organizations in these two, as well as in other regions, so called South-South cooperation.

During the time period evaluated, Diakonia has made an ambitious attempt to mainstream equality issues into all aspects of their activities, and most of this work has been carried out on planning and policy level. In spite of this progress Diakonia's country programs are still not permeated by their gender policy.

Even though Diakonia works in several countries with a high percentage of indigenous peoples, the organization does not give any account of the particular notions of alternative gender systems of indigenous peoples. Diakonia supports partners who incorporate indigenous gender systems and practices in their gender perspective, and Diakonia's staff is aware of these efforts. The evaluation team suggests that Diakonia systematizes its experience of working with ethnic groups using alternative gender systems. This is also an arena where Diakonia could contribute to a dialogue concerning gender systems and practices between ethnic groups from different regions.

#### *Recommendations:*

- 8: It is recommended that Diakonia initiate strategic discussions on strategies and working methods regarding the networks it supports. The evaluation team believes that it would be beneficial to consider including actors outside the traditional NGO-sphere, such as relevant state institutions.
- 9: It is recommended that Diakonia define common strategies and methods of institutional strengthening, as well as an overarching plan on when and how to implement such support. South and Central America should seek to cooperate more closely concerning this issue.
- 10: It is recommended that Diakonia continue development of baseline instruments and other methods for increased measurability. Diakonia's staff should be strengthened with external assistance, for example from research institutions or other development agencies in this field.
- 11: It is recommended that Diakonia systematize its experience of working with ethnic groups that use alternative gender systems. This is also an arena where Diakonia could contribute to a dialogue between ethnic groups from different regions on gender systems and practices.

## **4.4 Diakonia's organizational capacity**

Diakonia has a fairly large field organization, compared to other Swedish development actors working in Latin America. At present there are at least two program officers per country (one Swedish and one local), as well as regional coordinators along with administrative staff. The effectiveness of having all Swedes (with the exception of Colombia) stationed at the regional offices can be questioned.

This organizational model is the result of previous experience where country programs became isolated from one another. The need for coordination and joint planning does not, however, necessarily justify this staff being exclusively Swedish. This is a relevant issue considering that the high turnover of the Swedish staff in Latin America has been described as a problem for many years, and continues to be a complaint stated by many partner organizations since it is perceived to negatively affect the continuity of country programs.

Diakonia faces the challenge of institutionalizing thematic competence and experience within the organization. There do not appear to be any simple solutions as to how to do this, but their strategy should most likely concentrate on building competence at central level and subsequently integrating this into all program levels.

Diakonia is an active and learning organization. The evaluation would, however, like to express concern about the rate in which changes are introduced in Diakonia. There is a risk that processes become too dynamic, thus losing their foothold. Sida should also reflect on how processes of organizational change and development affect overall institutional capacity.

*Recommendations:*

- 12: The evaluation recommends that Diakonia re-assess the need for the relatively high number of Swedish staff in Latin America. Such a discussion should question if Swedes are necessary in relationship to the base in Sweden, and if these relationships should be considered as more important than the continuity of country programs.
- 13: It is recommended that Diakonia examine how thematic capacity could be further strengthened within the organization. One possibility could, for example, be to promote distance studies among staff in complementary areas such as evaluation methodology, municipal democracy, human rights etc.

## **4.5 The relationship between Diakonia and Sida**

Even though both Sida and Diakonia appear to be basically satisfied with the present system of financial support to programs in Latin America, there are reasons to consider certain adjustments. Currently, financial support to Diakonia is fragmented and role sharing between the different departments at Sida somewhat unclear.

The evaluation endorses ongoing discussion within Sida, suggesting that RELA take full responsibility for scrutinizing and discussing the contents and relevance of the overarching programs, while SEKA would be in charge of organizational assessment of Diakonia and financial control. Such a reform would most probably clarify the roles of the departments and would increase their comparative advantages.

Sida has recently allowed Diakonia to present one overall application for program activities in Latin America, as well as one overall annual report. To increase coherence even further, it would be desirable if Diakonia could include funds for humanitarian assistance from the department for humanitarian assistance, SEKA/Hum, as well as costs for information and advocacy activities in Sweden or elsewhere concerning Latin America, as financed by Sida/INFO. The purpose would be to present one overall report for Latin America, including all direct and indirect financing and costs.

Sida is acknowledged for establishing the forum for program officers from different departments who have dealings with Diakonia. Considering that the high turnover of staff at Sida has affected the regularity and efficiency of these meetings, it would be desirable that each program officer recruits a substitute, so that at least two individuals from each department has working knowledge of ongoing discussions, etc.

Routines and criteria for assessment of Diakonia vary between the different departments at Sida. While SEKA, as the department specialized in cooperation with NGOs, works according to established guidelines for organizational assessment, RELA lacks guidelines on how the department should deal with applications from Swedish NGOs.

The evaluation has found that there is a lack of clarity regarding Sida's criteria for follow-up of Diakonia's program countries at field level. The evaluation team concludes, as previous evaluations have also stated, that Diakonia and Sida should mutually seek to improve this coordination and exchange of experience in order to establish complementary roles in overall Swedish development cooperation.

#### *Recommendations:*

- 14: In order to more coherently judge the relevance of Diakonia's applications, it is recommended that Sida/RELA and Sida/SEKA more actively seek knowledge and experience from other departments within Sida. One suggestion in this respect is that Diakonia's applications hereafter should be assessed in a joint reference group with representatives from different relevant Sida departments.
- 15: It is recommended that Sida/RELA and Sida/SEKA pursue discussions on the responsibilities of the two departments regarding financing of Swedish NGOs. This issue should be considered a priority, as the lack of clearly defined roles may affect the quality of assessments of Diakonia and other NGOs.
- 16: Instead of presenting different reports for different areas within their Latin American programs, it is recommended that Diakonia submit one comprehensive annual report to Sida, including funds for humanitarian assistance from SEKA/Hum, as well as costs for information and advocacy activities relevant to Latin America, as financed by Sida/INFO.
- 17: The program officers at the different Sida departments that constitute the Diakonia group are recommended to recruit a substitute, so that at least two individuals from each department possess working knowledge of ongoing discussions, etc.
- 18: It is recommended that Sida, in collaboration with Diakonia, clarify and further develop criteria for field follow-up and relationships between Sida and Diakonia.
- 19: With the purpose of improving the complementary impact of Sweden's overall development cooperation in Latin America, the evaluation recommends that the following three levels of dialogue should exist between Sida and Diakonia at program country level:
  - a) Joint ongoing analysis of the political situation and its consequences for international cooperation, including a discussion on the areas projects and activities should be directed to, according to Sweden's overall development cooperation goals.
  - b) Experience exchange within different areas of cooperation with relevance to the country. Sida, with greater resources and more contacts should, more than is currently the case, offer Diakonia (and other Swedish NGOs) contacts and experience in order to provide Diakonia and its partners with a broader perspective. Examples of such useful contacts are Swedish authorities and other international actors such as the IDB and the World Bank.
  - c) On a technical and administrative level it is urgent that Sida and Diakonia discuss and share planning and monitoring methods (for instance baseline data and indicators) in relationship to projects oriented towards human rights, peace and democracy. This could be promoted through workshops, with the participation of Sida's own experts and perhaps with other donors who possess relevant knowledge on how to assess and measure impact in these areas.

## **4.6 General observations**

Considering that this evaluation does not attempt to measure results in relationship to stipulated program goals<sup>2</sup> it would be desirable that Sida and Diakonia, schedule an impact study and specify how the terms of reference should be elaborated. Such an evaluation should, preferably, be limited to one program country and follow the entire vertical chain, from the national NGO level to grassroots and finally study scope and impact among the primary target group. The role played by Diakonia could then be scrutinized closely.



Paraguay was not studied by this evaluation although Diakonia is a large donor and important development actor in this country. More knowledge on Diakonia's role in Paraguay could be in the interest of Sida/SEKA, considering that this department has financed Diakonia's program in Paraguay for several years, along with the fact that Diakonia is one of the few NGOs working with human rights and gender issues. It will therefore be most likely that Diakonia's role can be assessed on a country level. Sida should consider carrying out a case study or documentation of some sort on Diakonia's role in Paraguay.

