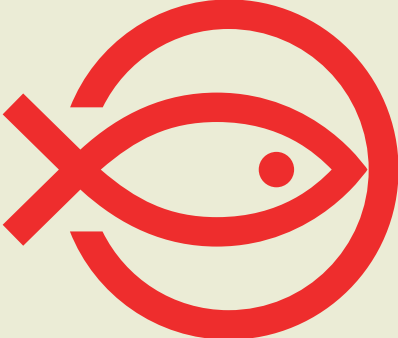


GLOBAL RESULTS REPORT 2023



DANCHURCH AID
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June 2024 / DanChurchAid: Meldahlsgade 3, 1613 Copenhagen V / **Secretary-General:** Jonas Nøddekær

Contact: phone +45 33 15 28 00 / mail@dca.dk / nødhjælp.dk / danchurchaid.org

Cover Photo: Deminers for DCA, Anastasia and Serhii, during a training scenario at the DCA humanitarian mine action training centre in Mykolaiv, Ukraine. / Photo: Rasmus Emil Gravesen



Photo: Beritna Garcia

01: Statement by the Secretary-General

Global crises have become a persistent characteristic of the world we live in. While the new geopolitical realities, challenging the rules-based global order, continue to be highlighted in the context of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, they are also evident in the context of forgotten crises with worsening humanitarian situations. In particular, the erosion of rules-based global order and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is noticeable in the face of the increasing number of conflicts where both these aspects are being blatantly disregarded. At the same time, the narratives of decolonisation continue to push us as humanitarian actors to reflect on and reconsider our approaches to delivering assistance. These same narratives, however, are also misused by some authoritarian regimes which label them as re-colonisation to apply even more restrictions.

Despite the many challenges that operating in such complex environments entails, DanChurchAid (DCA) remains committed to implementing our four goals of saving lives, building resilient communities, fighting extreme inequalities, and creating opportunities for the public in Denmark to engage in support of these activities. We continue to steadfastly uphold our fundamental principles: advocating for human rights and IHL, fostering sustainable and inclusive development together with our partners, and encouraging the public in Denmark to contribute to the sustainable development agenda through local actions with global impacts.

These commitments are evident in the Global Report 2023. The report outlines the results from the first year of implementing DCA's Global Strategy 'Hope and Action in the Age of Disruption 2023-2026', which is structured around our four global goals. In support of our work to achieve these

goals, DCA succeeded in attracting more funds from donors and reaching more people than ever in 2023. Our income exceeded an unprecedented one billion Danish Kroner and enabled DCA and our partner organisations to directly reach 5 million people.

Our approach as a multi-mandated organisation working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus was crucial, given that most contexts where DCA operated in 2023 were increasingly affected by a complex combination of factors, including protracted conflicts, various forms of displacement, fragility, and the adverse impacts of climate change. This complex operational environment required us to constantly reflect over the situation, find ways to adapt, and to mitigate and share risks with our partners.

We have also enhanced our efforts across sectors by bringing together faith-based actors, civil society organisations, the private sector, social movements, international organisations, and research institutions to pursue collective outcomes. In doing so, DCA has increasingly been playing a role of facilitator, connecting the various actors together to promote knowledge exchange, co-creation, and capacity sharing.

While the world has undoubtedly become a more difficult place to navigate in 2023, giving up is not in our nature. Instead, we continued and will continue to address these challenges head-on, by joining forces with our partners and continuously adapting and innovating while staying true to our organisational values.

Jonas Nøddekær
Secretary-General, DanChurchAid



Yasser Hatoum got access to farmland that he could not use for 24 years out of fear of explosives. Only after DCA Lebanon cleared all land in the area in October 2023 could he start using it again. He lives in the village of Kfar Selouane in Lebanon with his family.
Photo: Mikkel Rytter Poulsen

02: Executive Summary

As an organisation that delivers both humanitarian and development assistance, DCA continued to work in highly complex and volatile environment throughout 2023, marked by a state of polycrisis. This situation has manifested itself in escalating conflicts, disregard for international law and human rights, democratic backsliding, crackdown on civic space, mounting consequences of climate change and environmental degradation, widespread food insecurity, rising inequalities, record-high levels of displacement, and aggravated states of vulnerability.

Together these factors increased the demand for DCA to continue to perform its multi-mandated role as a provider of emergency assistance, protection, and longer-term resilience building support, and as a supporter of human rights and democratic participation. The fact that DCA's income surpassed DKK 1 billion by mobilising resources from diverse institutional and private donors testifies to the levels of trust and expectations attached to DCA in Denmark and internationally. While the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained DCA's largest donor with a contribution of DKK 267.5 million, it was particularly the increase in the

contributions from other institutional and international donors (amounting to DKK 548 million) and from the public in Denmark (reaching a new record of DKK 207 million) that raised DCA's income to an unprecedented level in 2023.

Applying these funds to work, DCA joined forces with 198 partners and was able to implement 317 projects across 20 country programmes directly reaching 5 million people in 2023.

The polycrisis that has become the norm rather than the exception in many parts of the world also made fulfilling DCA's various roles increasingly challenging. In order to stand firm in this context, DCA continued to be guided by its fundamental principles. As a multi-mandated organisation with a strong focus on human rights, 41% of DCA projects adopted a nexus approach integrating humanitarian, development, and/or peacebuilding components, while 83% of projects adopted a human rights-based approach. Similarly, collaboration with locally anchored faith-based actors continued to be important, with 32% of projects engaging such actors. As a partnerships-based organisation

committed to promoting local leadership, DCA also continued to undertake a range of initiatives supporting its partners through capacity sharing and fostering space for mutual reflection and dialogue. To this end, DCA transferred 24% of its humanitarian funding and 30% of its development funding to partners in 2023 and the 2023 Partnership Satisfaction Survey revealed an 86% satisfaction rate among partners regarding their collaboration with DCA.

Working together with partners remained essential for DCA to reach its four global goals: Save Lives, Build Resilient Communities, Fight Extreme Inequalities, and Create Engagement.

In the humanitarian and nexus settings, DCA further increased the use of cash assistance, transferring over DKK 128 million to over half a million people in need in 2023, one third of which was transferred via partners. In 2023 there was also an expansion of survivor and community-led responses and group cash transfers across 14 of DCA's 20 country programmes to support 432 community groups with over 15 million DKK, of which over 80% was channelled through local partners. Globally, 96% of groups supported through this modality self-reported increased preparedness and capacity of community members to respond to community priorities as a result of the grants provided by DCA. Supporting community-based responses also played an instrumental role in early recovery contexts where DCA showcased active integration of conflict sensitivity, prevention, and peacebuilding components in relevant interventions in 2023. Such interventions enabled local actors to address drivers of violent conflict and contribute to social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. At the same time, DCA's humanitarian mine action continued to play an important role in communities facing threats posed by explosive remnants of war, with 92% of participants in DCA's and partners' explosive ordnance risk education activities displaying safe knowledge of explosive ordnance.

In development settings, DCA's activities to strengthen the social, economic, and environmental resilience of vulnerable people primarily consisted of disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and livelihoods interventions. Promoting green economic empowerment also continued to be an important focus of resilience building, with 87% of income and employment opportunities created through DCA's interventions categorised as green in 2023. Food security was another priority, with 36% of DCA's projects having a focus on improving food security or working towards promoting inclusive, just, environmentally sustainable, and resilient food and market systems. Advocacy to build resilience was another area where DCA continued to invest efforts, calling for systemic changes to promote just climate and environmental policies, sustainable and resilient food systems, and responsible business conduct. At the

national level this led to 31 relevant policy changes across different topic areas, while at global level DCA took steps to strengthen its position as an active stakeholder in the global policy discussions on climate adaptation, loss and damage, and food system change.

Through close collaboration with its partners, DCA remained continuously committed to empowering marginalised groups and individuals, strengthening democratic institutions, and promoting the role of civil society, amidst global democratic decline and the erosion of the rules-based world order. Due to mounting pressures on civic space in many countries, DCA saw a decline from 74% in 2022 to 57% in 2023 in the share of targeted individuals who reported that they were able to participate in decision-making. At the same time, there was a notable increase, from 47% to 79%, in the share of those who demonstrated positive behaviours as a result of increased knowledge and recognition of the rights of vulnerable and marginalised people. There was also an increase in the number of country programmes engaging in strategic advocacy to hold duty bearers to account, which contributed to 115 changes in laws, policies, or practices in a wide range of areas, including: social service distribution, land rights, digital rights, addressing gender-based violence, and protecting and promoting human rights and civic space.

DCA also made significant progress in creating engagement with the public in Denmark. Besides the record-high overall fundraising result, this progress was reflected in record-high sales in DCA's second-hand and Wefood stores to achieve a 26% increase in turnover in 2023 compared to the 2021 baseline. The successful public engagement was also proven by the more than 13,000 persons who chose to volunteer with DCA in 2023, and in the number of times that the public interacted with DCA on website and social media platforms, which almost doubled in 2023. DCA also continued its strong engagement with decision-makers and opinion-makers in Denmark, along with its partners and alliances, leading to 80 specific policy changes during 2023. This advocacy significantly shaped national public and political discussions around a rules-based world order, climate change, women's rights, food systems, innovative partnerships, and humanitarian and development assistance.

Last but not least, 2023 saw DCA laying more groundwork to ensure that it continues to be an organisation that remains fit for purpose. One notable achievement was the introduction of the new risk management tool across DCA country offices, which ensures a comprehensive and standardised approach to risk identification and mitigation across the organisation. DCA also invested into updating and rolling out relevant organisational policies, including its Climate and Environment Policy to accelerate its organisational response to the climate and environmental crises and to respond to internal and external stakeholders' requirements and expectations. ■

Kodok, situated along the Nile in South Sudan, has become a refuge for internally displaced and returnees from Sudan. Kodok has been flooded since 2020, the worst being in 2022. DCA is distributing cash to the most severely affected families through its partner. Photo: Rasmus Emil Gravesen



03. Introduction

03.1: Contextual changes

The global landscape in 2023 underwent a shift in geopolitical dynamics, which challenged the established global rules-based order and resulted in increasingly strained relations between the Global North and South, and in the emergence of new geopolitical alliances. Influenced by wars in Ukraine and Gaza, geopolitics became increasingly multi-polar, with increasing competition for influence among the major and middle powers and for resources across regions like the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. This fragmentation contributes to the complexity of conflicts involving proxy wars fought with little respect for IHL and resulting in shrinking civic and operational space for local, national, and international actors.

Democratic backsliding continued to be a global trend, jeopardising international cooperation, peace, and security and exacerbating poverty and inequality. The increasing disregard of human rights, with more than 71% of the global population living under autocratic regimes (according to University of Gothenburg Democracy Report 2024) in countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Syria, highlights the urgency of upholding international norms.

Social and economic inequities continued to contribute to the democratic decline, with 1% of the world's population holding 43% of world wealth (according to Oxfam's 'Inequality Inc' 2024 report). This concentration of wealth and power often leads to the exclusion of populations from participation in decision-making. At the same time, authoritarian regimes make it more difficult for local, national, and international civil society to operate as a result of more restrictive legislation and sophisticated surveillance and control. Such measures could be seen in many countries in 2023, including Cambodia, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe. Counter-terror narratives had

been misused to shrink democratic and humanitarian space, which affects women, girls, young people, people with diverse Sexual Orientation Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), ethnic, and religious minorities the hardest. Young people, while organising and pushing for change, most often remained excluded from decision-making and opportunities.

Despite this, 2023 also saw human rights defenders, civil society organisations, faith actors, and social movements mobilising against democratic backsliding and human rights violations (HRVs), with access to new digital platforms often used as a gateway to coordinate and advocate for change. One of the areas where these progressive drivers of change have been able to mobilise is in the fight against the continued rise in global temperatures and the devastating consequences of climate change.

Throughout 2023 the world continued to witness record-high temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, and more intense and frequent weather events which resulted in devastating disasters in countries such as Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Climate change has been disproportionately affecting the poorest nations and the most vulnerable communities within them, exacerbating inequalities and threatening ecosystems worldwide. Interacting with other socio-economic factors, this trend is expected to further drive food and water scarcity, conflict, and displacement on a scale much greater than that already experienced in many parts of the world.

The 28th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP28) held in 2023 delivered some of the long-awaited steps to address the worsening climate crises, including through operationalisation of a fund

to support vulnerable countries and communities to respond to losses and damages related to climate change. Additionally, although these commitments were vaguely formulated, it was decided to transition away from fossil fuels.

While these decisions signalled some political will to move in the right direction, challenges remain. Many low-income countries struggled in 2023, and will continue to do so, with the financial burden of adaptation despite bearing minimal responsibility for global greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning from fossil fuels continued to pose economic challenges for many fossil fuel-dependent economies in the Global South. These countries need support to enable a just transition that maximises economic and social gains from climate action while minimising risks of social disruption. Adding to this, rampant environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change constituted a triple planetary crisis endangering human health and wellbeing, increasing security risks, and making climate adaptation even more difficult.

The humanitarian situation deteriorated significantly in 2023. According to the UNHCR Global Trends Report 2024, the world has yet again renewed the dreadful record of having over 117.3 million people displaced worldwide, including 68.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 37.6 million refugees, due to persecution, conflict, violence, or HRVs. Wars in Gaza and Ukraine and major disasters such as the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria attracted much of the world's attention. At the same time, humanitarian crises in countries such as DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, and Myanmar continued to worsen, with millions of people in need of lifesaving assistance left behind and forgotten by the world. Escalating conflicts exacerbated the risk of unexploded ordnance and mine accidents posing a severe threat to civilians, hindering access to essential services, and impeding societal reconstruction efforts for generations to come.

With more and more people experiencing acute food insecurity, the inadequacies and inequalities of the global food system also became more evident in 2023. Apart from the impacts of conflicts, the increasing severity and frequency of weather extremes, including droughts and floods, destabilised fragile food systems to directly impact crop yields and exacerbate food shortages. In 2023, 238 million people faced acute food insecurity, breaking the record by an increase of 10% compared to 2022 according to the Food Security Information Network Global Report on Food Crises 2023 Mid-Year Update. The world's industrialised food systems, responsible for a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, freshwater consumption, and pollution of waterways further exacerbated climate change and environmental degradation. At the same time, a small number of large corporations dominated the markets within the global food system, using economic

dominance to exercise political power to resist more just and environmentally sustainable food systems.

In response to the many challenges of 2023, there is a growing recognition of the importance of advancing a local leadership agenda and strengthening civil society. Empowering local actors ensures local ownership and relevant and effective humanitarian and development responses. However, despite commitments to increase funding to local actors, 2023 saw only an allocation of 1.2% of total humanitarian funding to local actors according to Development Initiative's Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2023. Much more political will and effort will have to be invested in inclusive global processes for fundamental change to happen.

03.2: Structure of the Global Results Report

2023 marked the first year of implementing DCA's Global Strategy 2023-2026 'Hope and Action in the Age of Disruption'. The Strategy is focused on specific intervention areas (IAs) and expected long-term changes (LTCs) to be achieved in working towards DCA's global goals. It is accompanied by a Global Results Framework (GRF) that specifies key outcome indicators (KOIs) for each IA, which are linked to one of the expected LTCs. The GRF also includes relevant indicators for measuring progress with respect to DCA's fundamental principles, cross-cutting commitments and how fit for purpose DCA is. In 2023 DCA continued to improve its Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) processes and tools and incorporate these into project design and proposals across Country Offices (COs). Consequently, for many of the KOIs/indicators, 2022 or 2023 data serve as baselines for the period covered by the current Global Strategy. In some cases, the changes introduced to the MEAL processes and tools mean that data may not be directly comparable between the years.