*Recommendation:*

20. Sida is recommended to commission an impact study of Diakonia's activities during the next period of financing, 2004–2006.

In conclusion, Diakonia has during the last few years been subject to several evaluation processes and subsequent recommendations. As this report has detailed, Diakonia has learned from previous findings and shown capacity to improve and develop its overall work. Although results may vary, the will has by no doubt been genuine.

When this evaluation recommends changes or actions in order to help resolve shortcomings, consideration has only roughly been taken to Diakonia's current personal and financial resources. The evaluation team has not reflected upon the period of time that is required to accomplish these recommendations. It is, of course, up to Diakonia in dialogue with Sida to interpret these recommendations and decide upon which priorities they will make.

---

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion, please refer to the section on Limitations, pp 5-6.

# Annex 1

## Terms of Reference: Description of Assignment to Evaluate the Programme Of Diakonia in Latin America

### 1. Description of Sida

Sida is the Swedish government agency for bilateral international development cooperation and most of Sweden's cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. The Parliament and Government decide on the development cooperation budget, the countries where Sweden shall have programmes of development cooperation and the focus of cooperation.

Sida supports activities in almost 120 countries, including the partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Most of the resources are allocated to the twenty or so countries with which Sida has extensive, long-term programmes of cooperation. The framework of cooperation is specified in special country strategies and regulated in agreements between Sida and the government of each partner country.

Sida's contributions are based on the changes the partner countries wish to implement and are prepared to allocate funds to. Sida's task is to assess the type of contributions that can give results and then to provide the know-how and capital required. Each contribution is carefully studied and evaluated. Sida's support to any project ceases as soon as the project is able to operate independently of Sida funding. Less successful projects should be concluded rapidly rather than revised.

Sida operates through some 1,500 partners in cooperation, mostly Swedish. These are companies, popular movements, organisations, universities and government agencies that possess the expertise to make Swedish development cooperation successful.

In the long run Swedish development cooperation should lead to better living conditions for poor people.

For more information, please see Sida's homepage: [www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)

### 2. Background

During the three-year period 2001–2003, Sida/RELA is financing Diakonia's programme for co-operation with 72 organisations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, for a total amount of 180 MSEK. The activities financed by RELA are part of a bigger programme, where Sida/SEKA also contributes resources on a yearly basis. Sida/SEKA support to Swedish NGOs is granted on condition the NGOs contribute at least 20 percent of the programme budget. The SEKA support to Diakonia during the period 1999–2001 amounted to 179 million SEK. The SEKA grant for 2002 amounts to 66 million SEK.

The programme is focused on promotion of democratic structures and a democratic culture, characterised by gender equality, on a local level. The projects aim towards local development and popular participation in democratic processes, respect for human rights and a strengthened civil society with an increased participation in society. An important part of the programme is the development of co-operation and exchange of experiences between Diakonia's partner organisations, within the countries, but also between countries and between regions.

#### 2.1 Development Goals

The objectives of the Diakonia programme coincide with many of the priorities in Sida's strategies for the countries in question and Sida's different action programmes.

The regional strategies for Central- and South America, and the country strategies for Bolivia and Nicaragua, as well as the action programmes for poverty reduction and for peace, democracy and human rights, all emphasise concepts such as *popular participation and the role of civil society*, especially in relation to public institutions at the local level.

Other common aspects are *conflict management and reconciliation, human rights (not least of indigenous peoples and women), gender equality, internally displaced persons, municipal administration and women's participation in political processes*, all areas where the Diakonia programme coincides with the Swedish policies.

These policies also point out the importance of the Swedish non-governmental organisations in supporting the civil society and recommend that an important part of this support be channelled through Swedish organisations, especially organisations with a long term commitment and presence in the countries.

The over all assessment has been that the Diakonia programme is consistent with the strategies and action programmes mentioned. An important motive for the choice of Diakonia as a partner, has been that a support to the programme in Latin America implicates a higher degree of fulfilment of Swedish development goals.

## 2.2 Comparative Advantages

In the assessment of the Diakonia programme, the following comparative advantages were identified:

Diakonia has built the programme parting from a strategy in each country. An important component is exchange of experiences and co-ordination between different partner organisations. The networking is both national and regional. Apart from this, Diakonia has activities in Sweden that can be linked to the Latin American work. The following aspects have been considered in choosing Diakonia as a partner:

Diakonia stems from and is an expression of the Swedish popular movement. It is an asset to have experiences from the construction of the modern Swedish democracy.

After thirty years, Diakonia has a net of contacts in Latin America and in other parts of the world, that can serve as an arena for co-ordination between actors.

Diakonia is engaged in important information and opinion creation projects in Sweden and in Europe. Information from the work in the South serves as a basis for this.

Diakonia is close to the organisations in their daily work and creates meeting spaces for reflection and co-ordination.

Diakonia's partner organisations participate in the planning and development of the common work, in line with the objective of partnership in the development co-operation.

## 3. Purpose and Objective

The objective of the evaluation is to analyse how the Diakonia programme in Latin America coincides with the Sida strategies and action programmes. Special emphasis should be put on Diakonia's comparative advantages, in comparison with other possible development actors.

## 4. Description of the Assignment

The evaluation shall study the Diakonia programme in Latin America, financed by RELA and SEKA (both SEKA/EO and SEKA/HUM), during the years 1999–2001

The following areas should be covered by the evaluation:

#### *4.1 Diakonia as part of Swedish Popular Movement and as an Actor in Development Co-operation*

- What is Diakonia's role within the popular movement in Sweden?
- In what way does this role influence Diakonia as a development co-operation actor?
- In what way does it influence the elaboration of Diakonia's programme in Latin America?
- In what way do Diakonia and its partner organisations complement other Swedish development co-operation in the region? Other, including international, development actors?
- Is Diakonia capable of linking the programme in Latin America to the information and opinion building work in Sweden?

#### *4.2 The Objectives And Contextual Relevance Of The Programme*

- To what extent does Diakonia's programme in Latin America coincide with Sida's action programmes and strategies in the region?
- How is the Diakonia programme constructed? Is the focus directed towards relevant aspects and areas? Is the programme relevant in its context?
- Which is the logic behind the combination of partner organisations, reference groups, platforms and the problem analysis in the programme?
- What are the methodological and thematic relations between the different country programmes?
- Does the Diakonia programme contribute with something of "aggregated value" to the partner organisations?
- Which is the strategy to reach a balance between NGOs and grass- root organisations as partners? Is this strategy relevant?

#### *4.3 Methods and Strategies*

- Do partner organisations find it meaningful and efficient to participate in the planning and elaboration of the programme?
- To what extent does Diakonia promote networking? Is this relevant in relation to the objectives?
- Are the methods that Diakonia uses adequate in order to strengthen partner organisations and increase the quality and the fulfilment of results and objectives?
- Are the methods for monitoring and follow-up of the programme (reports, base-line studies, visits, etc) adequate?
- Does the inter-regional co-operation between Central- and South America contribute to a stronger programme?

#### *4.4 Organisation in Function of Objectives, Results and Strategies*

- Is Diakonia's organisation in Latin America (country offices, regional offices, head quarters) structured in a relevant way in order to achieve the objectives?
- Does Diakonia have sufficient competence and resources to comply with the role as an actor, thematically and methodologically?
- Is Diakonia taking advantage of the network of partner organisations in an adequate way? Is Diakonia well organised in order to do so?
- Is Diakonia a learning organisation? Are there proofs that Diakonia has drawn conclusions from experiences and changed the future work?
- How can the institutional memory of Diakonia be described?

#### 4.5 Follow-up of results

Diakonia is in the process of developing methods for monitoring and follow up on programme level. It should, however, be possible to estimate results in a sample of projects, using an approach that is not too time consuming, in order to have an indication of the level of accomplishment. The evaluation team shall decide on methods and approach after consultations with Sida and Diakonia.

#### 4.6 Relations to Sida

- Is it efficient for Sida and Diakonia, that Diakonia has three, or more windows in Sida for support in Latin America? Is the relation between Diakonia and Sida sufficiently transparent?
- What is the difference, if any, between Diakonia projects financed by different departments in Sida?