This report presents the results of DCA's activities for 2023. Many of these results were achieved through the work that DCA has been doing jointly with partners (see Section 5.5 for more). Where relevant, DCA refers to specific partners in Denmark, but it refrains from doing so with respect to its local and national partners in other countries of operation due to potential sensitivity.

After outlining DCA's total income and expenditure for 2023 in Chapter 4, the subsequent Chapters 5, 6 and 7 report on the results from DCA's efforts to deliver assistance and contribute to systemic change according to its fundamental principles through its Country Programmes (CPs) and on the extent to which DCA integrates its cross-cutting commitments in its work. The final section, Chapter 8, reports on the initiatives undertaken by DCA to continue to be fit for purpose as a multi-mandated organisation that works across humanitarian and development settings. ■

04. Total Income and Expenditure

DCA's 2023 annual accounts show that DCA is financially robust and has increased its income despite operating in a world full of unpredictability and constant challenges. This enables DCA to contribute sustainably to local communities where DCA and its partners work to implement programmes and projects.

DCA's income in 2023 was 1,032.4 million Danish Kroner (DKK) and was the highest income achieved in DCA's history. This income represents a 4.9% increase compared to 2022. Table 4.1 shows DCA's major sources of income from 2021 to 2023. Funding from DCA's donors such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the United States

(US) institutions and other international donors increased from 2022 to 2023; funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), including Danish International Development Assistance (Danida), decreased slightly within the same period. The grant which the Danish MFA allocated to DCA through its Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) remained the largest among all DCA's donors and amounted to DKK 267.5 million. Fundraising in Denmark resulted in an increase in both unearmarked and earmarked funds between 2022 and 2023; the increase of 10% in unearmarked funding is remarkable and shows a strong commitment among the public in Denmark to DCA's work worldwide.

TABLE 4.1: OVERVIEW OF DCA'S INCOME FROM 2021 TO 2023 IN MILLION DKK.

SOURCE: DCA ANNUAL REPORT, 2023.

INCOME (MILLION DKK)	2023	2022	2021
DCA UNEARMARKED	156.0	140.5	134.0
DCA EARMARKED	51.3	48.0	30.9
DANISH MFA	267.5	272.5	236.2
EU	149.2	142.8	173.3
UN	99.7	87.9	78.3
US	147.8	141.6	114.8
OTHER INTERNATIONAL DONORS	151.6	140.8	136.5
OTHER INCOME AND FEES	9.3	7.5	13.9
TOTAL INCOME	1,032.4	981.6	917.9

The distribution of income from the top five donors and the earmarked funding raised in Denmark in support of DCA's projects is shown in Table 4.2 in relation to DCA's three global goals (Save Lives, Build Resilient Communities and Fight Extreme Inequality). In 2023 DCA had a total of 72 donors supporting its work. The Danish MFA provided the highest

amount among the donors in general and to each of the three global goals. In 2023 DCA raised most funds in support of its humanitarian and nexus work under the Save Lives global goal. The funding amongst the top five donors increased by 4.8% compared to 2022, where the income was DKK 494.0 million.

TABLE 4.2: INCOME FROM THE TOP FIVE DONORS AND ALL OTHER DONORS COMBINED (EXCLUDING ADMINISTRATION FEES, TIME REGISTRATION ETC.)

NOTE: EARMARKED FUNDING IS RAISED IN DENMARK AS PART OF ACHIEVING THE CREATE ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL GOAL. EU INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (INTPA) INCLUDES MULTI-YEAR FUNDING RECEIVED THROUGH EUROPEAID INSTRUMENTS.

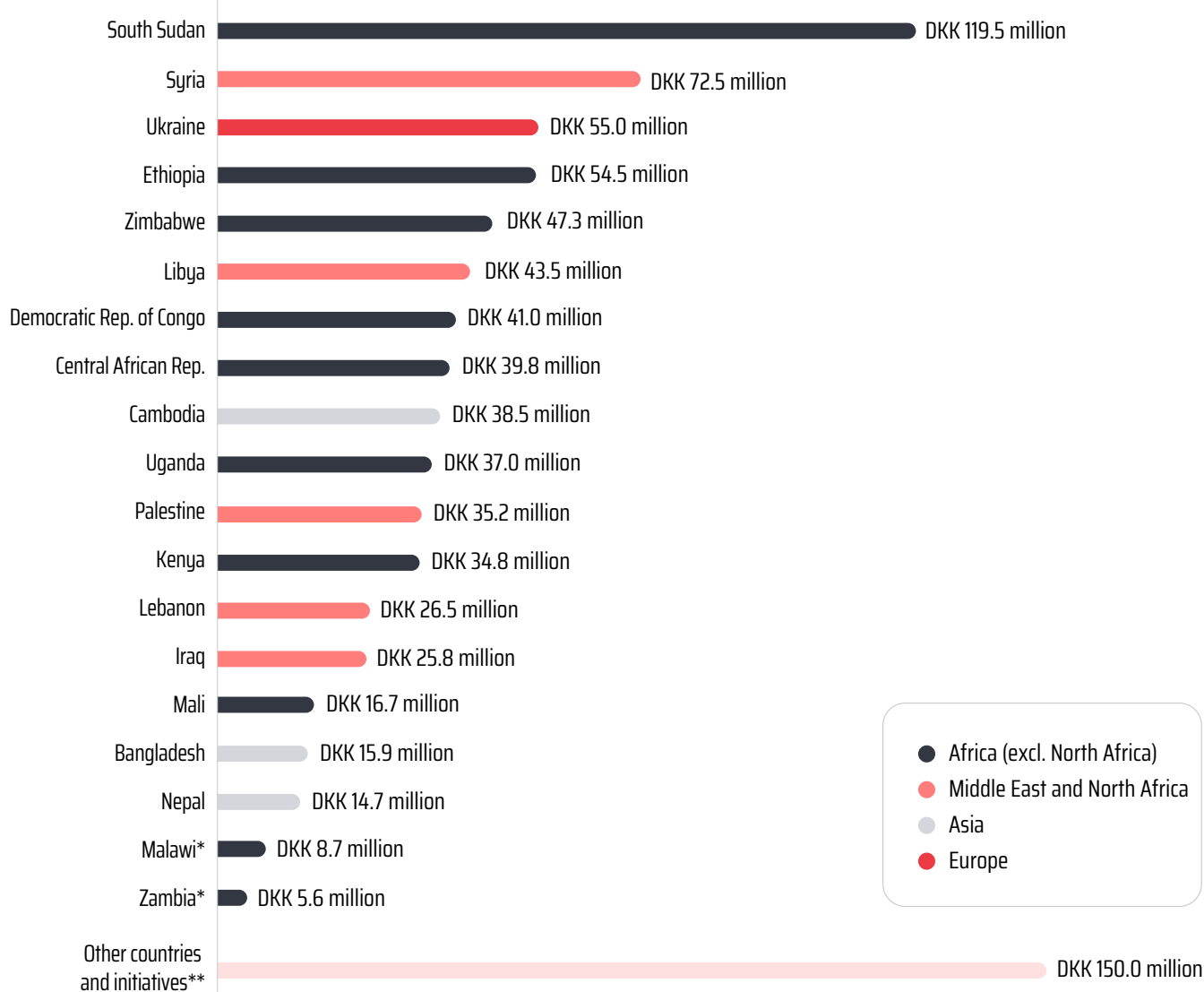
SOURCE: GPRM ACTUALS 2023 PROJECT TURNOVER DATA.

SAVE LIVES			BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES			FIGHT EXTREME INEQUALITY		
	MILLION DKK	%		MILLION DKK	%		MILLION DKK	%
DANISH MFA/SPA	117.9	22.7	DANISH MFA/SPA	75.3	32.8	DANISH MFA/SPA	28.9	37.8
ECHO	65.6	12.6	USAID	26.6	11.6	EU INTPA	18.8	24.5
USAID	64.9	12.5	FCDO	25.0	10.9	USAID	14.0	18.3
EU INTPA	55.9	10.8	SIDA	12.4	5.4	NCA	6.5	8.5
OCHA	32.7	6.3	UNOPS	10.5	4.6	DRL USDOS	2.6	3.4
OTHER DONORS	182.1	35.1	OTHER DONORS	79.5	34.7	OTHER DONORS	5.7	7.5
TOTAL	519.1	100.0	TOTAL	229.3	100.0	TOTAL	76.5	100.0

In 2023 DCA spent DKK 626 million on humanitarian interventions globally in support of projects under the Save Lives and Build Resilient Communities goals, and DKK 256 million on development interventions in support of projects under the Build Resilient Communities and Fight Extreme Inequality goals. Table 4.3 shows that among the 20 Country Programmes DCA supported in 2023, South Sudan (including Sudan) had the highest turnover of DKK 119.5 million, Syria followed with DKK 72.5 million, Ukraine with DKK 55.0 million, and Ethiopia with DKK 54.5 million. Geographically

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest turnover, and in 2023 DCA's expenditure in Africa was DKK 404.9 million, which is equivalent to 46% of total DCA expenditure. The Middle East and North Africa followed with a turnover of DKK 203.5 million, which is equivalent to 23% of DCA's total expenditure. In Asia DCA's expenditure was DKK 69.1 million, equivalent to 8% of DCA's total expenditure, in Ukraine the expenditure was DKK 55 million, equivalent to 6% of DCA's total expenditure, and lastly "other" refers to DKK 150 million, which is equivalent to 17% of DCA's total expenditure. ■

TABLE 4.3: OVERVIEW OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE PER COUNTRY IN 2023 IN MILLION DKK.
SOURCE: DCA ANNUAL REPORT, 2023.



* DCA runs the country programmes in Malawi and Zambia together with its sister organisation, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). The table only shows DCA's contribution to the two programme countries.

** Other countries and initiatives cover various global initiatives, including countries where DCA does not have a country office.

05. Fundamental Principles

05.1: Introduction

DCA's history as a multi-mandated organisation working across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus plays a pivotal role since most contexts where DCA operates are increasingly affected by a complex combination of factors, including protracted conflicts, different forms of displacement, fragility, and environmental changes. DCA's extensive and diverse partner network places DCA in a unique position from which to respond to multiple needs and create systemic and sustainable change at local, national, and international levels for the benefit of people and communities with whom it works. DCA's strong engagement with civil society actors including faith-based organisations (FBOs) as well as its foundation in a human rights-based approach (HRBA) enables DCA to empower the people it works with to hold duty bearers accountable and advocate for changes in law and policy. The ability to work holistically across sectors and bring FBOs and other religious actors, young people's groups, activists, the private sector, social movements, and research institutions together in the pursuit of collective outcomes continued to be a key driver for DCA's ability to influence systemic and sustainable change in 2023.

05.2: Multi-mandated – for Lasting Change

In 2023, approximately 41% of DCA's total project portfolio (i.e., 129 out of a total of 317 projects) adopted a nexus approach: 86 of these projects operated across a double nexus (i.e., humanitarian-development, humanitarian-peace, or development-peace) and 43 projects operated across a triple nexus (i.e., HDP). This result represents a slight increase from 2022, where 35% of DCA's total project portfolio adopted a nexus approach. This increase can be attributed partly to the fact that more DCA projects and programmes are integrating peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity and prevention measures as part of their nexus programming (see also Section 6.2.3). The link to the effects of climate change and the strain these put on peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, and economic recovery is also relevant in DCA's nexus approach. In **Mali**, DCA adopted a triple nexus approach that combined emergency responses with interventions to support community-led responses aimed at improving social cohesion and addressing economic and non-economic loss and damage experienced in the context of climate change. Moreover, several of DCA's COs

are also adopting an integrated programming approach that connects mine clearance with more comprehensive development programmes, including a focus on economic and environmental rehabilitation. In **Lebanon**, DCA's multi-mandated approach connected mine clearance and development activities by collaborating with farmers who cultivate formerly contaminated lands and with survivors of mine accidents in introducing innovative agroecological farming practices. The aim was to minimise the risks and impact of land mines as well as to promote environmentally sustainable agriculture and thus income opportunities to ensure longer-term recovery. Building on these programme efforts, DCA also continued to engage in advocacy work with donors to support more flexible funding for locally led and integrated programming across the HDP nexus, especially in protracted conflicts such as in **Syria**. This was done for example with respect to the Danish Government through the Denmark-based NGO advocacy working group focusing on the Syria crisis and though accelerating more support to local and national actors working across the nexus (see also Section 6.2.4).

05.3: Human Rights-Based – for Just Change

Working with a HRBA derives from DCA's statutes, and HRBA is integrated in DCA's programming through the promotion of Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Linking to Human Rights Law (PANEL). In 2023, 83% of DCA and partner projects integrated PANEL principles, an increase compared to 75% in 2022. This is the result of DCA's amplified efforts to integrate HRBA across all global goals and in all country contexts with a particular focus on fragile contexts, such as in **DRC**, where DCA increased focus on applying HRBA to working with gender-based violence (GBV).

DCA continued to be committed to promoting non-discrimination and protect human rights and democracy online and contribute to a rules-based world order. In 2023, 27% of DCA's project portfolio included a focus on protecting human rights online and/or promoting digital literacy for democratic participation (see also Section 6.4.3). This is a fast-growing engagement area that DCA has designated as one of its strategic focus areas in its Global Strategy 2023-2026. To amplify this work at policy level, DCA also

engaged in evidence-based advocacy at the 67th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, by organising a side event where it launched a report documenting women human rights defenders' (HRDs) experiences with online harassment and censorship. The event focused on holding governments and the private sector accountable as legal and moral duty bearers for the lack of protection of women HRDs online and advocated for improved international regulation.

DCA also worked to promote awareness about its human rights-related work in Denmark. In 2023, DCA strengthened relevant parts of its Danish webpage, for example by publishing case stories from Nepal that illustrate the scope of DCA's human rights work. DCA also marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2023 by publishing a joint statement with other Danish NGOs that registered approximately 16,000 views on social media platforms. Overall, 18% of the sampled population in Denmark considered DCA as an organisation with a strong focus on human rights in 2023.

05.4: Faith-based – for Systemic Change

DCA aims to increase engagement with and enhance visibility of its partnerships with faith-based actors. In 2023, 32% of DCA's projects across 16 CPs involved a wide range of faith-based actors in substantial roles (compared to 28% across 14 CPs in 2022). This increase shows that DCA's efforts to engage faith-based actors to counter inequalities, build resilience, and address humanitarian needs are incrementally yielding results. For example, in **Libya** DCA systematically engages with imams and mosques as centres of congregation to mobilise and engage community members in spreading mine risk education messages.

One of DCA's strategic focus areas is the engagement of faith actors in conflict prevention and peacebuilding (CPPB - see also Section 6.2.3). In 2023, 26 projects across 10 CPs included partnerships with local faith-based actors to foster social cohesion, prevent violent conflict, and build and sustain peace. These partners serve as community leaders in local peace structures and facilitate community dialogue. In the western part of the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, DCA engaged with an association that brings together key leaders of the Catholic, Evangelical, and Muslim communities to effectively build community trust and social cohesion, and provide mechanisms for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). This partnership enabled local resources and capacities to be harnessed to address complex social and humanitarian challenges in a culturally sensitive and community-driven way.

Another strategic area aims at bridge-building between DCA's faith-based partners abroad and its church constituency in

Denmark. In 2023, partners from both sides came together through interactions during visits, events, and debates facilitated by DCA. Participants in these activities reported that such interactions provided opportunities to challenge and transform their mutual perceptions and strengthened their sense of solidarity with one another. Activities ranged from boarding school exchanges to deepen young people's understanding of the roots and consequences of conflict in **Palestine** to bringing bishops from Denmark and church climate champions in **Kenya** together.

05.5: Partnerships – for Global Change

05.5.1: DCA's approach to local leadership

DCA's Local Leadership Strategy 2022-2026 was developed in close collaboration between DCA Head Office (HO), COs, partners, and other key stakeholders to further align and guide the organisation through a collective approach to strengthening local leadership. Prior to the development of this Strategy, several consultative processes were conducted through surveys and dialogue with relevant local actors and partners. Through this Strategy, DCA aims to shift power, resources, and responsibility closer to local communities while strengthening accountability, power sharing, and equitable partnerships. To this end, the Strategy outlines four pathways for change, and in 2023, DCA made the following progress in pursuing these strategic priorities:

1. Investing in innovative leadership models and governance structures

As part of the process of strengthening innovative and accountable governance structures, DCA reviewed the role and mandate of the Global Partner Group (GPG) that forms an advisory body to the DCA Board. In 2023, elections were held among partner groups in DCA CPs, which resulted in the appointment of seven partner representatives to the GPG. The GPG's mandate has been strengthened to advise the DCA Board and its international management team on specific issues related to partner-based work and local leadership, thus providing a direct avenue for partners' perspectives to shape DCA's direction in this respect. This means that the GPG will have an important role to play in monitoring DCA's local leadership strategy while ensuring that DCA partners' voices guide DCA not only in its operations but also at a more strategic level pertaining to organisational decision-making.

2. Strengthening accountability measures

DCA has assisted local actors to become stronger and more accountable representatives of the people they work with by supporting survivor and community-led response initiatives (sclr – see also section 6.2). In 2023, DCA implemented sclr and group cash transfers (GCTs) in 14 out of its 20 CPs globally: including in **Kenya, Mali, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine**. For example, in **Palestine**, the sclr methodology has successfully

empowered vulnerable communities, including women and young people, to drive their own crisis response and enhance their joint decision-making abilities. Overall, such community-led initiatives have strengthened accountability measures between community groups at grassroots level, the national NGOs, and DCA as an international partner.

3. Resourcing institutional capacity strengthening and organisational development

DCA has increased resourcing to support the multi-year institutional capacity strengthening of local and national civil society actors (see also Section 5.5.5). DCA Partners Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2023 (see below) indicated a high level of satisfaction among partners regarding capacity sharing (with 87% positive responses), but also suggested a need for DCA to provide more opportunities for learning and sharing between partners, which DCA will continue to prioritise in its future work. In **South Sudan**, DCA supported capacity sharing, peer-to-peer, and mentoring initiatives among local actors as well as joint learning initiatives and, in collaboration with Charter for Change (C4C) signatories, worked to develop joint and more harmonised due-diligence systems.

4. Investing in local coordination mechanisms and advocacy platforms

DCA has supported locally led coordination mechanisms and advocacy efforts at country and global level. In **Lebanon** DCA supported the national forum of NGOs, composed of local and national NGOs only, to increase this forum's advocacy work, including visibility and influencing policy makers at regional and global level. DCA's support to the forum has been pivotal in further advancing the localisation agenda in Lebanon and giving voice to Lebanese actors at global policy scenes.

Advancing the local leadership agenda and pursuing these four strategic priorities also entails several challenges. The level of global humanitarian funding transferred to local actors has remained very low, and financial systems (as managed by donors but also by DCA) are not yet tailored to move sufficient resources directly to local actors. Moreover, there are limited incentives provided by donors to support and invest in local organisations' institutional and organisational capacity. In addressing these challenges, DCA continues to advocate with donors and humanitarian actors through relevant policy forums and influence their priorities. At the

same time, DCA also moves these conversations to country level to strengthen capacity sharing and complementarity between diverse international, national and local actors on the ground.

Understanding how DCA's partners assess DCA as their partner is an important part in further developing and improving DCA's approach to local leadership. To this end, the DCA Partner Satisfaction Survey was introduced in 2022. This annual survey assesses DCA's capacity sharing component and other relevant aspects from both a programmatic/technical angle and an organisational/support angle, including procurement, finance, and other support services. Partners fill in the survey anonymously online. Findings are shared with all partners and discussed at country level to further inform and improve DCA's partnership and local leadership priorities.

The survey conducted in 2023 received responses from 147 partners, indicating an 82% response rate, which is a significant increase compared to the 65% response rate in 2022. The 2023 survey revealed an 86% satisfaction rate among partners regarding their partnership with DCA compared to 2022 survey which recorded a 75% satisfaction rate. In fact, DCA experienced heightened satisfaction across all three categories of inquiry in the 2023 survey. Notably, capacity sharing achieved an increase in satisfaction from 67% in 2022 to 87% in 2023. That said, it is important to note that despite the anonymity of the survey, the high levels of satisfaction might to some degree also reflect the inherent power dynamics between DCA and its partners on the ground. DCA will thus continue to invest time and effort in understanding partners' perspectives on DCA's partnership approaches and engage in constructive dialogue with its partners on how to strengthen its commitment to local leadership.

05.5.2: DCA's implementation modalities

As shown in Table 5.1, approximately DKK 448 million (more than 50%) out of DCA's total expenditure for international work in 2023 was used for projects implemented by DCA's local and international partners in the CPs. The remaining DKK 434 million was used for direct implementation by DCA and in co-implementation, typically as part of DCA's humanitarian mine action and response work and through multistakeholder consortia.

TABLE 5.1: TOTAL INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME IN 2023 BY IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES. NUMBERS EXCLUDE ADMINISTRATION COSTS AND COVER INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. (ALL AMOUNTS IN MILLION DKK)

SOURCE: DCA ANNUAL REPORT, FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023

	PARTNER IMPLEMENTED	DIRECTLY OR CO-IMPLEMENTED	GRAND TOTAL
DEVELOPMENT AID	130.5	124.1	256.3
HUMANITARIAN AID	317.9	310.0	626.2
GRAND TOTAL	448.4	434.1	882.5

05.5.3: DCA's partner portfolio and partnership agreements

In 2023, DCA had 198 partners with a total of 387 Cooperation Agreements (CAs) involving the transfer of funding or assets. Despite a slight decrease in the aggregated partner portfolio (from 204 in 2022), the total number of CAs increased (from 354 in 2022). This increase reflects DCA's growing commitment in fragile humanitarian contexts, where often only short-term funding is available to address acute needs. This situation results in more short-term interventions with partners which in turn lead to more CAs being concluded, but for shorter periods of time. Particularly in **South Sudan** and **Ukraine**, CPs significantly increased their partner portfolio and the number of CAs with existing partners due to an increased focus on localisation efforts and partner-led programming. In contrast, **Bangladesh** CP intentionally reduced the number of partners as part of DCA's exit strategy from the country (see also Section 6.1). Of the 198 partners, almost 12% were organisations led by young people and 27% women-led/women's rights organisations (WLO/WRO).

In 2023, DCA had 42 signed Partnership Agreements (PAs), reflecting mutual strategic commitments from both parties. Notably, 67% of these agreements were with organisations led by young people or led by women, indicating a slight

increase in efforts to engage with such organisations (compared to 58% in 2022). Overall, however, there was a substantial decrease in the total number of PAs compared to the 2022 portfolio. The decline can be attributed to several factors, including the difficulty for short-term agreements in humanitarian contexts to result in more formalised long-term commitments in the form of PAs due to volatility and uncertainty of funding. This was for example the case in **DRC** and **Syria**, where decreasing funding made it difficult to engage in longer-term strategic partnerships, and resulted in a proliferation of short-term agreements.

05.5.4: DCA's commitment to Charter for Change and Grand Bargain

DCA continues to strive to meet its commitments as a signatory to the C4C and Grand Bargain (GB), including a key target which is to transfer 25% of its total humanitarian funding to local actors. As shown in Table 5.2, DCA transferred 24% of total humanitarian funding and 30% of total development funding to local and national partners in 2023. While the magnitude of development funds transferred remained the same as in 2022, the humanitarian transfer marked the highest percentage since 2020. This indicates DCA's continued commitment to promoting equal partnerships and local leadership across the organisation.

TABLE 5.2: AGGREGATED FIGURES FOR C4C REPORT SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF GLOBAL FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR 2023, 2022, 2021

NOTE: THE NUMBERS HERE ARE CALCULATED BASED ON TRANSFERS TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS ONLY, WHEREAS TABLE 5.1 REFERS TO TRANSFERS TO ALL DCA PARTNERS

SOURCE: MACONOMY

	2023	2022	2021
THE PERCENTAGE OF HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TRANSFERRED TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS BASED ON DCA'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE	24%	22%	20%
THE PERCENTAGE OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDING TRANSFERRED TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS BASED ON DCA'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE	30%	30%	36%
THE PERCENTAGE OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING TRANSFERRED TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS BASED ON DCA'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE	26%	25%	25%

05.5.5: Organisational development and capacity sharing with partners

In line with DCA's commitments to C4C and the GB, enhancing capacity sharing and strengthening the capabilities of local partners through multi-year support continues to be a key focus area. In 2023, 133 partners (67%) reported receiving multi-year organisational/institutional capacity sharing support from DCA (compared to 62% in 2022). This increase is consistent with the findings reflected in the Partner Satisfaction Survey as mentioned above. Across CPs, a key priority was to support partners' organisational development. In **Iraq**, collaborative analyses of partner organisations informed targeted interventions, including policy development, fundraising strategies, and leadership skill enhancement. In **Ukraine**, the sclr/GCT modality (see also Section 6.2) was utilised to establish a

network of facilitating organisations, which coordinated mentoring, co-creation, and capacity sharing activities among a total of 196 community groups and CSOs.

05.5.6: Initiatives supporting informal social movements and activists

In 2023, initiatives were taken in 70 projects, including in **Cambodia, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, and Zambia**, to support activists and social movements. This is a substantial increase compared to 40 projects in 2022. These initiatives covered a range of intervention areas, including humanitarian response, early recovery, resilience building, and promoting space for civil society. Across these countries, 142 social movements contributed towards DCA's efforts to achieve its goals. In **Cambodia**, DCA and its partners supported informal groups of HRDs and social activists as well as livelihood groups. In

Nepal, support was channelled towards research about the social and economic status of individuals who had suffered bonded labour under the now-abolished Kamaiya system; under this system a worker and their family, through an informal contract with a landowner, had to do agricultural work in return for in-kind payments, such as a small percentage of the harvest.

DCA engaged with social movements and the partners supporting these to design innovative models of support. In **Lebanon** DCA tested a support model guided by principles of human rights, local leadership, and non-violence, which involved mapping of these social movements and an assessment of risks they faced. In this project, DCA collaborated with a feminist initiative led by young people to support and empower the freedom of expression of migrant and refugee women through promoting media skills and citizen journalism.

To integrate social movements within its partnership model, DCA needs to improve its analysis of how social movements operate within both development and humanitarian contexts. To this end, DCA will continue to improve its systems to ensure both flexibility and accountability in its work with social movements, in recognition of their diversity. Particular focus will be on improved risk sharing processes and respect for the agency of social movements to define their level of acceptable risk while operating in line with a 'do no harm' principle.

05.5.7: Multistakeholder-driven partnerships with the private sector

In 2023, DCA collaborated with private sector partners and market actors in 122 projects across all 20 CPs, showcasing an increased engagement of market-based actors across all global goals. These partnerships involved a wide range of activities. The increase in number of projects illustrates that DCA takes a broader market systems approach to engaging a broad diversity of local, national and international private sector actors involving social enterprises, financial institutions, and companies in both its humanitarian and development programming. In humanitarian settings in **CAR, Mali, and Ukraine**, DCA and its partners connected communities with formal and informal market actors to undertake activities such as cash distribution, but also livelihood development and income generation in for example waste management. In the context of DCA's development-oriented CPs, such partnerships fostered cross-sector dialogue and engagement of multiple stakeholders on environmental and social issues. Due diligence practices and activities to encourage responsible business conduct of private businesses in **Cambodia, Nepal, and Uganda** were also undertaken. DCA also supported access of small holder farmers to markets through engagement with local private sector actors. Additionally, partnerships were established to promote the development of greener and more sustainable

value chains under the Danida Green Business Partnership (DGBP) programme in **Kenya** (see also Section 8.6) and **Palestine**. These formalised partnerships, which include both local and Danish businesses, demonstrated how knowledge exchange, collaboration, and joint investments can elevate development impacts and promote responsible business conduct practices and improve global trade. DCA has been working with Danida-supported multistakeholder partnerships since 2018, and in 2023 finalised the first two projects established under the Danida Market Development Partnership programme in **Ethiopia** and **Uganda** to promote inclusive and responsible value chain development in the dairy and fresh produce sectors. Key results of these partnerships include capacity sharing with small-holder farmers that enabled to gain more equitable access to new markets. These partnerships also included focused interventions to train women and young people as micro-entrepreneurs, which in turn empowered them to diversify their income and enhance self-reliance in a way that best suits their diverse circumstances and aspirations.

05.5.8: Relationships with existing partners and church constituency in Denmark

In 2023, DCA had formal agreements with 14 different popular and church-based partners in Denmark, thus exceeding its longer-term target for partnership agreements in Denmark (13 in 2026). These agreements differed in scale, scope of activities, and target groups but all shared the same fundamental belief that local partnerships can create global change. A special emphasis was placed on engaging existing partners in sustainability and global climate action in 2023. For example, church constituencies, schools, and young people's organisations took part in DCA's 'Communal Dining against Food Waste'. Sustainability and food security were also a key element in DCA's partnership with FDF (a Christian organisation for children and young people in Denmark) around the GLOBUS project aimed at supporting farmers affected by climate change in **Nepal** (see also Section 7.3). In 2023 this project engaged more than 4,500 children and young people from FDF who took part in creative campaigns and activities about Nepal and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Likewise, eight of DCA's school partners visited local food security projects in **Cambodia, Malawi, Nepal, Palestine, and Zambia** (see also Sections 6.5.3 and 7.2). Through planting, cooking, and tasting different climate resilient crops, school partners gained first-hand experience which then inspired multiple local actions in Denmark.

2023 also saw an increasing focus on the growing number of conflicts around the world, where the role of faith-based actors and churches as a convener for dialogue and reflection on peaceful co-existence is becoming more apparent and needed. Together with the Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and National Council of Churches in Denmark, DCA organised a Worship for Peace

event with more than 1,000 participants in the Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen to create awareness and hope for peace (see also the change story, Section 6.5). Passing on hope was also key message in DCA's partnership with the Danish Church Choir organisation, KORLIV, which in 2023 resulted in joint publication of a new song booklet shared with 600 choirs around the country.