#### 4.7 Recommendations

- What are the evaluations team's recommendations to Diakonia and to Sida?

### 5. Method

- The evaluation shall part from earlier monitoring and evaluation reports (Cuellar-Martínez 1997, Boesen 2000, Bye 2000, Systemrevision 2000) and their recommendations.
- When planning the evaluation methods, gender aspects should be part of all areas.
- To get a wider range of questions covered, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on different aspects in the different regions. The evaluation team shall suggest aspects after consultations with Sida and Diakonia.
- The focus of the evaluation should be on the programme in relation to the regional context, rather than on comparisons between the regions.
- Interviews should be made with the following persons/actors:
  - Other actors in the regions, such as agencies, embassies, etc
  - National actors from civil society and public sector
  - Partner organisations
  - Diakonia's field representatives, both Swedish and national
  - Diakonia's headquarters
- The evaluators will have the opportunity to participate in seminars, field visits and annual meetings.
- Both Sida and Diakonia will expect to be consulted by the evaluators during the evaluation process.

### 6. Specification of Requirements

#### 6.1 Requirements

The tenderer shall possess the compulsory requirements below.

##### 6.1.1 Quality in performance of the Assignment

The tenderer **shall** account for his/her *understanding of the assignment* in his/her/own words

The tenderer **shall** clearly and concretely specify and motivate the *approach and methods* to be applied in performing of the assignment, including those employed in the various task of the assignment

The tenderer **shall** state how the assignment is to be organised.

The tenderer **shall** provide a detailed *time and work plan* for fulfilment of the assignment, a) a manning schedule that specifies the tasks performed by and the time allocated to each of the team members, and b) estimates of the time required for the *different tasks of the assignment*.

### 6.1.2 Staff resources for Performance of the Assignment

The personnel proposed by the tenderer **shall** possess relevant professional degree or equivalent theoretical and practical qualifications in relation to experience of assignments within the field of civil society development co-operation, especially as to human rights and democracy projects. The personnel proposed **shall** have performed at least two assignments of similar character.

Among the personnel proposed at least one **shall** have documented knowledge and experience of work with the Swedish popular movement, but **shall not** have participated in Diakonia's programme.

Among the personnel proposed at least one **shall** have documented knowledge and experience in the areas of gender related evaluations.

The personnel proposed **shall** have very good knowledge of written and spoken Spanish and English. At least one person in the team must be fluent in Swedish.

Exchange of proposed personnel can only be made according to conditions stated in the draft contract, Appendix B.

The tenderer **shall** submit the following documents/information:

- a) Confirmation that above requirements are fulfilled by the tenderer
- b) Specification of qualification of each and every one of the persons/sub-contractors provided by the tenderer and a Curriculum Vitae for each and every one. The persons in question certifying the correctness of the information shall sign their CVs.
- c) The tenderer and the proposed personnel shall show prior experience from similar assignments executed in up to the two preceding years and at least two references whose names and telephone numbers shall be stated and the persons in question ought to have been notified.

### *6.2 Price and Other Commercial Conditions*

The tenderer **shall** present a budget, which differentiates between and proposes ceilings for *fees and reimbursable costs*, specified for the different elements of the assignment and for the different staff categories.

Total estimated cost/price **shall** be stated. All fees **shall** be stated hourly. All costs **shall** be stated in SEK, exclusive of Swedish VAT, but including all other taxes and levies. Individuals (natural person) however **shall** state their fee exclusive of social contributions.

The tenderer **shall** state and specify any minor reservations as to the draft contract and Sida's General Commercial Conditions for Service Tasks, issue 1999 (*and/or Sida's Standard Conditions for Short Term Consulting Services, issue of 1998*) and propose alternative wordings, which **shall** however not lead to material changes of the present draft contract and conditions.

### *6.3 Preferred Qualifications (Requests)*

The tenderer **should** possess the requests below.

There **should** be gender balance in the team.

It **should** be possible to conclude a contract to be effective as from May 31, 2002.

It **should** be possible to commence the Assignment on or before June 13, 2002, so that the evaluation team could present its work plan for the personnel of Diakonia in a half-day meeting, on June 13, 2002.

Field visits **should** be planned for during the months August to October 2002.

A preliminary report **should** be presented in November. The final report should be presented by the evaluation team to Diakonia and Sida in two one-day seminars in La Paz and Tegucigalpa respectively, during the first week of December 2002.

The report **should** be written in English and not exceed 40 pages. An executive summary, not exceeding 4 pages, should be presented in both English and Spanish.



## Annex 2

### Terminology used by Diakonia and its theoretical definitions

#### The concept of civil society

The concept ‘civil society’ is used abundantly in Diakonia’s applications, reports and other documents. Diakonia states that it uses “a pragmatic definition”<sup>1</sup> of the concept: civil society is regarded as a counterweight to state power, it is intrinsically pluralistic, and it contributes to the formation and distribution of a democratic political culture<sup>2</sup>. In practice Diakonia, however, appears to erase all other actors except grassroots organizations and so-called intermediary NGOs<sup>3</sup> from the realms of civil society. This overarching definition does not present the movements, segments, clusters and loose networks that are constructed within this wide and vague frame.

One negative consequence of Diakonia’s abundant use of the concept is that it functions primarily as a normative and ideological vehicle and not as an analytical tool. Diakonia’s utilization of the term has the effect of making all its cooperating partners appear as part of a democratic sphere as opposed to the bureaucratic and non-representative state. NGOs and grassroots organizations in Latin America, however, often lack democratically elected boards. By embracing all sorts of organizations in the realm of the concept ‘civil society’ Diakonia may thus, in other words, legitimate both its own position and the positions and roles of the various partners by alleging that they are part of the most vital democratic sphere of society, even if specific organizations are run in an authoritarian manner. Diakonia’s usage of the concept ‘civil society’ thus poses more questions than it answers.

The evaluation team therefore suggests that Diakonia utilize more specific and elaborate concepts, which the team believes would improve the analysis of both the overarching political context and the so called organized civil sector. Such an elaboration would hopefully benefit the composition of country programs, overarching objectives and cooperation with partner organizations.

#### Defining political opportunities

Even though Diakonia states that every country program must be analyzed in its specific context, the organization is quite vague when it comes to defining these contexts. The evaluation team suggests that Diakonia outlines the political ‘opportunity structure’ more clearly. This is of vital importance in order to understand the emergence and success of both social movements and specific organizations.

The political opportunity structure can informally be described as the space for political maneuver that is available to the movements and the organizations. In order to assess these opportunity structures the differential access by citizens to political institutions such as legislatures, bureaucracies and courts must

---

<sup>1</sup> “When Diakonia defines civil society it is most important to analyze those parts of the society, apart from the state and its agencies, which are important actors in the strengthening of democracy. It then mainly focuses concerns on actors at the local level and it might in some cases also be actors in the market. /.../ Diakonia considers this perhaps rather pragmatic definition of civil society as the most useful” (Diakonia’s application to Sida/RELA for 2001–2003. South and Central America). This can hardly be called a definition at all, and the important question is what Diakonia intends to gain or to legitimize by referring to it.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Keane 1988.

<sup>3</sup> The leadership of intermediary NGOs, tends to be run by middle class academics who work with, and represent, individuals who belong to strata with less economic, social and cultural capital. Grassroots organizations, on the other hand, are run by leaders who belong (or initially belonged) to the same social stratum as their target group. Diakonia’s utilization of the concept “civil society” as a synonym to the arena of NGOs and grassroots organizations implicitly omits other actors that often are regarded as part of civil society, such as households and the actors in the market.

be taken into account. It is also beneficial to observe changes in formal or informal political power relations over time<sup>4</sup>.

It is the belief of the evaluation team that Diakonia should select a number of criteria to analyze in order to be able to define the framework of the political opportunity structure. Diakonia states that it aims at exchanging experiences between countries and regions. A more elaborate description of the specific political opportunity structure would be of great importance in order to analyze which projects and activities are restricted to specific country contexts and which are of a more general nature.