05.6: Conclusion

DCA made good progress to meet its strategic ambitions on fundamental principles. As a multi-mandated organisation, DCA increasingly integrated conflict prevention and peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, and climate/environment-related responses as part of its nexus approach. This work was often coupled with DCA's growing ambition to partner with local faith-based actors to foster social cohesion and build and sustain peace. DCA also continued to operationalise HRBA across its CPs, with 83% of DCA and partner projects integrating PANEL principles in 2023. In the context of shrinking civic space, DCA also increased its focus on protecting human rights and promoting democracy online, and 27% of DCA's project portfolio incorporated this focus in 2023. Partnering with faith actors and promoting awareness about DCA's HRBA also continued to constitute an important focus of DCA's engagement work in Denmark.

Another important characteristic of DCA's work in 2023 was its sustained commitment to furthering local leadership

and equitable partnerships that address power imbalances and prioritise locally led and inclusive solutions. To this end, initiatives such as the Partner Satisfaction Survey, the reform of the GPG, and an increased focus on supporting partners in their efforts to strengthen institutional capacity provided DCA and its local partners important platforms for reflection and dialogue. Likewise, DCA's growing collaboration with organisations led by women and young people and with social movements continues to play a significant role in enhancing partnerships with representatives of groups that are often marginalised and/or excluded from decision-making forums.

In its future work DCA will continue to improve its systems to ensure both flexibility and accountability in its work with local partners and other actors. This entails recognising the diversity of these actors including their different capacities in addressing the underlying root causes of vulnerability, fragility, and conflict. There will also be a need for enhanced and collective advocacy efforts by DCA jointly with its partners, at both HO and CO levels, vis-a-vis various donors to address the humanitarian funding gap and secure more flexible funding across the HDP nexus and in the climate/environmental sector. Similarly, DCA will also have to engage more with governments and businesses to call for their accountability to meet relevant policy commitments and invest in responsible practices in favour of the most vulnerable and marginalised people. ■

Change story – Fundamental Principles

In 2023, DCA facilitated a multistakeholder East Africa Business and Human Rights Dialogue with its partners over the course of three months. Co-convened by DCA **Uganda** and **Kenya**, the Dialogue brought together actors from governments, national human rights institutions, the private sector, international organisations, and civil society to discuss regional challenges and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. The dialogue culminated in a conference in Uganda with more than 100 representatives from across the region with the aim of promoting policy uptake and quality implementation to enhance responsible business practices. This initiative catalysed the start of processes to develop National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights in several countries in the region (see also Section 6.2.2). DCA and other participants also jointly published the 'Bringing Principles into Practice' report. The report makes specific recommendations for advancing business and human rights in the East Africa region. While attracting significant investments into the extractives and agricultural sectors, HRVs continue to be frequently documented in the region, and multistakeholder action and dialogue continues to be needed for a just transition.



Cyclone Freddy, which hit Malawi in March 2023, was the most powerful and longest-lived cyclone ever measured. Thousands lost their homes and livelihoods. DCA provided affected families with cash to rebuild their homes and with corn and bean seeds so they could sow the fields again. Now children are able to play football and have fun again. / Photo: Bax Lindhardt

06. Programme Results

06.1: Introduction – Overview of DCA's Global Programmes

In 2023, DCA had 20 CPs globally and reached five million people directly. In Denmark, DCA continued to actively involve volunteers, partners, and the public through various activities, with for example 10,000 people participating in DCA's annual door-to-door collection in March 2023.

2023 marked the last year of DCA operations in **Bangladesh**. Given declining funding to the Rohingya refugee response over recent years, DCA had to take the difficult decision to discontinue its operations in Bangladesh. Thus, 2023 was spent on phasing out existing projects in Cox's Bazar and closing down DCA offices in the country.

In 2023, a total of 317 projects were implemented by DCA and its 198 partners. Through this work, DCA reached five million

people directly, which was one million more than in 2022. The increase was primarily due to the escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas since October 2023 and the ensuing crisis in Gaza. This conflict generated significant engagement in advocacy activities, especially active engagement on social media and other digital platforms. As people who engage directly with DCA's advocacy content on these platforms are counted as people directly reached, Palestine CP stands out as the programme that reached the most people in 2023 as shown in Figure 6.1.

The age and gender disaggregation of people reached presented in Figure 6.2 shows that women represented 52% of people reached, while men represented 48%, and that 58% of people reached by DCA were between 25-60 years, while 22% were between 15-24 years.

FIGURE 6.1: PEOPLE REACHED DIRECTLY IN 2023 BY CP

NOTE: DATA FOR MALI ALSO INCLUDE PEOPLE REACHED IN BURKINA-FASO THROUGH PROJECTS ADMINISTERED BY MALI CP, AND DATA FOR SOUTH SUDAN INCLUDE PEOPLE REACHED IN SUDAN THROUGH PROJECTS ADMINISTERED BY SOUTH SUDAN CP.

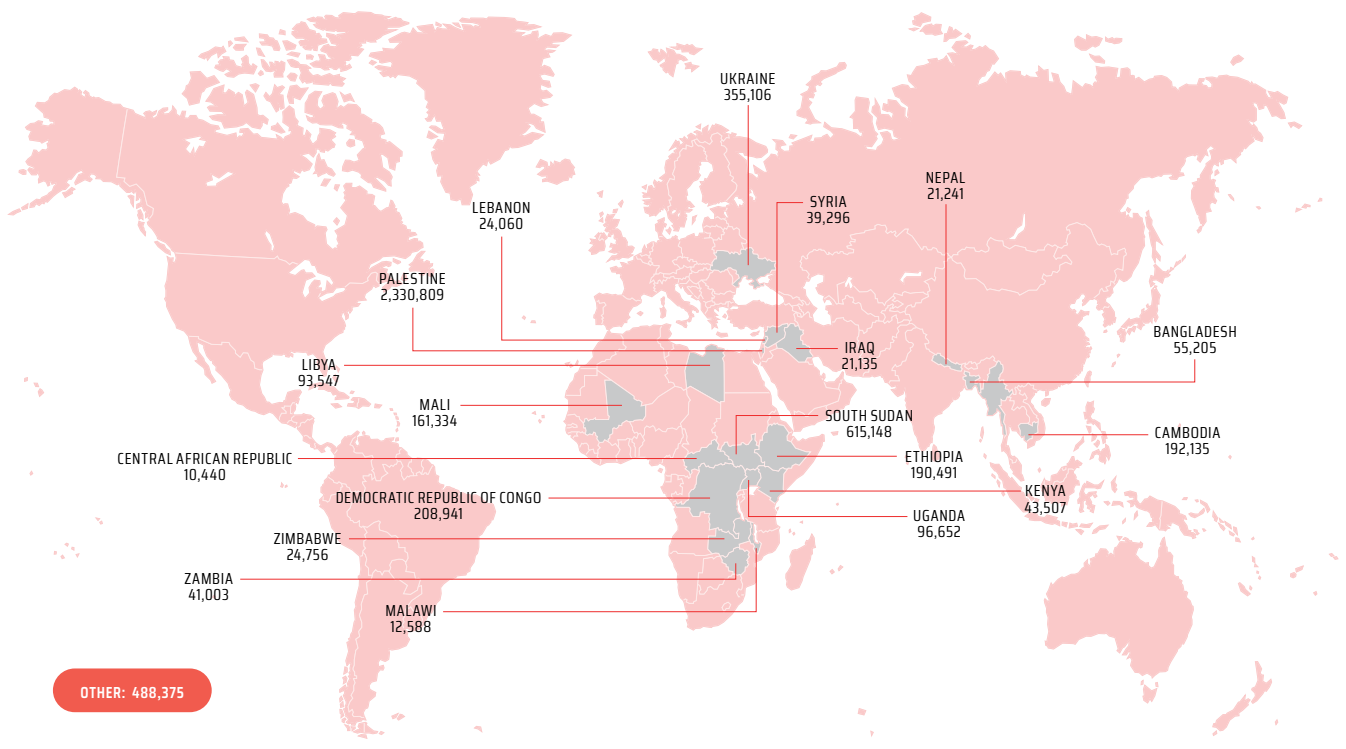
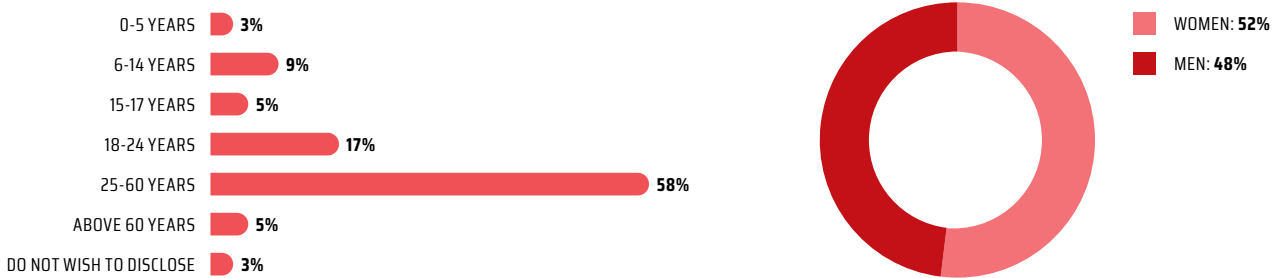


FIGURE 6.2: PEOPLE REACHED DIRECTLY BY AGE AND GENDER.

NOTE: IN THE GENDER BREAKDOWN, 'OTHER' COVERS PEOPLE NOT IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS WOMAN/MAN OR NOT WISHING TO DISCLOSE THEIR GENDER AFFILIATION. THE SHARE IS 0.06%.



06.2: Save Lives

06.2.1: Introduction to Save Lives Global Goal

Recognising the global trend of increasing humanitarian needs driven by protracted conflicts, climate change and environmental degradation, DCA places locally led and owned action as a key component for reaching its Save Lives goal. In 2023, DCA continued to increase the use of cash assistance as the first line and first choice response modality in meeting humanitarian needs. DCA expanded its investment in partner preparedness for cash programming with a strong focus on community-led GCTs and sclr. DCA's triple nexus approach, which integrates its humanitarian, development, and where relevant peacebuilding work, engaged local actors to identify and address drivers of violent conflict.

Across DCA's Save Lives portfolio, protection approaches and human rights principles of diversity and inclusion are aligned and incorporated to ensure safe and accountable programming (protection mainstreaming) as a minimum standard. DCA further expanded standalone programmes to address gender-based violence (GBV) in displacement settings and MHPSS across humanitarian contexts.

Threats posed by explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to pose a significant risk to people's individual safety and their social and economic well-being. DCA's survey and clearance interventions together with explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities continue to play a critical role in mitigating these risks for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and/or those trying to return to their communities.

06.2.2: LTC 1: Vulnerable and displaced people are safe and withstand shocks and crisis.

• IA 1: Humanitarian Response and Protection

DCA's commitment to maximise the protective impact of humanitarian assistance was evident in an increase in projects (from 10 in 2022 to 45 in 2023) with targeted measures to ensure that people receiving DCA's humanitarian assistance felt it was delivered according to protection

principles. This process of mainstreaming protection incorporated various approaches, including community-informed protection risk analyses, contextualised and resourced risk mitigation plans, and strengthening two-way communication channels between programme staff and communities.

2023 also saw a rise in both the number of CPs and in projects applying approaches to promote psychosocial wellbeing. This included classic MHPSS integration in protection interventions responding to the most urgent needs in **Syria, Ukraine, DRC, and Myanmar**. There were also more unique approaches leveraging DCA's distinctive expertise areas, such as Victim Assistance programming in **Mali**, where direct and indirect victims of explosive ordnance and small arms/light weapon violence were provided psychosocial support (PSS). Likewise, DCA drew on its extensive experience with GCTs both in **Palestine and Ukraine**, where it supported community-led initiatives enabling residents to address PSS needs within their own communities. In seeking to further develop innovative approaches that extend across the nexus, promising practice emerged in **CAR**, where research illuminated specific social-psychological determinants of wellbeing and enabled design of bespoke support modalities for young people's mental health, with the aim of contributing to peacebuilding outcomes.

EORE and awareness raising is an essential part of DCA's humanitarian mine action (HMA) and protection work. In 2023, DCA CPs strengthened their protection approach by combining and integrating EORE messaging into relevant interventions in **Mali, Syria, South Sudan, and Ukraine**. The CO reports for 2023 verify that DCA's and its partners' EORE sensitisation and messaging proved effective, with more than 92% of participants displaying safe knowledge of EO's among target groups. DCA, furthermore, strengthened its technical (TS) and non-technical survey (NTS) efforts in both rural and urban settings in particular in **Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine**.

Cash was a working modality used by all DCA's CPs except Libya in 2023. In total, over DKK 182 million was transferred to individuals, families, and community groups supporting a diverse range of community-led responses in various settings. Cash programming also served as DCA's primary humanitarian assistance modality in 2023 under IA1, with over DKK 128 million being transferred to over half a million people in need, and one third of this amount transferred via partners. These transfers enabled vulnerable households in humanitarian settings to meet their basic needs and reduce the prevalence of negative coping strategies, such as selling vital livelihood assets, skipping meals, and resorting to child marriages. The average coping strategy index (CSI) dropped by 41% in 2023 (as also in 2022). Typically, the targets for similar interventions done by other humanitarian agencies aim for a 20% reduction in CSI score. DCA's result for 2023 thus shows that a significant achievement continues to be made in this area. As the main modality of humanitarian response in DCA, cash programming occupies a key role in ensuring preparedness for emergencies (in **CAR, Syria, Mali, Ethiopia**), commitment to localised humanitarian responses (in **Ukraine, Palestine, South Sudan, and Sudan**) and anticipatory action (in **Uganda, Nepal**). In addition, over DKK 12 million was transferred as GCT/sclr microgrants to 120 groups under IA1 (see Section 6.2.3 for more).

It should be noted, however, that while DCA mentions the 2023 results along its 2022 results in reflecting on this IA, results may not be always directly comparable between the years given that there are often significant contextual changes in humanitarian settings. DCA's humanitarian projects do not target the same people, and DCA does not respond to the same disasters/crises every year. In fact, even in protracted contexts, the situations constantly evolve. Where relevant, DCA therefore uses specific baselines to make more nuanced comparisons.

Multi-year programming, resilience building, and systematic protection mainstreaming in **Ethiopia, Syria, and Zimbabwe** enhanced women's and girls' protection and thus reduced their risk of becoming affected by negative coping strategies, such as early marriages and dropping out of school. Reduction in negative coping strategies also helped women and young people participate in livelihood activities in **Cambodia** and **Kenya**, reducing vulnerability and safeguarding livelihoods.

Cash transfers and in-kind support improved food security and increased the intake of diversified nutritious food in food-insecure households. Compared to a baseline of 38%, 58% of targeted households achieved an acceptable Food

Consumption Score (FCS) in 2023 (the 2022 result was 61%). The increased number of households with acceptable FCS compared to the baseline reflects increased diversity and regularity of food consumption. For example, in **Mali**, cash transfers, income-generating activities, nutrition guidance, and cooking workshops helped at-risk women and children to improve their nutrition status. Similarly, the baseline for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon showed that 58% had poor FCSs due to insufficient carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins in their dietary intake. A project by DCA **Lebanon** to address this problem reduced the proportion of households with poor FCS to 2% through cash and voucher assistance (CVA). The intervention enabled refugee populations to access adequate and diversified food, hence reducing malnutrition among vulnerable groups such as children and people with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities.

Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) further enables households to acquire what they need from local markets based on their own priorities, thus boosting their dignity by facilitating choice and flexibility. In 2023, DCA interventions helped 65% of targeted households meet all or most of their basic needs (the result for 2022 was 56%), an increase from a baseline of 21.3%. Owing to MPCA, targeted households in **Mali** and **Ethiopia** were able to prioritise food, health, shelter, and education for their children.

06.2.3: LTC 2: Communities in fragile contexts are self-reliant and enjoy peaceful co-existence.

- **IA2: Early recovery and conflict prevention**

Five CPs in 2023, namely **CAR, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mali, and South Sudan**, showcased active integration of conflict sensitivity (CS) and CPPB components in relevant interventions, enabling local actors to address drivers of violent conflict and contribute to social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. Increasingly, CS assessments were conducted as an integrated part of projects and largely with and by community members – the recorded majority of whom were (young) women – and indicates a localisation of knowledge and skills. The explicit commitment to CS in many CPs together with a developed Global Toolkit were important milestones in 2023. To enable staff and partners to operationalise and embed CS better in day-to-day processes, DCA collaborated with the Danish Refugee Council and specialist consultants to develop practical tools for integrating CS throughout the project management cycle. The resulting toolkit was launched in a joint global workshop in 2023 and is currently being rolled out in several DCA CPs. In 2023, four CPs measured perceived levels of community-level social cohesion and marked improvements over project time spans, indicative of positive developments in the conflict context.

Many CPPB projects were integrated with other interventions ranging from MHPSS provision to climate change adaptation to meet context-specific peacebuilding needs. Several of these interventions stood out due to their focus on young people and their specific needs and opportunities to act as community peacebuilders, such as a social cohesion project in **Lebanon** and a peacebuilding and MHPSS project in **CAR**. Women peacebuilders were directly supported in some interventions, for instance in **Ethiopia**. Other projects, such as an EU-funded action in **CAR**, focused on supporting local peacebuilding mechanisms to become more inclusive of women, young people, ethno-religious minorities, and other diverse groups, as well as to engage with local, regional, and national authorities. Faith actors, traditional leaders and FBOs were actively engaged in relevant CPPB interventions, such as in **CAR, Ethiopia, and Mali**. While types of identified and addressed conflict drivers are highly context-specific, most are related to tensions within or between communities, which often arise along socio-economic or identity-based group divisions. In CPs such as **Ethiopia, Mali, and South Sudan**, the interplay between drivers of conflict and climate change vulnerability, especially around displacement, land ownership, and natural resource management, was considered in integrated programme responses.

In 2023, DCA and its partners worked to provide resources to community-led crisis responses within acute emergencies in **Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine**, as well as to forgotten crises in **Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Syria, and Iraq**, and in relation to anticipatory action frameworks in **Nepal**. Support to community-led responses included increased investments in the roll-out of sclr and GCTs as critical components of humanitarian and resilience building programming. The number of CPs supporting community-led responses (sclr/GCT) increased from seven in 2022 to 14 in 2023, with 432 community groups supported through transfers amounting to over 15 million DKK (over 80% channelled through local partners). In **Ukraine**, sclr/GCTs were used to support the expansion, continuation, and improvement of community-led responses in places most affected by the ongoing war (ranging from soup-kitchens to shelter support), while in **Kenya and Ethiopia** sclr/GCTs supported community-led responses to drought. Globally, 96% of sclr/GCT-supported groups self-reported increased preparedness and capacity of community members to respond to community priorities as a result of the cash assistance provided.

Community-led responses and livelihood support occupy key roles in integrated nexus programming within many of DCA's humanitarian programmes and aim to increase resilience while meeting the evolving needs of people impacted by crises. Such livelihood support is implemented for example

as part of vocational/skills training projects targeting young South Sudanese refugees in **Uganda** and Eritrean refugees in **Ethiopia**. Much of such work oriented towards enhancing livelihood skills of displaced population is reported under IA5 (see Section 6.3.3).

Increased safe access to socio-economic activities is one of the important impacts of clearance of ERWs and landmines. In 2023, DCA CPs strengthened and further developed their survey resources focusing on releasing land and other areas and hence ensuring safe access to livelihood activities and key infrastructure. As a result, DCA's survey and clearance interventions directly benefitted more than 129,000 individuals. In **DRC, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine**, DCA increased its survey and clearance exposure in semi-urban and urban areas to benefit more people and communities. DCA also added a stronger focus on combining HMA efforts with relevant and possible humanitarian interventions. In **Ukraine**, DCA connected its NTS interventions with cash programming, EORE and Community Liaison (CL) in the same communities. In **Mali**, NTS interventions are aligned with EORE, CL, victim assistance and peacebuilding efforts. In **Iraq**, DCA and a national partner successfully finalised the project 'Establishing a National HMA NGO' by securing international independent grants.

06.2.4: **LTC 3: Government institutions, non-state actors, international organisations, the private sector, and civil society organisations promote and adhere to localisation commitments and international law in conflict and crisis.**

• **IA3: Advocacy on Crisis and Humanitarian Issues**

In 2023, DCA COs and HO undertook varied advocacy and policy change efforts to promote localisation commitments and adherence to a rules-based world order across a range of contexts.

In **Palestine**, together with its Palestinian and Israeli partners, DCA continued to engage Danish and EU duty bearers to raise awareness of IHL violations and to promote respect for IHL. After October 7, 2023, DCA engaged jointly with other humanitarian actors at multiple levels: in Jerusalem (through the Association of International Development Agencies – an international NGO coordination forum in the occupied Palestinian Territory), in Brussels (through Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance EU) and in Copenhagen. These multi-level efforts focused on amplifying calls for a ceasefire, for continued support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) that plays a vital role for provision of essential assistance and services in Gaza, and for a cessation of all violations of international law.

In turn, DCA **Syria** with DCA HO colleagues participated in the Brussels VII Conference ‘Supporting the future of Syria and the region’ organised by the EU in June 2023 and continued to lead an informal advocacy group of actors working in Syria and the surrounding region at the Copenhagen level. DCA **Lebanon** also supported a Lebanese partner to attend the ‘Hear Our Voices’ Conference held in Amman, Jordan, where locally led organisations and international NGOs involved in Syria response came together to promote joint agenda-setting ahead of the Brussels VII Conference. Meanwhile, DCA **Iraq** continued to position its partners at the forefront of donor dialogue and engagement in furthering DCA’s local leadership objectives. In **Mali**, DCA undertook joint advocacy efforts focused on mine action, specifically to raise awareness about the increasing humanitarian needs associated with the proliferation of improvised explosive devices across the country and their disproportionate impact on civilians. This initiative also sought to influence funding decisions and drive more decisive, HMA-specific commitments, resulting in strengthening of the emphasis on protection issues.

In 2023, DCA also continued to advocate with key donors to develop policies and guidance on localisation that ensure a more equal playing field for local actors. As a result of such advocacy, the European Commission’s Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) launched their localisation guidance that aligned with the work and priorities of DCA and its partners (see Section 5.5 for more on these priorities). Furthermore, DCA has facilitated dialogue through the C4C and ACT Alliance with governments and donors at country level to ensure that donors’ localisation policies are implemented at that level.

In 2023, DCA HO led the development of a joint working paper with other Danish CSOs on innovative funding mechanisms

to support localisation across the HDP nexus. This paper was launched during the Danish MFA-convened donor conference on localisation in Copenhagen in October 2023, during which DCA’s Secretary General made a keynote presentation.

06.2.5: Conclusion – Save Lives

Overall, DCA finds its achievements under the Save Lives goal in 2023 to be satisfactory. DCA demonstrated its even stronger commitment to delivering humanitarian assistance in accordance with protection principles and continued to push for local leadership, for example through advancing community-led responses in humanitarian action and resilience building. The efforts to expand these approaches will be further intensified in that the work with local partners in humanitarian and nexus settings will be given priority in line with DCA’s Local Leadership Strategy.

DCA also enhanced its approach to integrated nexus programming. For example this approach resulted in increased focus on CS approaches applied across DCA CPs in peacebuilding efforts, food security programming, EORE and NTS, and cash programming. Cash programming, including GCTs, continued to be DCA’s primary humanitarian assistance modality and DCA will continue to focus on further enhancing its work in this area (see also the change story below).

DCA staff at both CO and HO levels also continued to devote time and energy together with partners to promote attention and awareness of pressing advocacy issues under the Save Lives goal. DCA intends to further strengthen its advocacy efforts for more long-term solutions in humanitarian contexts, especially through calling for protection of civilians, the upholding of IHL, and the need for the international community to address the widening humanitarian funding gap, particularly in forgotten crises.

Change story – Save Lives

2023 saw a dramatic increase in attention and support to crisis responses led by community volunteer groups. Data collected by Local to Global Protection (L2GP – an initiative of humanitarian workers and activists committed to meaningful transfer of power and agency to local and national actors in crisis) indicate that global financial support for such community-led responses (sclr/GCTs) doubled from around DKK 45 million in 2022 to more than DKK 100 million in 2023. DCA’s support for this purpose reached DKK 15 million in 2023. DCA, in collaboration with partner NGOs and networks such as L2GP and the Cash Learning Partnership, lead in supporting community-led responses globally. In crises such as **Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine**, community volunteer groups with support from DCA responded in places where need was greatest, but where very few others or no one could respond. Volunteers from the crisis-affected communities organised local shelters, soup kitchens, drinking water provision, PSS, protection, and tried to reduce local conflict. A colleague with DCA’s sister agency Christian Aid reports from Gaza that: ‘Community level responses have been the main driving force for survival in Gaza. It comes very naturally - even if the volunteers have not been trained. They are survivors and they can do anything’. Such work is as important as that of larger humanitarian organisations. Despite being affected by the crisis themselves, the volunteers were able to reach those that otherwise would be left behind.

06.3: Build Resilient Communities

06.3.1: Introduction to Build Resilient Communities Global Goal

DCA's work under the global goal of 'Build Resilient Communities' focuses on strengthening the social, economic, and environmental resilience of vulnerable people. In 2023, most of the activities under this global goal took the form of disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate resilience and livelihoods interventions. Taking a locally led approach, DCA engaged communities in the design and implementation of resilience measures, including anticipatory action, and paid attention to fostering ownership of resilience building at local, national, regional, and global level. DCA also worked to strengthen its models for influencing systemic changes in food and market systems. The integration of agroecology (AE) principles in food production and landscape-level natural resource management enhanced the resilience of communities to environmental and climate shocks and stresses. Working across the HDP nexus, DCA sought to connect humanitarian assistance, early recovery of local food and market systems, and long-term resilience building aimed at green economic empowerment and financial inclusion. At the same time, DCA continued to advocate for responsible business conduct, including in food value chains, and to be a strong voice in the global climate debate, especially in the areas of adaptation and loss and damage.

06.3.2: LTC 4: Vulnerable and displaced people anticipate and adapt to climate and environmental stressors and shocks, engaging in a sustainable and regenerative use of resources.

- **IA4: Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate resilience**

DCA and partners continued working together with communities and relevant local organisations to enhance climate resilience and promote the adoption of practices and strategies to anticipate and reduce the risks associated with climate change. According to project portfolio analysis based on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Rio Markers methodology, DCA and partners supported the adoption of DRR and/or climate adaptation practices across 14 CPs both in humanitarian and development settings, and both in rural and urban contexts. In the climate adaptation field, DCA increasingly shifted from implementing climate resilient agricultural practices at farm level towards landscape and system-level approaches that support transformation to more sustainable resource management and food systems. Among the five CPs that particularly focused on this approach, 77% of targeted individuals reported to have successfully adopted adaptation and DRR practices. In **Ethiopia** DCA and local partners implemented a combination of locally led adaptation practices, such as community-led integrated watershed management, to effectively address food security, water management, and environmental protection in a context of severe drought. In other contexts, DCA promoted adaptation practices

at farm level, such as climate resilient practices for homestead gardening in Rohingya refugee camps in **Bangladesh** (see also Section 7.4). Besides increasing household-level food security and nutrition, this project fostered community cohesion through involving both men and women and thereby highlighting the importance of teamwork for collective sustainability and resilience.

DCA also strengthened engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including local and international research institutions such as the World Resource Institute (WRI), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and international organisations such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This engagement further expanded DCA's knowledge base on locally led action to address adaptation and loss and damage and to assess the impact of AE on farmers' resilience. Likewise, it has supported internal learning, including through capacity sharing on climate adaptation programming, and has provided opportunities for up-scaling joint actions. DCA's strengthened capacity and growing track record on climate adaptation interventions also translated into the design of multi-country initiatives aimed at scaling up locally led adaptation in humanitarian settings, for example in the borderlands of **Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan**.

A total of 11 CPs promoted the adoption of DRR practices in communities affected by the disasters and adverse impacts of climate change, such as severe flooding and landslides in **Nepal**, a combination of drought and flooding in **Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda**, and human-wildlife conflict linked to ecosystem degradation and increasing aridity in the Zambezi Valley in **Zimbabwe**. DCA and partners continued promoting community-led DRR interventions and enhanced efforts to test innovative approaches to support communities to act ahead of predicted hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts. In Mahakali River Basin in Western **Nepal**, a scalable model of locally led DRR was co-designed and tested. This model brought together community leaders, young people, local government authorities, and experts across multiple sectors to support informed decision-making using an impact-based forecasting mechanism to determine household-level flood risks and ensure that systems for early action are in place. Evidence and lessons were consolidated in a policy brief to promote the integration of anticipatory action into relevant policies.

A total of 13 CPs promoted the adoption of practices to mitigate climate change, either by reducing carbon dioxide emissions or by promoting the adoption of carbon sequestration, for example through afforestation or agroforestry practices. In five CPs, 91% of individuals targeted by DCA's resilience building projects adopted mitigation,

environmental and biodiversity protection practices. In addition, 10 CPs continued promoting the adoption of renewable energy technology for different purposes. For example, solar lamps and sustainable street lighting enhanced safety in **Bangladesh, Libya, and Palestine**, whereas solar pumps strengthened the sustainability of irrigation systems in **Ethiopia, Nepal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe**. DCA also supported approaches where both mitigation, adaptation, and other environmental, social, and economic objectives were met, for example through promoting the production and adoption of clean cookstoves and by supporting community-led approaches to sustainable land management and AE practices.

DCA's adherence to AE as a transformative framework for DRR, climate resilience, and fairer food systems through sustainable resource management and food production practices was expanded and consolidated in 2023. DCA staff increasingly participated in AE and climate resilience training. The outcome was increased integration of relevant approaches in new projects and on-going adjustment of existing interventions by identifying additional entry points to enhance environmental resilience of existing agricultural practices. As of 2023, 15 CPs incorporated AE in some form. Nine CPs supported this transition with technical training for partner staff and local duty bearers. Furthermore, five CPs engaged with FAO offices and relevant national academic institutions and networks in rolling out and using FAO's Tool for AE Performance Evaluation (TAPE). TAPE is a systematic way to monitor progress towards AE by assessing its impact on social, environmental, and economic dimensions of food production systems. This tool also produces documentation to promote organisational learning across countries.

06.3.3: LTC 5: Vulnerable and displaced people are resilient and actively engaged in economically and environmentally sustainable food and market systems.