### **Sustainable networks**

Diakonia places emphasis on connecting partners and networks of various kinds. The organization does not outline, however, the identities, values and resources that function as potential and real cogs within these connections. An adequate theoretical framework of organization would facilitate Diakonia's ability to identify existing patterns and connections as well as the support it provides in order to create sustainable connections and networks. It would hopefully also enable Diakonia to search for, and select, suitable partner organizations.

Structures and organizations in Latin America are different from the Swedish case. The organizational sphere in Latin America is dominated by small, bounded organizations that often are part of loose networks, and that form overarching social movements which can mobilize around certain issues and articulate specific identities<sup>5</sup>. In academic research these movements are mostly labeled "new social movements" and may consist of the women's movement, the Afro-Colombian movement, the indigenous movement, the movement for human rights and so on. It is important to understand that the organizations that make up these movements may consist of both NGOs and grassroots organizations, that they may have distinct political agendas, and that it is necessary to outline their network and discourses in order to detect encompassing patterns.

The partners that Diakonia supports are related both to overarching social movements and to its so called 'primary target groups'. Diakonia's description of how its programs relates to both these levels is diffusely sketched, however. If the effects of the embracing themes and the aggregated measures of the social movements are to have a chance to be detected and reflected upon, it is essential to link programs and evaluation to such a theoretical framework<sup>6</sup>.

Diakonia also displays a tendency to portray movements and clusters of organizations as being more coherent and homogenous than is often the case. There is a large dose of competitiveness and rivalry for resources and political space both between social movements and, especially, between organizations inside these movements. In fact, many of these social movements often are notoriously ephemeral and fractionalized<sup>7</sup>, manifest major discrepancies among leaders and between leaders and supporters<sup>8</sup>, and, as John Burdick<sup>9</sup> points out, rarely attract more than a minority of the constituencies they claim to represent.

### **Popular participation**

Another theoretical problem is the lack of a discussion of the reasons why actors become mobilized and participate in organizations of various kinds. The reasons, for example, for participation in different

---

<sup>4</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. *States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements*. From *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*.

<sup>5</sup> Escobar 2000, Touraine 1981.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Edelman 2001, Escobar and Alvarez 1992, 1998, Touraine 1981, Melucci 1989, McAdam et al 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Brecher et al 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Edelman 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Burdick 1998.

human rights organizations may vary greatly and without such discussions it will be hard to understand both the popularity of certain organizations and movements and their inability to attract followers. Diakonia's promotion of certain themes would benefit from an attempt to understand the motives and actions of the primary target groups. The evaluation team has not encountered any such discussion.

An essential part of social movements is constituted by the collective identity that can be found in their emergence, trajectories and outcomes. These identities, however, do not necessarily need to have crystallized initially but are often strengthened during their process of development. Poletta and Jasper define collective identity as an individual's cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice or institution<sup>10</sup>. It will be interesting for Diakonia to find out, and identify, the relationships between interest and identity, strategy and identity and politics and identity, in order to analyze the objectives, strategies and actions of their partners and their participants. Such analysis will, hopefully, also contribute to illustrating how and on what grounds different partners may be connected.

An emphasis on collective identities will also facilitate the understanding of the type of claims organizations make, which categories of members are recruited by the organizations, their process of strategic and tactical decision making and, consequently, which organizations are suited for cooperation. If an organization that focuses on one of Diakonia's major themes is founded, for example, an analysis of collective identity may make it easier to understand which categories of people will join in, how the message of the organization might be revised to recruit other categories and which strategies the organization ought to choose to avoid widespread abandonment.

Research demonstrates that collective identities play a major role in both mobilizing and sustaining participation, but as mentioned above they can also help to comprehend the exodus from organizations and movements. As Echols and Robnett<sup>11</sup> have demonstrated, one of the main causes of the decline of a movement is that its collective identity no longer corresponds to a certain movement. Why do people at a certain point begin believing that an organization or a movement no longer represents them? One such example could be the waning support for the human rights movement among the poor in the shantytowns of Lima.

Gamson<sup>12</sup> distinguishes between the solidary, organizational and movement identities, where an organizational identity involves loyalty to a single organization and its fellow members. Others may identify more broadly with its objectives and specific strategies. Thus an organization on human rights in a shantytown may attract followers mainly because of friendship, kinship and other types of alliances to the leadership of the organization, meaning that a change of leadership or a dismantling of the organization will make these people lose their interest in the human rights movement as a whole. Such changes can lead to great deception of development organizations that believe that the popularity of organizations is primarily centered on its messages.

---

<sup>10</sup> Poletta, Francesa and Jasper, James M. 2001. Collective Identity and Social Movements. From *Annual Review of Sociology*, No 27: 283–305.

<sup>11</sup> Echols, A. 1989. *Daring to be Bad*. Minneapolis. Minneapolis University Press. Robnett, B. 1997. *How long? How long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>12</sup> Gamson, WA. 1991. Commitment and agency in social movements. From *Sociological Forum*, No 6: 27–50.

## Annex 3

### Description of country programs

A brief description of the country programs studied is presented below, together with a general assessment of the relevance of the scope of activities in relationship to the development context in each country. The development context is here understood as the problem analysis presented in Sida's country strategies, and Diakonia's applications to Sida. Nicaragua and Paraguay are not mentioned here, as the evaluation team did not visit these countries.

<b>Bolivia (regional office for South America)</b>	
Description of partners	Currently 16 partners, but Diakonia would like to expand in Bolivia.
Main focus of program	The program focuses on local democracy, gender, ESC rights and strengthening grassroots organizations among the indigenous population.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	The evaluation team found the Diakonia program highly relevant in Bolivia where poverty and various forms of oppression are conspicuous. To support different activities with the objective of strengthening fruitful collaboration between representatives of organized civil society and the authorities is certainly a precondition for sustainable development. Moreover, several partners have successfully improved the situation for women in different ways by making the authorities aware of the importance of popular participation in the development process in general, and of female participation in particular. The main shortcoming of the program, according to the partners, is the low level of attention financial and financially related issues have been paid so far. Almost all partners asked for more support for auditing, budgeting, etc.

<b>Peru</b>	
Description of partners	Approximately 16 partners.
Main focus of program	The program focuses on democracy, human rights and gender.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	The Diakonia program has been highly relevant in Peru where Fujimori's authoritarian regime fell in the year 2000, partly because of resistance from different human right organizations supported by Diakonia. These advances have unfortunately not been accompanied by any progress in the standard of living for the majority of the population. At the same time as political violence has decreased and human rights are in focus, at least in the political discourse, domestic violence has increased due to the economic turnaround. This ought to be a lesson for Diakonia to learn. Advances in Human Rights and Democracy are not worth much unless they are accompanied by economic progress. Most partner organizations asked for more valid support from Diakonia in different matters related to their financial reality.

<b>Colombia</b>	
Description of partners	Approximately 20, of which three are coalitions, two indigenous movements, one Afro-Colombian movement, one women's organization and the remaining professional human rights NGOs.
Main focus of program	The program emphasis is on the promotion of a culture of peace and civil and political rights.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	<p>The promotion of peace is a highly relevant issue in Colombia. It includes targeting the root causes of the conflict and is, thereby, related to all the other thematic areas and a prerequisite for the long-term transformation of the Colombian society. During the last few years, the Colombian civil society has, to an increasing extent, organized itself into different human rights and peace networks and coalitions in order to promote a negotiated solution to the armed conflict. It is vital to support this movement for several reasons. It increases the possibilities of participation in politics by popular sectors which have historically been marginalized. It also promotes tolerance and concrete cooperation between development actors within the fragmented and deeply polarized civil society.</p> <p>As Colombia is a country of gross and systematic violations of fundamental civil and political rights, this thematic area is also very relevant. Deep structural inequalities were one of the main causes of the armed conflict and are one of the reasons for its continuation. This is one of the main reasons why economic, social and cultural rights are very important in the Colombian context. Institutional strengthening and local democracy are highly relevant issues as well. Both areas, however, seem to be conceptually fairly weakly developed in Colombia. Gender is a mainstreaming area. Work on it has started during the last few years so the area is not yet very well developed.</p>