- **IA5: Resilient livelihoods linked to markets and food systems**

In 2023, 36 % of DCAs projects had a focus on improving food security or working towards promoting inclusive, just, environmentally sustainable, and resilient food and market systems. DCA and partners worked across the HDP nexus to connect emergency food assistance, early recovery of local food and market systems and long-term resilience building, for example in **Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe**. Similarly, promoting green economic empowerment continued to be an important focus of resilience building. In 2023, 87% of income and employment opportunities created through DCA's interventions were categorised as green, showing DCA's strategic focus on strengthening innovative green solutions and mobilising resources to develop pro-poor food and market

systems. Four CPs reported that individuals targeted through relevant interventions had increased income and held decision-making power on how this income was spent in the household. Over the course of 2023, DCA also engaged in a comprehensive organisational co-creation process to identify successful approaches and the main challenges and opportunities that DCA and its partners have for influencing food and market system change. This process led to development of innovative concepts and leveraging of funding for new projects that will serve as inspiration for DCA, partners and donors for replication and scaling up for a transformational systems approach to tackling the food and climate crisis.

While DCA historically has focused on rural communities, in 2023 its work continued to expand into urban areas. Besides being a response to a global trend of urbanisation, this shift reflects a more comprehensive approach to food and market systems, which stresses the interconnectedness of market actors across rural and urban areas. In 2023, about one fifth of all individuals supported by DCA and partners for employment and livelihood opportunities resided in urban areas, generated income from petty trade, off-farm processing, and waste management. To identify good practices and foster learning in the field of urban programming, a cross-organisational community of practice (CoP) was set up, facilitating regular exchange sessions for relevant colleagues in **Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Palestine, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe**. The CoP focused particularly on pilot initiatives in the field of circular economy and waste management to support the development of viable business models that contribute to building economic resilience of vulnerable urban residents, including marginalised women and young people, refugees and IDPs, and their host communities (see also change story in Chapter 8).

Financial inclusion continued to be another longstanding key programmatic priority across development and humanitarian settings. While community-based savings and loan schemes as well as CVA (see also Section 6.2.2) remained common approaches in DCA and partners' programme portfolios, other tools and new types of partnerships for promoting financial inclusion were added and piloted in 2023. In **Kenya**, DCA partnered with a micro finance institution to set up a revolving fund to enable young people to access finance for investing into their businesses. In **Cambodia**, DCA joined forces with an international impact investment (crowdfunding-based) scheme to ensure access to working capital for a farmers' cooperative. This enabled the cooperative members to expand their business on organic produce and showcases how blended finance can boost the economic and environmental resilience of smallholders (see also Section 8.2 for more on blended finance). The continuous

rise of mobile money in many of the countries where DCA works also meant that financial and digital literacy remained a key interest. In **Uganda**, DCA tested digital approaches for strengthening women's ability to invest wisely and manage funds using mobile devices and digital vouchers. Specifically, DCA collaborated with a financial technology company and assisted savings groups to digitise their cash books and thus build a digital financial track record that enables them to access formal financial services.

06.3.4: LTC 6: Government institutions, international and national organisations, the private sector, research institutions and civil society contribute to the implementation of global, national, and local instruments that strengthen just climate and environmental policies, protect human rights, and promote responsible business conduct.

- **IA6: Advocacy on resilience, including business and human rights**

DCA advocacy activities under the 'Build Resilient Communities' goal call for systemic changes at multiple levels to promote just climate and environmental policies, sustainable and resilient food systems, and responsible business conduct.

Globally, DCA continued to strengthen its positioning as a stakeholder in global climate policy discussions. Through its close collaboration with Danish MFA, DCA organised four high-level events about adaptation in Copenhagen, at the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, at the UN General Assembly in New York, and at COP28 in Dubai. This enabled DCA to actively participate in the key relevant debates and contribute to the adaptation outcome of COP28. DCA also continued to play a leading role in climate advocacy efforts within the ACT Alliance, for example in the context of the ACT Alliance's coordinated contribution to the COP28 decision to operationalise a loss and damage fund.

In relation to international advocacy on food systems, DCA identified priority agendas, alliances, and actors to engage with in order to influence food system change. For example, in 2023 DCA became a member of the Agroecology Coalition. This coalition is a global alliance of national governments, regional organisations, UN agencies, private sector actors, research institutions, indigenous people's associations, farmers associations and CSOs committed to accelerating the transformation of food systems through AE.

DCA COs also played an active role in advocacy efforts on resilience. Based on such advocacy activities, DCA CPs reported 31 changes in policies, legal frameworks, actions, and practices by duty bearers that cover a wide range of thematic areas in 2023. For example, in relation

to climate policy, five CPs included advocacy related to climate adaptation and loss and damage. To this end, DCA **Ethiopia** and **Nepal** COs presented studies on locally led climate action and nature-based solutions at COP28. With respect to food systems, DCA **Uganda** advocated for improved conditions for farmers in food value chains with private sector actors and local government and succeeded in improving arrangements for sourcing input and ensuring ready buyers. DCA also succeeded in improving land tenure conditions for communities and contributed to developing CSO policy advocacy positions and strategies on reforming relevant national policies and acts on land rights in Uganda. In **Zimbabwe**, **Nepal**, and **Cambodia**, DCA has contributed to bringing AE considerations into the national policy dialogue on agriculture. With respect to responsible business conduct, DCA and its partners in **Uganda** contributed to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights. This plan focuses on the government's commitment to improve human rights, access to remedy, and promotion of better conditions for communities negatively affected by business operations, for instance in relation to land based investments in agriculture and extractive industries. This achievement was the result of continuous support to partner and grass-root organisations to raise awareness and of facilitating spaces for dialogue and transfer of information across sectors (see also Chapter 5 change story). DCA also continued to facilitate participation of its partner organisations in international forums such as the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights and the Regional Africa Forum on Business and Human Rights, where DCA and partners co-facilitated multistakeholder workshops and panels.

06.3.5: Conclusion – Build Resilient Communities

DCA has made considerable progress with reaching its strategic commitments under the Build Resilient Communities goal in 2023. DCA resilience building work increasingly integrated climate action, financial inclusion, and sustainable and resilient food and market systems approaches, including AE. DCA CPs continued to engage communities and individuals in the design and implementation of interventions such as DRR, anticipatory action and climate resilient practices in contexts severely affected by climate change, environmental degradation and other shocks and stresses. In promoting inclusive, sustainable, and more resilient food and market systems and economic resilience of marginalised groups in this context, DCA also adopted more comprehensive approaches factoring in the differences and links between needs in rural and urban areas. At the same time, DCA together with its existing partners continued to explore new partnerships at local, national, and global levels in its efforts to advocate

for systemic changes in climate and environmental policies, food and market systems, and responsible business conduct. This has inspired new collaborations and actions with the Danish Government, international organisations, research institutions and philanthropic foundations. The knowledge gathered through programmatic and advocacy collaborations also strengthened DCA's organisational learning in this area and will continue to be key to ensuring that advocacy efforts to mobilise finance and influence enabling policy frameworks are informed by relevant on-the-ground experiences.

DCA has also identified gaps and challenges to delivering on its strategic ambitions. In the coming years, DCA intends to further strengthen technical capacities of its staff and partners and ensure a more systematic integration of lessons learned from existing experiences into future programming.

Towards this end, the need to strengthen the longer-term financial sustainability of resilience building interventions and bring successful approaches to scale has been one of the key learnings. DCA will address this by enhancing capacity on approaches that address the underlying causes of unsustainable and unequal food and market systems, promote climate resilient, gender responsive market systems development, and attract investments. Building on DCA's strengths with developing multistakeholder collaborations, DCA will continue to engage in new networks and alliances to further enhance its efforts to connect across relevant agendas, for example by addressing the links between business and human rights, sustainable food and market systems, gender equality, blended finance models, and climate finance advocacy.

Change story – Build Resilient Communities

In **Nepal**, DCA initiated the establishment of a network of media professionals, agriculture experts, and other relevant stakeholders successfully engaging in advocacy for AE at the national level. This action built on learning from the DCA experience of establishing AE Living Labs in **Cambodia** (see Section 8.7 for more details) for engagement in regional policy dialogue platforms. Through this approach, DCA staff and partners enhanced awareness raising, sparking public debates that also engaged policy makers. A tangible result was that the Ministry of Agriculture of Nepal took a more participatory approach to the formulation of the Agriculture Act, and committed to incorporating feedback, reviews, and comments from stakeholders. As the final Agriculture Act is expected to include key elements of AE, DCA and partners intend to use the Act as a means to gain momentum in advancing its advocacy for AE in the region.

06.4: Fight Extreme Inequality

06.4.1: Introduction to Fight Extreme Inequality Global Goal

DCA's work under Fight Extreme Inequality global goal focuses on empowering marginalised individuals, strengthening democratic institutions, and promoting the role of civil society and HRDs, amidst a global democratic decline and erosion of the rules-based world order. Through close collaboration with its partners, DCA supported work in this area at various interrelated levels: at the level of individuals and community groups, at the level of CSOs, and at the national and international levels. This was done through projects designed to empower individuals to meaningfully participate in public processes, enhance the protection of human rights in both online and offline spaces, and to push back against laws and policies that intended to curtail and/or erode civic space. To promote structural change, DCA pushed for stronger interlinkages between work at the country level and at the international level, through advocacy based on experiences from the ground. DCA also continued to strengthen its systems to ensure it preserves its ability to operate amidst repressive contexts. This was done for

example through supporting the role of faith actors to advocate for human rights in repressive contexts, and through building DCA's internal systems to support the role of social movements and informal partners.

06.4.2: LTC 7: Marginalised and vulnerable individuals, households, and communities know, own, and claim their rights and the rights of others, and influence decisions to respond to their needs and protect their rights.

• IA7: Inclusive participation and decision-making

In 2023, DCA measured changes in inclusive participation in decision-making across 24 projects implemented in nine CPs. Under this IA, DCA and partners worked to support the capacity, knowledge, and space for marginalised and vulnerable people to defend and claim their rights, address discrimination, and influence equitable and transparent service delivery, policy development and resource distribution, especially at the local level. However, working towards these goals had been increasingly difficult given the overall tendency of democratic decline and mounting pressures on civic space in many countries in which DCA operates (see also Chapter

3). Thus, DCA saw a decrease in the percentage of targeted individuals who reported that they were able to participate in decision-making from 74% in 2022 to 57% in 2023. At the same time, there was a notable increase in the share of those who demonstrated positive behaviours as a result of increased knowledge and recognition of the rights of vulnerable and marginalised people, from 47% in 2022 to 79% in 2023.

In **Nepal**, DCA enhanced the capacity of women and marginalised groups to participate in local government planning processes through providing training and facilitating access to information. As a result, these groups were able to access local and provincial government resources through community action plans (CAPs) in seven local government areas, with government budgets made available to implement 25 CAPs. In one municipality, a women's agriculture group received funds from the provincial government for activities to combat GBV and caste-based discrimination and to engage in small business and livelihood activities. DCA also invested in leadership development of women and marginalised groups. Consequently, 172 women stepped into leadership positions in women's networks, political parties, community forest user groups, school management committees, and cooperatives, thus taking on key roles in representing their communities and influencing relevant decision-making.

In **Cambodia**, DCA supported partners to conduct training on fair trial rights for 455 university students (64% women) and on technical court monitoring for 282 HRDs (30% women) across 12 provinces. As a result, 81.5% of students and HRDs increased their understanding of fair trial rights and how to claim them. Training participants reported that they felt confident in demanding fair trial rights from court staff, police, and other stakeholders. Moreover, 96.5% of students reported they had already used what they had learnt from the training, by sharing knowledge with peers, through posts on social media, or by following up on court and trial decisions. Digital and physical security training was also conducted for 162 HRDs (28% women), with 87% of HRDs utilising knowledge from the training in continuing their human rights work.

DCA also supported HRDs through capacity sharing sessions: 88% of HRDs surveyed in **Cambodia** and **Palestine** reported that they felt safer defending human rights as a result of these activities.

In **Palestine**, 254 women received training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and on HRVs and solutions, including how to raise complaints with local duty bearers, service providers, and the PSEA network. Training participants reported increased awareness of their rights, with

some women subsequently reporting that they had also followed up with duty bearers and service providers in this regard.

In **Uganda**, DCA supported the work of community activists, cultural leaders, local council leaders, and faith leaders to raise awareness on gender justice and women's economic empowerment. The project reached 636 parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders (hereunder 278 women) through drama sessions aimed at dismantling negative gender norms and stereotypes that lead to GBV and harmful behaviour. Nearly 75% of the surveyed targeted individuals demonstrated positive behaviour as a result of increased knowledge and recognition of rights.

06.4.3: **LTC 8: A diverse and strong civil society that represents marginalised, vulnerable, and displaced people and holds moral and legal duty bearers to account.**

- **IA8 Space for Civil Society**

To promote more space for civil society to operate, DCA supported interventions aimed at strengthening the ability of local actors to advocate for their rights, and to counter restrictive measures imposed by governments and de-facto authorities. DCA worked with formal and informal CSOs, faith-based actors, and/or social movements (see also Section 5.5.6) that represent marginalised and vulnerable individuals aiming to hold duty bearers accountable. A total of 4,153 actions were conducted that reached at least 275,133 individuals. These actions included campaigns, research, solidarity actions, and protection activities for at-risk HRDs.

In **Kenya**, DCA and its partners supported HRDs, social movements and other civil society partners in demanding accountability on land rights, resulting in the drafting of and advocacy for an action plan that recognised the rights of community members. The supported actors also facilitated engagements between community members and duty bearers to recognise this action plan. Furthermore, partners provided legal aid to oblige public authorities to address violations and gaps in services in **Cambodia** and **Zimbabwe**. DCA also supported partners in demanding accountability on land rights through its work on Business and Human Rights, thus enhancing links between its resilience building work and initiatives to fight inequality (see also Section 6.3.4).

DCA and partners also promoted human rights online through documentation and advocacy to combat digital rights violations against HRDs (see also Section 5.2) and ethnic minorities. In **Palestine**, digital rights violations such as disinformation and hate speeches were documented to analyse trends and to feed into advocacy action. Meanwhile, rights-holders in **Cambodia** joined capacity sharing sessions on digital rights and training on legal analysis of cyber laws

to understand how these apply to their own contexts. At the international level, DCA participated in consultations for the Global Digital Compact, a global framework meant to guide how States deal with technology. Likewise, DCA provided input on integrating language around human rights, civic space, and technology into the 'Pact for the Future' that will be negotiated and is expected to be endorsed by countries in the lead-up to and during the UN Summit of the Future in New York in September 2024.

Human rights monitoring and documentation form a key part of DCA's work to ensure that efforts to seek accountability are based on solid evidence. In 2023, a total of 14,517 cases of HRVs were documented (compared to 25,863 in 2022). The decrease reflects an introduction of a more precise methodology in 2023, which counts number of cases against groups and individuals (rather than violations against individuals only, as was done in 2022). Documented cases included violations of civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, and rights of women and marginalised groups. Of these, 4,327 (29.8%) were referred for redress or follow-up, while 1,010 (6.9%) were effectively solved. In one context, documented cases of violations against civil society actors were litigated, which led to the rights violations being reversed or remedied. DCA and its partners also documented violations against activists and HRDs in authoritarian countries, including cases of judicial harassment and criminalisation, illegal detentions, and threats to physical security. In **Nepal** and **Bangladesh**, DCA partners documented violations against women's rights, including cases of GBV and domestic violence.

06.4.4: **LTC 9: Government institutions, international organisations, the private sector, and moral duty bearers protect civic space and safe digital participation, and adhere to human rights.**

- **IA9 Advocacy on Human Rights**

In 2023, DCA documented an increase in the number of CPs and projects reporting to have contributed to holding duty bearers to account. DCA and partners contributed to 115 changes in laws, policies, or practices of duty bearers in six countries. In so doing, DCA and partners conducted effective and strategic advocacy to hold legal and moral duty bearers accountable towards their human rights obligations. Focus areas included social service distribution, land rights, digital rights, addressing GBV and technology-facilitated GBV, and promoting changes in laws that protect and promote human rights and civic space. For example, in **Cambodia**, DCA supported partners' advocacy that led to increased transparency by courts on trial procedures.

Likewise, DCA continued to support civil society engagement in international human rights and accountability mechanisms,

such as the Universal Periodic Review, Human Rights Council sessions, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and multi-stakeholder forums such as the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). Through these mechanisms, DCA's civil society partners drew attention to documented violations and put forward specific recommendations.

DCA also supported partners' work in advocating against restrictive laws, including those invoking national security, counter-terrorist financing, and money laundering that risked criminalising human rights work. At the same time, DCA supported its partners' efforts towards institutionalising the protection of civil society. For example, DCA-supported human rights partners in **Nepal** who lobbied for the passage of the National Law on Protection of Human Rights Defenders and resulted in the provincial governments committing to support the proposed law. In **Zambia**, DCA has contributed to the passage of the Access to Information Bill through participating in the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) network. This action enabled DCA to contribute to CSPR's joint efforts that played a pivotal role in the enactment of the bill through submissions which led to members of parliament becoming involved and providing guidance on key aspects of this policy change.

Furthermore, DCA supported relevant authorities in complying with their obligations in selected areas. In the **DRC**, DCA worked with the Ministry of Gender, Family and the Child and the governmental focal point for the fight against GBV to actively promote the implementation of the National Gender Policy, the National Strategy to Combat GBV and its associated Protocols and Standard Operational Procedures. This work was complemented by community level work that established local groups to seek to change relevant norms and practices through community dialogue.

06.4.5: **Conclusion – Fight Extreme Inequality**

The environment for DCA's work under its Fight Extreme Inequality global goal is becoming increasingly complex due to the shrinking civic space and dismantling of democratic institutions by authoritarian governments. This poses new challenges and risks both for DCA and even more so for its partners, which make the desired results harder to achieve and increase the need for innovative interventions that can be adapted to an evolving operational landscape.

Despite these challenges, DCA and its partners continued to reach some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in 2023, strengthening their relevant knowledge and skills to claim their rights, participate in relevant decision-making

forums, and advocate for change. More DCA CPs integrated relevant elements of work to promote inclusive participation in decision-making, (re)claim civic space, and strengthen human rights advocacy, including within challenging fragile or conflict-affected contexts. Through targeted training and awareness raising interventions, DCA and its partners managed to equip people with knowledge that they could apply to exercising their rights and further share within their networks. Likewise, through strengthening the evidence base and the linkages between country-level and international advocacy efforts, DCA and partners achieved some much-needed policy changes to counter restrictive measures, protect HRDs, and push for more recognition of the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups. This broad range of activities and initiatives undertaken by DCA in 2023 also reflects the strength of DCA's partnerships with diverse actors, including local community groups, CSOs, faith actors,

social movements, and activists, and the resilience of these actors amidst continuing setbacks. This shows that despite the increasingly challenging operating environment, DCA and its partners' work in this area continues to make positive even if often incremental changes.

DCA will maintain its focus on engaging with diverse actors while being mindful of the respective contexts in which they operate, and how and where DCA can make a meaningful contribution by supporting them. In particular, DCA will seek to further expand its focus on HRBA in fragile settings. DCA will also focus on the role of young people – a group that remains inadequately captured in DCA's work to fight extreme inequality. This will be done by building on results achieved so far through for example promoting opportunities for mutual interactions and learning for young people in Denmark and in DCA's countries of operation.

Change story – Fight Extreme Inequality

In **Palestine**, DCA and its partners supported members of a protection group in their advocacy vis-a-vis the Women's Affairs Department (WAD) at their local governorate. The protection group invited the WAD to their village to share the risks and vulnerabilities they had identified in the community and their action plan for addressing these risks. They advocated for WAD to recognise the risks and include them in its own work plan. Four meetings were conducted between the protection group and the WAD, resulting in the WAD agreeing to include the protection group's action plan within the governorate's work plan. Two of the women engaged in these advocacy activities were later appointed as members of the governorate's Women's Committee and continue to work towards getting issues from their communities integrated into the governorate's activities and projects. This example highlights the empowering effect of initiatives that enable local communities to identify and act upon their own risks and priorities. Through this intervention, community members recognised and utilised their own power as rights-holders to successfully lobby with local duty bearers to address the identified risks and vulnerabilities. This work also empowered women to take on active roles in both identifying the risks and taking initiatives to address these by participating in local decision-making bodies.

06.5: Create Engagement

06.5.1: Introduction to Create Engagement Global Goal

Creating engagement with individuals, partners and stakeholders in Denmark is a vital part of DCA's efforts to gain public support and secure diverse funding to achieve the organisation's global goals of saving lives, building resilient communities, and fighting extreme inequality. DCA does this by creating strong relations through shared values and solutions that allow individuals, partners, and stakeholders to take meaningful action.

In 2023 DCA continued to engage the public in Denmark through partnerships and campaigns as well as with the support of its strong and value-based constituency. Consequently, the public in Denmark contributed a record-breaking DKK 207 million in support of DCA's work, more than

13,000 persons chose to volunteer with DCA, and the number of times that the public interacted with DCA on website and social media almost doubled. Public engagement in Denmark was also reflected in the record turnover in DCA's second-hand shops, in the 473 tonnes of food waste that was saved through DCA's Wefood stores, and in the many young people who engaged through the Go Global programme. In 2023, DCA also continued its strong engagement with decision-makers and opinion-makers in Denmark and continued to be a central stakeholder in the debate about Denmark's international climate policies.

06.5.2: LTC 10: Individuals, partners, and political stakeholders in Denmark act together with DCA and contribute donations, time, and voice in solidarity with the world's poorest and the realisation of DCA's international goals.

- **IA10: Action through donations, time, and voice**

Engaging the public in Denmark requires DCA to be a well-known organisation. Being recognised among different existing organisations calls for, among other things, a strong brand recognition and brand vitality. In 2023, 31% of a sampled population recognised DCA's name and logo, while 80% indicated knowing the organisation when presented with a list of Danish NGOs. This makes DCA one of the most known NGOs in Denmark, with a robust and well-known brand. However, to continue to stay known and relevant, DCA worked to operationalise its brand platform and develop additional communication and marketing tools in 2023 to further strengthen its position.

In 2023, DCA also continued to engage the public in Denmark in humanitarian and development issues through relevant communications and campaigns on the website and social media platforms. This has led to a remarkable increase in the number of interactions on these platforms, from 1,8 million in 2022 to 3,5 million in 2023. DCA's ability to communicate about its engagement in the series of crises and disasters that marked 2023 (see also Chapter 3) in a timely and relevant manner had significant impact on the increase in such interactions.

Throughout 2023, the public in Denmark also demonstrated its willingness to support people affected by new and ongoing disasters and conflicts such as earthquakes in Syria/Türkiye and Nepal, flooding in Libya, drought in Kenya, and the escalation of conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. An impressive DKK 11 million that was donated to DCA's emergency relief work served as evidence of that support, and of the general public's willingness to engage. This solid public support for DCA's commitment to save lives enabled DCA to withstand the compassion fatigue that otherwise continued to grow.

Recognising the increasing importance of balancing ethical and powerful communication for public engagement, DCA also used 2023 to develop an overarching framework to guide the organisation in navigating this communication paradox. The primary objective of the framework is to empower DCA staff, particularly those engaged in public information and engagement in Denmark, to communicate in a more respectful and nuanced way about the people with whom DCA works. The framework was developed through a cross-organisational consultative process that drew on insights and inputs gathered through survey and interviews with staff in various functions in both HO and COs. The roll-out of the framework will continue into 2024 through developing accompanying guidelines on visual and written communication.

Working with volunteers continued to be key to DCA's work with respect to developing meaningful and relevant actions of engagement and connecting local actions among the public in Denmark with global impact. Moreover, it would not be possible to run the 111 DCA second-hand and six Wefood shops (see Section 6.5.3 for details) as well as the yearly Parish collection without volunteers who wish to donate their time to DCA. In 2023, DCA's work was supported by 13,283 volunteers, which was a 3% increase compared to 2022. To remain attractive for volunteers, DCA also worked with its volunteer advisory board 'Frivilligforum' to create a series of principles to strengthen the identity and culture of DCA volunteers.

In 2023, DCA also laid the groundwork for new ways to engage private donors in Denmark through digital means and using schemes such as short-term sign-up and micro-donations. DCA also developed a new strategic action plan for targeted corporate partnerships with the aim of enhancing the scope of corporate engagement and fundraising. The implementation of this action plan will start in 2024.

06.5.3: **LTC 11: Individuals and partners engage in sustainable consumption and global climate action together with DCA in Denmark.**

- **IA11: Sustainable consumption and global climate action**

Recycling and second-hand purchasing continues to be a growing trend in Denmark, both as a relevant choice of action for conscious consumers and as a business opportunity for commercial businesses and individuals. As a pioneer that established the first second-hand shop in Denmark in 1973 in support of its non-profit work worldwide, by 2023 DCA had 111 shops all over Denmark run by volunteers (see also Section 6.5.2). In 2023, these shops contributed to DCA's international work through a record-high turnover of DKK 56 million, a total of 820,177 transactions, and a basket size of DKK 68.5.

DCA continues to be a clear voice in the fight against food waste in Denmark. DCA's Wefood stores sell surplus food that would otherwise be wasted, thus providing the public in Denmark with an opportunity to engage in the fight against food waste locally while generating an economic surplus to help in the fight against food insecurity globally. In 2023, Wefood stores received a record-high 473 tons of food through DCA's strategic partnerships with companies such as Salling Group, Schulstad, and Arla. The Wefood stores also broke their record in terms of sales of food that would otherwise have been wasted (see also Section 7.4) by registering 310,206 transactions in 2023 (compared to 275,000 in 2022). Taken together, DCA's second-hand and

Wefood stores recorded a 26% increase in turnover in 2023 compared to the 2021 baseline.

Working with people in some of the countries that are worst affected by climate change provides DCA with an impetus to link local action with global impact in its efforts to contribute to a more sustainable world. Creating this link is an integral part of DCA's communication on sustainability and climate change. Sustainability continued to be a core element in DCA's fundraising campaigns such as Give a Goat and its annual Parish Collection (see also Section 7.2) as well as its more dedicated thematic campaigns linked to Denmark's National Day against Food Waste, and campaigns to promote second-hand shopping. These actions have contributed to the increasing number of people in Denmark who recognise DCA as an organisation that takes strong action on sustainability and climate (from 21 % in 2022 to 24% in 2023).

DCA is committed to facilitating the link between local action and global impact, not only through communication and campaigns but also through hands-on opportunities for the next generation (see also Section 7.3). In 2023, 286 young people travelled with DCA via its Go Global programme to countries such as **Cambodia, Nepal, Malawi, Palestine, and Zambia** to witness the multiple and far-reaching implications of climate change (see also Section 5.5.8 and 7.3). The visits offered opportunities for close interaction with people DCA works with in the designated countries to motivate the participants from Denmark to become ambassadors for the green transition.

06.5.4: LTC 12: DCA engages with Danish stakeholders and partners to influence political decisions, priorities, and action in Denmark in support of its engagement work, a rules-based global order, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the realisation of the Paris Agreement.

- **IA12: Influence on political decisions and priorities in Denmark**

DCA's engagement with decision-makers and opinion-makers in Denmark, along with its partners and alliances, led to 80 specific changes in policies, legal frameworks, actions, and practices during 2023. This advocacy significantly shaped public and political discussions around a rules-based world order, climate change, women's rights, food systems, innovative partnerships, and humanitarian and development assistance.

With respect to the situation in Gaza, DCA has been steadfast in advocating for an immediate ceasefire and adherence to international humanitarian law by all parties implicated in the conflict. Moreover, through its engagement with a

broad range of political actors, DCA contributed to ensuring that the Danish government's decision to pause its official development assistance (ODA) for projects in the West Bank, following the escalation of the conflict in Gaza, remained brief and had no severe consequences for the Danish commitment.

DCA also continued to be a central stakeholder in the debate about Denmark's international climate policies and some of DCA's efforts bore fruit in 2023 in the form of the Danish Government's decisions to focus on climate finance for adaptation and to allocate dedicated funds for loss and damage. As an active member of the coalition for a Danish Green Constitution that brings together over 35 organisations from across the private and civil society sectors, DCA could also celebrate the fact that the coalition's proposal to add specific climate and environmental provisions to the Danish constitution was brought up in parliament and supported by several political parties.

DCA additionally provided input to the Danish MFA on the new 'Foreign and Security Policy Strategy' issued in May 2023. Furthermore, DCA's General Secretary was invited to a closed meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to provide insights on the importance of equal partnership models, which were subsequently emphasised in the published Strategy.

In 2023, DCA's strategic press mentions in the Danish media, initiated with partners and other stakeholders, reached 2,560. This positioned DCA as the second most mentioned humanitarian organisation in the media. DCA was a particularly significant voice, with over 700 media mentions on the Gaza crisis from October 7th and throughout the remainder of 2023. DCA's success in setting the agenda was also evident in its climate advocacy initiatives on loss and damage and climate finance at the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, the UN General Assembly, and COP28 (see also Section 6.3.4). These initiatives resonated both in the Danish and the international press.

Furthermore, DCA sought to promote action and awareness through collaborations with relevant opinion-makers in Denmark. To this end, DCA's climate advocate and football player Sofie Junge Pedersen, along with 50 international other football players, used the 2023 World Cup in Australia/New Zealand as a platform to highlight the need for climate action, including forest restoration and climate adaptation, in the Global South. DCA also organised delegations with journalists from the major Danish newspapers Politiken and Weekendavisen to Syria and South Sudan to promote greater awareness about forgotten crises.

06.5.5: Conclusion – Create Engagement

Throughout 2023, DCA made significant progress in its endeavour to create engagement in Denmark. This translated into a record-high fundraising result, an increasing number of partners and volunteers in Denmark, and a remarkable increase in interactions with the public in Denmark on social media and other digital platforms. DCA also continued to engage the public in Denmark by raising awareness and linking local and global action on climate and sustainability issues, which contributed to record-high sales records from DCA's second-hand and WeFood stores.

However, DCA does not take this progress for granted, and throughout 2023 DCA continued to lay the groundwork for continuous engagement of individuals and partner

organisations. This effort is reflected in the range of DCA's initiatives to develop new ways that enable people to contribute through their time, donations, and/or voice. Additionally, an organisational framework for a more balanced and nuanced communication was developed and DCA demonstrated sustained and targeted advocacy and awareness raising efforts among stakeholders in Denmark. Moreover, DCA has worked to operationalise its brand platform and develop more clear communication and marketing tools to further enhance its position as a well-known and influential organisation.