<b>El Salvador (regional office for Central America)</b>	
Description of partners	Approximately 16 partners, of which most are NGOs working with development and democracy issues at municipal level. Two can be characterized as grassroots organizations.
Main focus of program	Main focus is on democratic development at local and municipal level, combined with lobby efforts at national level. Gender is also a focal point.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	<p>The local and municipal levels continue to be dynamic areas for development of democracy in El Salvador. This is where people are able to make a difference, and it is also where democratic institutions are most underdeveloped, thus limiting citizen participation. Most of Diakonia's partner organizations focus on activities aimed at strengthening local authorities, municipal leaders and promotion of different types of local development. Such efforts are combined with lobbying at national level in order to influence the legislative process, policy regarding decentralization etc.</p> <p>The evaluation team received the impression that, although the decentralization debate may have lost some of its previous momentum on the national scene, the situation is quite the reverse at local and municipal levels where innovative development efforts are being carried out by both Diakonia-financed partner organizations and others. Together with actions to increase women's participation, their strategy demonstrates high relevance in relationship to the development context in El Salvador.</p>

<b>Guatemala</b>	
Description of partners	Approximately 20 partners, of which the majority are professional development NGOs.
Main focus of program	Focus has been on strengthening sectors within organized civil society by means of coordination on issues of common interest, such as the follow-up of the peace accords.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	<p>The situation regarding democratic reform and respect for human rights is becoming increasingly difficult in Guatemala. Societal processes following the peace agreement in 1996 have been characterized by turmoil in which development actors have been constantly forced to redefine positions. However, social movements, NGOs, ethnic groups and other organizations comprising organized civil society, continue to be weak and poorly coordinated and politicized. Their overall capacity to formulate proposals is low, as is their knowledge of strategies and methods for working with advocacy and public opinion building.</p> <p>Diakonia's partner organizations are many in number and widely spread both geographically and thematically. The program appears to lack a stringent and overall strategy to hold the partner organizations, and their efforts, together. The evaluation team found that the program in Guatemala is in need of strategic redefinition and concentration. Diakonia acknowledges the problems encountered and expresses that discussions on the program's future are underway.</p>

<b>Honduras</b>	
Description of partners	Approximately 11 partners, of which one is an international platform, one national network, three grassroots organizations, one human rights organization and the rest professional development NGOs.
Main focus of program	Main focus is on strengthening democracy at local and municipal levels, complemented with lobby efforts on national and international levels.
Relevance in relationship to the development context	<p>In the aftermath of reconstruction after hurricane Mitch, the Diakonia program strategy has been focused on development efforts at local and municipal levels. Municipal governments are often poorly organized and local authorities lack both financing and democratic experience. Diakonia therefore supports organizations, both grassroots and NGOs, which work to strengthen participation and capacity at local and municipal levels. This is combined with support to national NGOs that lobby on issues such as debt relief and decentralization as necessary components for poverty reduction. Diakonia's strategy of emphasizing strengthening of local democracy and citizen participation is highly relevant in the country's development context.</p> <p>The Honduras program is still under construction and their ambition is to grow to a total of 12-15 partner organizations. Several of Diakonia's partner organizations are well known and well established organizations that receive support from many donors. Several people interviewed, both partner organizations and others, commented that Diakonia would stand to gain by more strategic discussion among the partner organizations themselves on the future direction of the program. Several partner organizations commented that they were not sure what role they were expected to play within the program, in relation to the other partner organizations etc.</p>

## Annex 4

### Discussion on stratification

As mentioned in section 3.2.1, the evaluation team advocates that Diakonia should carry out a stratification analysis. The team further suggests that such an analysis be based on the three fundamental types of capital that Pierre Bourdieu promotes: economic capital (that is, income, assets, etc), cultural capital (formal and informal education and knowledge) and social capital (membership of, and access to, social alliances of various forms).

By using these three criteria it is possible to roughly outline different strata that have both analytical and operative value. The strata discerned could subsequently be utilized as the basis of an evaluation of participation and the effects of the projects among Diakonia's primary target group.

From which strata, for example, do the individuals who participate in different grassroots organizations come? Is it possible to trace any common pattern of social connection among the leaders and is there a difference in strata between leaders and common members?

Such a stratification analysis may have great value in determining patterns of participation; who participates, which individuals from what strata are more inclined to participate in specific grassroots organizations. The evaluation team believes that there might be considerable differences in the potential for mobilization and organization of individuals from distinct strata.

Furthermore, most residents of shantytowns have their own definition of the stratification in their environment. Nancy Scheper-Hughes<sup>13</sup>, for example, has described how upper and middle class Brazilians in the small town of Bom Jesus da Mata in Northeastern Brazil classify all poor people as belonging to an undifferentiated mass, literally called the poor ones, *os pobres*. The *pobres* themselves, however, made finer distinctions, subdividing themselves into three strata; the poor (*os pobres*) who survive on their own resources and, according to their own definition, even can afford to help people financially who are worse off than themselves. The key concept here is that they regard themselves as possessing self-respect, because they can survive on their own or their family's income. Their financial classification is merged with a moral classification as well.

The second category is the poorer ones (*os pobreziños*). They survive from day to day on all kinds of casual work. According to the residents themselves, what really separates *os pobreziños* from the category above is that they are dependent on individuals or groups outside their network of kin; if an unforeseen accident happens, such as illness, they have to rely on charity and the only way they can succeed is through attaching themselves to a powerful patron<sup>14</sup>. At the bottom of the social ranks are the very poor (*os pobretões*), the ones who have almost no possessions and often have to beg to survive. These are even more dependent on others than *os pobreziños*, and this apparently deprives them of all self-respect. Only this last category could be labeled as 'marginalized', according to the criterion of Janice Perlman<sup>15</sup>. It is interesting to note that Scheper-Hughes' informant who belongs to the category of *os pobres*, maintains that her class, in many ways, is better off than the middle class<sup>16</sup>, *because they regard themselves as*

---

<sup>13</sup> Scheper, Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death Without Weeping*.

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that the person who categorizes the poor in Scheper-Hughes (1993: 84-86) study defines herself as belonging to the poor (*os pobres*). It would have been interesting to see if the other class fractions share her definition.

<sup>15</sup> Perlman, Janice. 1976. *The Myth of Marginality*.

<sup>16</sup> By "middle class", the informant means more affluent persons than herself, who live in better-off residential areas (Scheper-Hughes 1992).



*more independent*. Independence thus seems to be the most crucial factor in their social ranking. The informant also emphasizes that among *os pobres* the whole family has to cooperate to survive, which indicates that it is socially appropriate to be dependent on close kin.

That strata distinctions are much more complicated for the individuals themselves than mere income distribution is also stressed by Cecilia MacCallum<sup>17</sup> in her study of a poor neighborhood in the Brazilian city Salvador. Informants who MacCallum herself classified as "poor" identified themselves as middle class. She came to understand, however, that the use of the concept "middle class" in this context was referring to their position inside their residential area, which meant that this group actually defined themselves as occupying an intermediary social position. Categorizations were also made according to housing standards and the ability to feed the family. The categorization based on dependency of people that were not kin could also be found here, even if it did not seem to be as salient as in Bom Jesus da Mata.

To understand how economic conditions affect social life, how they are perceived culturally must be analyzed. One criterion that appears even more important than income levels for people in the shantytowns even for the poorest strata, when it comes to self-esteem and defining their position in the social hierarchy is consumption. According to Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood<sup>18</sup> goods make visible statements about the hierarchy of values to which their buyers subscribe. Goods chosen or not chosen provide a possibility to discard norms and values of consumers. The goods themselves are neutral, but their uses are social; or as Douglas and Isherwood stated, they can either be used as fences or bridges between people. Different types and levels of consumption serve as overt indicators of social identity and function as signs of social distinction. If the importance of consumption increases in different settings, this will probably also affect the extension and density of social networks.

In order to make a stratification analysis it would be beneficial to construct an external analysis according to specific objective criteria, and to complement this model with the residents' own estimation of stratification. The latter type informs us of how the poor culturally negotiate and articulate the divisions within their own society. It tells us which values and norms of stratification that the residents find most important themselves. Furthermore such studies may also demonstrate tensions and conflicts among the primary target group which may have detrimental effects on projects in the area.

It is the belief of the evaluation team that stratification analysis would contribute to improve the planning of projects and to measurement of impacts. Such an analysis also entails a more participatory approach than base-line studies, however.

---

<sup>17</sup> MacCallum, Cecilia. 1995. Race, Class, and Gender in Northeast Brazil. Salvador: Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. 1979. The World of Goods: towards an anthropology of consumption.

## Annex 5

### List of individuals met

#### Guatemala

- Joakim Olsson, Second Secretary at the Swedish Embassy and Sida Program Officer responsible for development cooperation with El Salvador
- Henrik Riby, Second Secretary at the Swedish Embassy and Sida Program Officer responsible for development cooperation with Guatemala
- Hans Magnusson, Counselor at the Swedish Embassy and responsible for regional development cooperation
- Klavs Wulff, Coordinator for the Danish Human Rights program PRODECA
- Olivier Consolo, Project Coordinator at the Guatemala office of the EU Commission
- Jorge Vargas, National Representative for the Swedish Cooperative Centre
- Oscar Azmitia, PRODESSA
- Martha Lila Mayes, OCDIH, Honduras
- Roberto Danilo Vides, Field Officer in local development, OCDIH, Honduras
- Merlin Joel Fuentes, CASM
- Suyapa Diaz, Regional Coordinator for Copan department, ASONOG, Honduras
- Jorge Navarro, CASM
- Carlos Melgar, Equipo Maíz, El Salvador
- José Cruz Portillo, ASONOG, Honduras
- José Antonio Gutierrez, CRIMCH, Honduras
- Andres Ramirez, CONIMCHH
- César Davila, COINDE
- Juan Humberto González Morales, Mayor of San Juan Ostuncalco
- Juan Gabriel Ixcamparij, Coordinator, Centro Pluricultural para la Democracia, Quetzaltenango
- Iván Buitrón, Consejería en Proyectos
- Ada Cavaría, PROMUJER
- Vilma Donis, PROMUJER
- Nery Rodenas, ODHAG
- Alberto Colorado, COMADEP
- Roger Brandin, head of the UN Volunteer Program in Guatemala

#### El Salvador

- Teresa García, General Secretary, INPRHU, Nicaragua
- Jorge Mayorga, Fundación Nueva Generación, Nicaragua
- Denis Mayorga, Fundación Nueva Generación, Nicaragua
- Luis Castillo, General Director of FUSAI
- Antonio Orellano, FUNDAUNGO
- Maria Eugenia Ochoa, Coordinator of the Macro Program, FUNDE

- Nelson Fuente, Assistant Investigator at FUNDE
- José Angel Talentino, Investigator at FUNDE
- Patricia Valdés, Assistant Coordinator for the SID program, FUNDE
- Roberto Rubio, Executive Director, FUNDE
- Francisco Altschul, President, SACDEL
- Alberto Villacorta, Director of Local Development, FUNDE
- Ricardo Córdova, Executive Director, FUNDAUNGO
- Carlos Mauricio Rodríguez, Subdirector of the Program for Democracy and Local Development, FUNDAUNGO
- Oscar Perez, Director for Central America, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC

### **Honduras**

- Francisco Machado, ASONOG
- Raf Flores Ponce, FOSDEH
- Edgardo Chavez, OCDIH, Santa Rosa Copán
- Nelson Garcia Lobo, General Director, CASM
- Emilio Saloj Poz, COINDE, Guatemala
- Gustavo Briceño, El Productor, Costa Rica
- Dionisis Sáenz, INPRHU, Nicaragua
- Nury Alvarado, ASONOG
- Zenia Ayestas, Administrator, CIPRODEH
- Alvaro Cabiz, President of the Board, CIPRODEH
- Edgardo Colindres, Program Officer in charge of the Program for Citizen Participation, CIPRODEH
- Sally Valladares, Program Officer for Migration and Refugee Population, CIPRODEH
- Aminta Navarro, Executive Director, CIPE Consultores
- Helge Semb, National Representative of the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB
- Ina Eriksson, First Secretary, Swedish Embassy in Guatemala, Honduras office
- Jan Robberts, Counselor, Swedish Embassy in Guatemala, Honduras office
- Åsa Thomasson, Advocacy Group of Swedish NGOs in Central America
- Sonia Cano, Coordinator of the Oxfam International Program for Honduras

### **Diakonia staff in Central America**

- Vilma Padilla, Program Assistant
- Francisco Perez, Accountant
- Annika Andersson, Regional Representative for Guatemala and Gender Coordinator
- Mattias Brunander, Regional Representative for Nicaragua and co-coordinator of the SEJ program
- Malin Evertsson, Regional Representative for Honduras and co-coordinator of the SEJ program
- Graciela Solano, General Administrator, Diakonia Regional Office
- Lea Sandra Velasco, Administrative Assistant, Diakonia Regional Office
- Felicita Argueta, Administrative Assistant, Diakonia Regional Office
- Carolina Poggio, Regional Representative for El Salvador and local development coordinator

- Moises Moraga, National Representative for Nicaragua
- Pedro Martin Garcia, National Representative for El Salvador
- Francis Araica, National Representative for Honduras
- Göran Paulsson, Regional Coordinator
- Sandra Paulsson, Regional Representative and coordinator for capacity building of partner organizations
- Sotero Sincal, National Representative for Guatemala

## **Sweden**

- Peter Ottosson, Program Officer for Central America at Diakonia Headquarters
- Eric Nilsson, Head of the Department for Development Cooperation at Diakonia Headquarters
- Bo Forsberg, Director of Diakonia Sweden
- Ewa Widén, Program Officer for Asia at Diakonia Headquarters
- Lennart Henriksson, Head of the Sweden Department at Diakonia Headquarters
- Karin Rohlin, Program Officer with responsibility for Diakonia at the Sida Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA
- Emma Nilenfors, Program Officer at the Sida Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA
- Sara Martinez Bergström, First Secretary at the Swedish Embassy in Nicaragua
- Maud Johansson, Head of the Policy Department at Forum Syd
- Martin Wicklin, Editor of the Diakonia magazine Dela Med
- Marie Louise Bruzelius, Program Officer with responsibility for Diakonia at Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA
- Veronika Granath, Head of the Department for Latin America and Asia at Forum Syd
- Göran Holmqvist, Head of the Sida Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA
- Ulrika Modéer, Program Officer for South America at Diakonia headquarters
- Linnea Ehrnst, Program Officer at Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA
- Lena Ingelstam, Program Officer at Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA
- Svante Sandberg, Head of Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA
- Håkan Mårtensson, Program Officer at Diakonia Headquarters in Stockholm
- Ulrika Forsberg, Program Officer at Sida's Division for Training Programs, Sida/IK

## **Colombia**

- Karin Rodriguez, Coordinator, Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz, National Headquarters
- Alfredo Aguirre, Coordinator, Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz, Antioquia
- Norberto Ríos, Executive committee, Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz, Antioquia
- Octavio Rojas Romaña, President of Asociación Campesina Integral del Medio Atrato (ACIA)
- Dhayana Cuellar Becaria, Administrative Assistant, Asociación Campesina Integral del Medio Atrato (ACIA)

- Richard Moreno Rodriguez, Legal Assistant, Asociación Campesina Integral del Medio Atrato (ACIA)
- Julio Emilio Valencia, tecnólogo, Asociación Campesina Integral del Medio Atrato (ACIA)
- Diego Pérez, Director of Banco de Datos
- Gustavo Gallón, Director, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ)
- Carlos Rodriguez, Co-director, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ)
- Carlos Alberto Marín, Deputy Program Director, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ)
- Alba Teresa Higuera Buitrago, Secretary, Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos (CCEEU)
- Natalia López, Lawyer, CCJ
- Marcela Salazar Posada, Director, Corporación Avre
- Gloria Amparo Camilo, Program Coordinator, Corporación Avre
- Alejandro Angulo Novoa, Director General, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Cinep)
- Natalia Paredes, Researcher, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Cinep)
- Rubén Fernandez, Director, Corporación Region
- Lina Correa, Gender Coordinator, Corporación Region
- Manuel López, Program Coordinator, Corporación Region
- Alberto Yopez, Program Coordinator, Corporación Region
- Irma Garcia, Coordinator, Diálogo Inter-Agencial en Colombia (Dial)
- Camilo Castellanos, Director, Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos (ILSA)
- Eleonora Douglas, Coordinator, Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos (ILSA)
- Hector Mondragon, Coordinator, Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos (ILSA)
- Pablo Stucky, Coordinator, Justapaz
- Guillermo Tazcón, Vice President, Organización Indígena de Antioquia (OIA)
- Eduardo Aguduelo, Advisor, Organización Indígena de Antioquia (OIA)
- Aida Suarez, Treasurer, Organización Indígena de Antioquia (OIA)
- Dennis Cabezon Cabezon, President, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- Cecilia Aolito, Treasurer, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- Alfonso Quinogamo, Coordinator of the Justice Program, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- Renteria Soreor, Program Officer, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- Luis Fernando Sarco Moña, Program Officer, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- Aritzon Andrade Cosamp, Advisor, Organización Regional Embera Wounaan (Orewa)
- John Ludwick, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Pedro Lázaro, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Javier Andres Cacuo, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Evelyn Burgmarie, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Sergio Hayos, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Dorrit Timmer, Peace Brigades International Antioquia
- Rikard Nordgren, Director, Project Counseling Service (PCS)

- Elisabet Hellsten, Counselor and Sida Program Officer at the Swedish Embassy in Bogotá
- Ingemar Cederberg, Minister at the at the Swedish Embassy in Bogotá

## **Peru**

- Rocio Romero, IDS
- Diana Miloslavich, Flora Tristán
- Dina Guerra, CiiR
- Aínin Chavez, CEDEP Ayllu
- José Parras, CEDEP Ayllu
- Juan Carlos, CEDEP Ayllu
- Teresa Campos, CEC-Sicuaní
- Miguel Jugo, Aprodeh
- Maritza Caycho, Alternativa
- Jaime Joseph, Alternativa
- Elisabet Vargas Machuca, Calandria – Asociación de comun social
- Marisol Castañero, Calandria
- Celia Aldana, Calandria
- Liana Ascama Sanchez, Calandria
- Hector Bejar, Cedep/CONADES
- Ernesto de la Jara, IDL
- David Lavatón, IDL
- Carlos Alviar, Cedap
- Dante Alviar, Cedap
- Martha Ribas Plata, CEPES
- Roberto Lisana, CEPES
- Marco Willems, PROANDES

## **Bolivia**

- Pablo Solón, Fundación Solón
- Elisabeth Peredo, Fundación Solón
- Rogelio Mayta, Fundación Solón
- Mónica Beltan, Gregoria Apaza
- Ulrika Hjertstrand, Sida Program Officer at the Swedish Embassy in La Paz
- Javier Gómez, CEDLA, Capitulo Boliviano, Plataforma
- Ana Cristina Betancourt, CEDETI
- Rosa Crespo, CEDETI
- Eduardo Zevallos, CEDETI
- Delma Peña, CEDETI
- Antonio Vargas, CEDETI
- Madela Saenz, Colectivo Rebeldía
- Marie Eugenia Canedo, Colectivo Rebeldía

- Catarina Rodriguez, Colectivo Rebeldía
- Lupe Perez, Colectivo Rebeldía
- Cynthia Suárez, Colectivo Rebeldía
- Mary Camargo, Colectivo Rebedía
- Fanny Urtado, Colectivo Rebeldía
- Jorge Cortéz, CEADES
- Henry Tito, CEADES
- Marisol Solano, CPESC, OICH
- Carlos Cuasase, CPESC, OICH
- Manuel Dosapey, CPESC

### **Diakonia staff in South America**

- Mette Sunnergren, National Representative for Colombia
- Doris Pérez, National Coordinator for Colombia
- César Grajales, National Coordinator for Colombia
- María Victoria Heikel, National Coordinator for Paraguay
- Daniel Slunge, Regional Representative
- Veronica Balcazar, General Administrator, Diakonia Regional Office
- Cecilia Ängelid, Regional Coordinator for Peru
- Milton Soto, National Coordinator for Bolivia
- Marianne Gustafsson, Regional Coordinator for Bolivia
- Karen Marie Slunge-Buus, Regional Coordinator for Paraguay
- Edith Montero, National Coordinator for Peru

### **Workshop participants in La Paz, Bolivia, December 2, 2002**

- Diakonia:* Eric Nilsson, Daniel Slunge, Karen Marie Slunge, Cecilia Angelid, Marianne Gustafsson, Matilda Sunnergren, Verónica Balcázar, Milton Soto, Edith Montero, María Victoria Heikel, Doris Pérez, Susana Terrazas, Maria del Carmen López, Edgar Siñani, Luis Aruquipa
- Sida:* Ulrika Hjertstrand
- Others:* Sofia Bildt, (trainee), Carlos Rodriguez (Fundaungo El Salvador)
- Context:* Örjan Bartholdson and Anna Tibblin

### **Workshop participants in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 5, 2002**

- Diakonia:* Carlonia Poggio, Pedro Garcia, Annika Andersson, Sotero Sincal, Mattias Brunander, Moises Moraga, Malin Evertsson, Francis Araica, Göran Paulsson, Eric Nilsson, Peter Ottosson, Vilma Padilla
- Sida:* Teresa Rovira, Henrik Riby, Joakim Olsson, Sara Martinez-Bergström, Jan Robberts, Ina Eriksson
- Context:* Örjan Bartholdson and Anna Tibblin



## Annex 6

### Field visit program, Central America, September 16–29, 2002

#### Guatemala

- September 16 Jocke Nyberg and Anna Tibblin arrive in Guatemala City, Guatemala.
- September 17 Travel to Quetzaltenango. Participated as observers in an experience exchange between Honduran and Guatemalan partner organizations, including meetings with the municipal authorities in San Juan Ostuncalco and municipal authorities in the Chotacaj aldea in Totonicapan.
- September 18 Participated as observers in a meeting between Honduran and Guatemalan partner organizations with the civic committee Xel Ju in Quetzaltenango. Interviews with partner organizations. Travel to Guatemala City.
- September 19 Interviews in Guatemala City with Sida representatives, partner organizations, international donor agencies, Swedish and international NGOs.

#### El Salvador

- September 20 Travel to San Salvador, El Salvador. Interviews in San Salvador with partner organizations.
- September 21 Participated as observers in the 3rd Congress of female politicians, ANDRYSAS, supported by Diakonia. Interviews with Diakonia personnel.
- September 22 Interviews with Diakonia personnel. Report writing.
- September 23 Workshop with Diakonia personnel at the regional office in San Salvador. Interviews in San Salvador.

#### Honduras

- September 24 Travel to San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Participated as observers in the first regional exchange of experience regarding interdisciplinary courses already underway in Nicaragua, Guatemala and to be commenced in Honduras. Interviews with partner organizations.
- September 25 Report writing.
- September 26 Travel to Tegucigalpa. Interviews in Tegucigalpa with Sida representatives, partner organizations, international donor agencies, Swedish and international NGOs.
- September 27 Interviews in Tegucigalpa with Sida representatives, partner organizations, international donor agencies, Swedish and international NGOs.
- September 28 Travel to Sweden.

## Field visit program, Peru and Bolivia, September 15–28, 2002

### Peru

September 15	Birgitta Genberg and Mikael Román arrive in Lima, Peru.
September 16	Planning together with the Peruvian evaluator Teresa Valiente and the Diakonia staff in Lima.
September 17	Travel to Cuzco for meetings and interviews with partner organizations.
September 18	Meetings and interviews in Lima.
September 19	Meetings and interviews in Lima.
September 20	Travel to Ayacucho in order to participate in a workshop where most partner organizations were present.
September 21	Participated in workshop. Several interviews were also made.
September 22	Travel to Lima and on to La Paz, Bolivia

### Bolivia

September 23	Meeting with the Diakonia staff and interviews with partner organizations in La Paz.
September 24	Meetings and interviews in La Paz.
September 25	Interviews in La Paz, travel to Santa Cruz.
September 26	Interviews in Santa Cruz.
September 27	Meetings and interviews in Santa Cruz.
September 28	Meeting with Diakonia representatives from Paraguay. Then travel to Sweden.

## Field visit program, Colombia, October 8–17, 2002

October 8	Agneta Gunnarsson and Jocke Nyberg arrive in Bogotá, Colombia.Meeting with Sida representative.
October 9	Meetings and interviews with Diakonia and partner organizations in Bogotá.
October 10	Participated in a workshop on gender together with Diakonia partner organizations.Meetings and interviews with partner organizations and other development actors in Bogotá.
October 11	Participated in workshop on gender together with Diakonia partner organizations.Interviews with development actors in Bogotá.
October 12	Report writing.
October 13	Travel to Quibdo.Interviews with partner organizations and other development actors.
October 14	Travel to Medellin.Interviews with partner organizations and other development actors.
October 15	Meetings and interviews with partner organizations and other development actors in Medellin.Travel to Bogotá.
October 16	Interviews with partner organizations and Diakonia representatives.
October 17	Travel to Sweden.

# Annex 7

## Literature list

### Evaluation and monitoring reports

- Vegard Bye, Martha Doggett, and Peter Hellmers. Sida Evaluation 99/16: Diakonia Program for Democracy and Human Rights, the El Salvador Case. Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA (July 1999).
- Juan-Enrique Bazán, Roberto Cuellar and Sara Martínez Bergström. Sida Evaluation 97/32: Diakonias arbete för mänskliga rättigheter och demokrati i Sydamerika. Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA (September 1997).
- Öhrings Coopers & Lybrand. Systemrevision 99/1: Styrning och kontroll inom Diakonia. Sida's Department for Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance, Sida/SEKA (December 1998).
- Nils Boesen, José Antonio Péres and Ingela Ståhl. Diakonia's Programme for Human Rights and Democracy in South America, Second Monitoring Report. Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA (May 1999).
- Frühling, Pierre. Turning Disasters into Opportunities. Swedish contributions to reconstruction and transformation in Central America after disaster Mitch, Department for Latin America, Sida/RELA (May 2002).

### Sida documents

- Bedömningspromemoria 001207, Stöd till Diakonias program i Central- och Sydamerika 2001–2003, Sida/RELA
- PM 980115, Diakonias framställan om stöd till program för mänskliga rättigheter och demokrati i Sydamerika, Sida/RELA
- Registered correspondence, such as assessment statements from Sida field personnel and memos from other departments within Sida regarding the Diakonia programs in both Central and South America, 1999–2001
- Sida's Evaluation Policy, Sida/UTV (1999)
- Sida's program for poverty reduction (1997)
- Regional strategy for South America 1998–2002, Sida/RELA (1997)
- Regional strategy for Central America 1997–2000, Sida/RELA (1996)
- Regional Strategy for Central America and the Caribbean 2001–2005, Sida/RELA (2000)
- Semi annual reports from Sida field staff in Latin America regarding developments in program countries, 1999–2002
- von Essen, Trender i det civila samhället, Sida/SEKA (2001)

### Diakonia documents and publications

- Diakonia South and Central America's program applications, applications for additional funding and reporting to Sida/RELA and Sida/SEKA covering the period 1999–2001
- Diakonia's policy, Aid to support equal value for all people (1998)
- Diakonia's project manual (1998)
- Jämställdhetspolicy (2001)

- Social and economic justice, a global programme. Report from a field visit in El Salvador and Guatemala (2000)
- Red para el desarrollo local en El Salvador, Estudio de caso.(Feb 2001)
- Diakonia's publication *Dela Med*, 2000–2002

### Further references

- Bobbio, N. 1979. Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society. In *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*. Mouffe (ed). London. Routledge.
- Brecher, J., Costello, T., Smith B. 2000. *Globalization from Below: The power of solidarity*. Boston. South End.
- Cohen, J.L., Arato, A. 1992. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge. MIT Press.
- Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. 1996. *The World of Goods: towards an anthropology of consumption*. London. Routledge.
- Echols, A. 1989. *Daring to be Bad*. Minneapolis. Minneapolis University Press.
- Edelman, M. 1999. Social Movements: Changing paradigms and forms of politics. In *Annual Review of Anthropology*.
- Escobar, A., Alvarez, S.E (ed). 1992. *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. Boulder, CO. Westview.
- Gamson, W.A. 1991. Commitment and agency in social movements. In *Sociological Forum*, No 6: 27-50.
- Gellner, E. 1991. Civil Society in Historical Context. In *International Social Science Journal*. Vol 43, no. 129: 495-510.
- Gunnarsson, C., Rojas, M. 1995. Tillväxt, Stagnation, Kaos. En institutionell studie av underutvecklingens orsaker och utvecklingens möjligheter. Stockholm SNS.
- Keane, J (ed). 1988. *Civil Society and the State. New European Perspectives*. London. Verso.
- MacCallum, Cecilia. 1995. *Race, Class, and Gender in Northeast Brazil*. Salvador. Unpublished manuscript.
- Melucci, A. 1989. *Nomads of the Present. Social movements and individual needs in contemporary society*. Philadelphia. Temple University Press.
- Perlman, J. *The Myth of Marginality. Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*. University of California Press.
- Poletta, Francesca and Jasper, James M. 2001. Collective identity and Social Movements. In *Annual Review of Sociology*, No 27: 283-305.
- Putnam, R. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.
- Robnett, B. 1997. *How long? How long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E.H., Stephens, J.D. 1992. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Cambridge. University Press.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death without weeping. The violence of everyday life in Brazil*. Berkley. University of California Press.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements. In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*. McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., Zald, M.N (editors). New York. Cambridge University Press.
- Touraine, A. 1981. *The Voice and the Eye: An analysis of social movements*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.



## Recent Sida Evaluations

- 02/35      Implementation of the 1999–2003 Country Strategy for Swedish Development Cooperation with Vietnam**  
Bob Baulch, Mick Moore, Anuradha Joshi, Jan Rudengren  
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/36      Implementation of the 1999–2003 Country Strategy for Swedish Development Cooperation with Laos**  
Dan Vadnjal, Tim Conway, Jan Rudengren, Marc Juville  
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/37      Country Plans: the Missing Middle of Sida's Country Strategy Process**  
Samuel Egerö, Göran Schill  
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, Asia Department
- 02/38      Samata's Centre for Advocacy and Support – Project Activities and Directions for Future in India**  
R. Sridhar, R. Rajamani  
Asia Department
- 02/39      Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) to Support Democratic Decentralisation in India**  
James Manor, R Parasuram, Anand Ibanathan  
Asia Department
- 02/40      Evolving Strategies for Better Health and Development of Adolescent/Young People: a Twinning Institutional Collaboration Project in India by MAMTA and RFSU**  
Gordon Tamm, Rukmini Rao, Viveca Urwitz  
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 03/01      Sida Support to the PRONI Institute of Social Education Projects in the Balkans**  
Birgitta Berggren, Bodil Eriksson  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 03/02      Swedish Bilateral Assistance in the Field of Migration and Asylum in Central and Eastern Europe 1996–2002**  
Kjell-Åke Nordquist, Martin Schmidt  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 03/03      Deseret's Response to the Challenge of HIV-AIDS in Zimbabwe – Mid Term Assessment**  
Hope Chigudu  
Department for Africa
- 03/04      Sida Support to the Pact Home Based Care Programme in Zimbabwe**  
Shingaidzo Mupindu, Itayi Muvandi, Paschal Changunda, Caroline Maphoshere  
Department for Africa
- 03/05      Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS**  
Shingaidzo Mupindu, Itayi Muvandi, Pascal Changunda  
Department for Africa
- 03/06      Village Based Support for HIV/AIDS Orphaned Children in Zimbabwe through Rural Unity for Development Organisation (RUDO)**  
Nontokozi Mugabe, Phatisiwe Ngwenya  
Department for Africa

### Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida  
S-105 25 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 (0)8 506 423 80  
Fax: +46 (0)8 506 423 52  
info@sida.se

### A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

Sida, UTV, S-105 25 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 (0)8 698 51 63  
Fax: +46 (0)8 698 56 10  
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>







SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY  
S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden  
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64  
Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9  
E-mail: [info@sida.se](mailto:info@sida.se). Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>