DCA will continue to invest efforts on developing new ways to engage the public in Denmark, both in terms of financial support and of donating time as volunteers. ■

Change story – Create Engagement

The escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza has divided the world. In Denmark, polarisation has been manifested in the media, the political debate, and public opinion, while at the same time the conflict left many people in despair and a state of hopelessness. To empower hope, DCA hosted a sermon and candle lightning event for peace in Copenhagen in November 2023 together with Interchurch, the National Council of Churches in Denmark, and the Church of Our Lady. Representatives from the Jewish and Muslim communities participated together with 1,000 churchgoers. Outside the church, 10,000 lit candles created a sea of light for spreading the message of peace for Gaza, Ukraine, and other places affected by conflict and war. Candles were bought as a donation to DCA's catastrophe fund by individuals from all over the country as a token of hope for peace. The candles were subsequently sold in DCA's second-hand stores to generate even more funding for DCA's work to save lives.

Wefood volunteer Emil Minana, 33 years, is sharing a meal with 6 year old Somnang Sokna. In June 2023 Emil was in Cambodia visiting DCA projects. One of the projects meant staying with a family of four in Sdey Kraom. DCA and its partner assisted the family in setting up a vegetable farm and make their own compost, so they could stop using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. / Photo: Erika Piñeros



07. Achieving Change Through Cross-Cutting Commitments

07.1: Introduction

DCA operates in complex contexts where pushback on women's and girls' rights, sustainable climate and environmental policies, and marginalisation of young people pose increasingly important challenges to obtaining long-lasting and equitable change. DCA therefore applies the three cross-cutting commitments – gender equality, engagement of young people, and climate and environmental sustainability – across all of its programming, in its partnerships and engagement work with the public in Denmark. The cross-cutting commitments are important building blocks in DCA's efforts to reach its global goals and contribute to achieving the SDGs. Throughout 2023, the implementation of these

commitments focused on capacity sharing and strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing DCA's and partners' accountability in delivering on them, and advocating and communicating on the importance of gender equality, engagement of young people, and climate and environmental sustainability. This chapter provides an overview of key achievements, but as the cross-cutting commitments apply across all DCA's activities, relevant results are also presented in other sections of the report.

07.2: Gender Equality

Of DCA's 317 projects across its 20 CPs, 75% integrated

gender equality in 2023. 57% of projects mainstreamed gender equality, while gender was the primary objective of 18% of the projects. The tracking of gender integration improved in 2023 with COs marking whether projects mainstream gender equality. In 2022, 30% of projects were reported to have gender as a primary objective, however, as this was the only indicator measured, the data are not fully comparable.

DCA has also continued its efforts to promote women's local leadership and empowerment of women and girls to claim their rights and address their own specific needs and risks. In 2023, 27% of DCA projects were implemented in partnership with women-led or women's rights organisations (WLO/WRO), compared to 24% in 2022. DCA contributes to WLO/WRO's access to funding by increasing and documenting its direct funding to these actors. In 2023, 5% of DCA's total international programme expenditure was transferred to WLO/WRO.

DCA promotes women's economic empowerment and support to female entrepreneurs through access to business opportunities, skills development, leadership training, and financial inclusion. In **Uganda**, women and girls were trained as model farmers in agricultural projects, and female role models were supported to access vocational training in areas that are traditionally not accessible to women, such as car mechanics and electronics. Women's self-help groups in **Ethiopia** were strengthened through income generating activities, engaging in small businesses, and skills development. In **DRC**, village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) were set up with 80% women as participants. These activities greatly enhance women's leadership capacity and space to make decisions at household and community levels thus contributing to women's increased and meaningful participation and enhanced opportunities to address their needs and risks, including GBV.

In several country contexts, DCA further applied a gender transformative approach to address and challenge the norms and power imbalances that underpin gender inequality. In **Bangladesh**, DCA engaged men and boys as change agents and worked with local stakeholders and community and faith leaders to promote positive masculinity and norms and behaviour change to combat GBV and enable women's and girls' education and participation. In **South Sudan**, Women Action Groups were established, trained, and facilitated to carry out awareness raising in the community on gender injustices and inequalities. DCA in **Mali** has focused on female role models by identifying, empowering, and promoting women leaders in risk education, victims' assistance, CPPB, and climate resilience. This included strengthening the capacities of women's groups and networks to amplify their collective voice and capacity to shape community responses while transforming the perspectives of traditional decision-

makers, who are mostly men. In **CAR**, women have played a significant role in local peace mechanisms advocating for non-violence and peaceful coexistence within their communities. In **Uganda**, women HRDs were supported in advocating for equitable access to digital technology and speaking out against sexual harassment online.

DCA continued to strengthen its organisational capacities in gender equality as well as that of partners. In **Cambodia**, a partner was supported to adopt a gender policy in 2023, and all DCA staff and 5 partners were provided with SOGIESC training. DCA in **Nepal** carried out a gender and social inclusion assessment of all partners, which will inform capacity sharing initiatives in 2024. DCA has also developed comprehensive online gender training modules to be rolled out to all DCA staff in 2024.

Likewise, DCA continued its strong focus on raising public awareness of the organisation's support for women's empowerment and promoting female role models. An important female ambassador in 2023 was DCA's climate advocate and football player, Sofie Junge Pedersen (see more under Section 6.5.4). Female empowerment played a vital part in DCA's campaigns such as the Parish Collection and Give a Goat campaigns. DCA shared stories of DCA's and partners' work to address GBV in Nepal, promote female entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe and Uganda, and on women volunteering as aid workers in Ukraine in these campaigns (see also Section 6.5.3). These stories demonstrated to the Danish audience how women's empowerment helps to build stronger communities across humanitarian and development contexts. In 2023, this initiative resulted in 24% of the sampled population in Denmark perceiving DCA as an organisation with a strong focus on women's empowerment.

07.3: Engagement of Young People

DCA continued to engage young people as change agents in peacebuilding, and in combatting various forms of discrimination and ensuring protection and civic space, for example by monitoring and promoting digital rights. DCA focused on creating job opportunities and ensuring livelihoods for young men and women both in urban and rural settings, supporting the young people to realise their great potential in entrepreneurship and innovation to drive the solutions needed to handle crisis and stimulate sustainable development.

In 2023, 32% of DCA's projects had young people as the primary target group. 26% of projects were conducted in partnership or close collaboration with one or more young people's organisations, an increase from 16% in 2022. In **Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, Palestine, and Uganda**, DCA facilitated entrepreneurship activities through skills development, mentoring and access to financial services, to enhance employability and catalyse business development.

In **CAR, Uganda, and Zimbabwe**, young people were strategically engaged and targeted in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, and in **Ethiopia** to enhance peaceful existence between ethnic groups. In **Ukraine**, DCA supported counselling for displaced young people to help them access jobs. Similarly, young people were targeted specifically in protection activities in **Syria** and **DRC** where GBV poses a significant threat to women's and girls' wellbeing. In turn, young women and men were engaged in awareness raising activities about sexual and reproductive health in **Bangladesh**.

Through a youth network, young people in **Cambodia** were engaged in human rights activism and digital security capacity sharing, and in **Mali** digital platforms were used for the dissemination of explosive ordinance risk awareness, targeted at young men and women. In **Palestine**, young people were strategically engaged in capacity sharing workshops addressing vulnerabilities and supporting monitoring of digital rights violations.

In Denmark, 4,343 young people were engaged in DCA's work in 2023 compared to 1,231 people in 2022. The DCA 'Go Global' programme for young people in Denmark was finally back to full-scale operation after the COVID-19 pandemic, and there were visits to all regular partners in **Cambodia, Malawi, Nepal, Palestine, and Zambia** (see also Section 6.5.3 and 5.5.8). DCA increased meetings and interactions among young people by facilitating visits from partner countries to school partners in Denmark. The aim of the exchange visits was to strengthen relationships between school and partner organisations, and the visits resulted in increased mutual knowledge and engagement between these organisations. In 2023, DCA developed new types of engagement activities targeting boarding schools, with a focus on recycling and upcycling activities and on connecting food waste in Denmark with global climate change and declining food security (see also Section 6.5.3). These engagement projects will be formally launched in 2024 to engage new types of partners and young people's groups.

The number of young people engaged also increased as a result of a new partnership with The Scout Aid Foundation in Denmark, which motivates children and young people to act and contribute to creating a better future for refugee children and young people in Lebanon. Around 2,500 young people from The Scout Aid Foundation were engaged in the project activities. DCA also engaged a large number of young people through the #TakePart campaign for young confirmands and the GLOBUS project for children and young people in FDF (see also Section 5.5.8). Around 16,864 young people received knowledge about DCA in 2023.

07.4: Climate and Environmental Sustainability

DCA and partners continue moving forward on the integration

of climate and environmental sustainability in programmes, including in crisis, conflict, and fragile contexts. In 2023, 43% of projects integrated climate and/or environmental action. This result is based on an internal analysis of all DCA projects with financial disbursements in 2023, including HO-led initiatives, using the OECD-DAC Rio Markers methodology and an additional internal Loss and Damage marker. Although the proportion of projects did not increase compared to 2022 (45%), innovative initiatives were implemented in 2023 to enhance DCA's approaches to address the climate and environmental crises in fragile contexts.

DCA developed a study to analyse the environmental impact of HMA operations. As a result, a new standard operating procedure for environmental protection in HMA was developed. Improving the environmental management of HMA supports DCA in ensuring adherence to the 'do no harm' principle for the environment. At the same time, a more systematic integration of environmental resilience is achieved for the communities that DCA works with, since the procedure reduces negative environmental impacts on soil, biodiversity, and other natural resources in cleared areas. In **Iraq and Lebanon**, DCA and local partners have been testing approaches to promote the sustainable use of land post-clearance and create links between mine clearance efforts and longer-term development initiatives. DCA and partners worked with communities to promote the adoption of climate-resilient and AE approaches to address issues such as water scarcity, drought, and environmental degradation.

Another example of the integration of climate and environment in a fragile context is in **Bangladesh** where climate resilient homestead gardening was promoted in refugee camps (see also Section 6.3.2) focusing on using locally available resources and adapting to local climate conditions like excessive heat. In **CAR**, vulnerable communities affected by conflict received training and inputs to facilitate the implementation of sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices. In doing so, DCA collaborated with local agricultural development agencies to enhance the environmental sustainability of agricultural interventions.

In the conflict affected context of **Mali**, projects are increasingly integrating climate resilient and environmental sustainability considerations when identifying relevant income generating activities and livelihood opportunities for displaced and host communities. DCA and partners worked with women's local associations to strengthen capacities and provide financing for the adoption of climate resilient agriculture. Moreover, together with its local partners and an international research partner, DCA worked to enhance understanding of interlinkages between climate change, conflict, and displacement and enhance responses to economic and non-economic climate related losses and

damages. In 2023, 14 CPs included responses to climate related losses and damages, in comparison to 12 CPs in 2022.

Furthermore, in 9% of its projects DCA integrated activities aimed at protecting and restoring biodiversity. For example, in **Zimbabwe**, DCA is breaking the silos between the conservation and development sectors by promoting community stewardship to protect ecosystems, building local human-wildlife conflict response capabilities, and supporting income diversification through climate resilient livelihood options. DCA is also committed to addressing food loss and waste and improving waste management and efficient use and circulation of resources. In 2023, **Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Palestine, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe** implemented relevant initiatives. For example, in Kenya organic waste was used to produce valuable resources such as compost and animal feed through black soldier fly farming, while in **Nepal** women groups were working on the production of cloth bags to reduce plastic waste.

Fighting food and textile waste was a key priority for DCA's work in Denmark (see also Section 6.5.3). Through corporate partnerships and support to Wefood and second-hand stores, DCA continued to focus on being a key partner for those seeking solutions to act in Denmark on sustainability, food waste, and climate change issues. In 2023, a record-high amount of food otherwise classified as waste was sold in DCA's Wefood's stores across the country. At the same time, a record turnover generated by DCA second-hand shops meant that DCA's volunteers made a significant contribution to recycling textiles. Moreover, communal eating events, campaigns on food waste, and second-hand gems helped engage the public in Denmark on climate and sustainability issues, thus connecting local climate change action with DCA's global work on climate.

DCA also collaborated closely with the Danish MFA, ACT Alliance and other knowledge partners and governments to contribute to the global climate debate at COP28 and other relevant forums with evidence from implementation of locally led approaches to climate action (see also Section 6.3.4).

07.5: Conclusion

For DCA, delivering on the three cross-cutting commitments of gender equality, engagement of young people, and climate and environmental sustainability continues to be a key priority. The results from 2023 indicate that the organisation is well on track in this regard both in terms of achieving the desired change and through sharpening the commitments and DCA's ability to document results. DCA strengthened its organisational capacity to strategically integrate climate and environment, gender equality, and engagement of young people in conflict and fragile settings, linking this to HMA and CPPB for example. DCA also continued to enhance the synergies between the three cross-cutting commitments in order to ensure more inclusive, systemic, and sustainable outcomes across its four global goals. In 2023, DCA further strengthened the organisation's role and voice as well as its recognition in Denmark as an organisation dedicated to enhancing gender equality, young people's empowerment, and climate and environmental sustainability across the HDP nexus.

DCA will continue to further strengthen the focus on strategic inclusion of young people in programming and partnerships both in Denmark and DCA CPs, and on further enhancing dedicated gender programming and quality mainstreaming. ■

Change story – Cross-Cutting Commitments

In **South Sudan**, DCA and its partners enabled communities to transition to cleaner cooking through introduction of fuel-efficient stoves (FES), which bring multiple benefits with respect to climate mitigation, environmental protection, and community health and safety. FES reduce firewood consumption by up to 50% thus relieving pressure on degraded local ecosystems and reducing women's labour burden and exposure to security risks when fetching firewood. Women have gained more time for income-generating activities while briquette-making for the new stoves provides a source of income for young people. The sustainability of these initiatives is further enhanced by local partners who train women as trainers of other women in their communities on construction and use of FES. Training led to a ripple effect of peer-to-peer action and strengthened bonds among women in the community. At the same time, young people who were trained in briquette-making also reported increased social cohesion.



Shredded plastic at recycling site established by DCA Mali as part of the REVERT project aimed at training and creating income opportunities for waste pickers at the IDP camp in Faladié outside Bamako. / Photo: Aliou Atji

08. Fit for Purpose

08.1: Introduction

The constant changes and evolving nature of the context in which DCA operates (see also Chapter 3) demands that DCA continuously adapts and adjusts itself as an effective organisation that continues to be fit for purpose. There is also a need for constant balance between agility and compliance in the pursuit of impactful positive change. This chapter reflects upon how DCA balances agility and compliance to continue to be fit for purpose with respect to its organisational setup and structure, competences and capacities, and measures pertaining to risk management, quality management and accountability, procurement, financial sustainability, innovation, learning, and environmental sustainability.

08.2: Organisation and Structure

DCA is committed to continuously assessing and adjusting its organisational set-up in response to contextual changes and evolving needs. To this end, DCA is in the process of designing a guiding checklist for HO units and COs to use to determine whether their organisational structures have the necessary set-up in terms of competences and resources to deliver on DCA's goals, strategic priorities, and live up to compliance requirements. Relevant stakeholders will be consulted to ensure the right scope, relevance, and operationality of the checklist. The first step in this process is to set up a working group with representatives from CO and HO management teams to learn about best practises and reflect on potential gaps between available resources, compliance needs, and the strategic focus of each CO and availability of specialists in HO.

Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and solutions also play an essential role in enabling DCA to stay fit for purpose. In 2023, staffing challenges in DCA's IT unit delayed the development and implementation of some new IT and digital solutions. However, DCA succeeded in

recruiting and reorganising its IT Operations team to address important areas of focus, including cloud computing, digital security, applications and services management, endpoint management, and support across the organisation. By the end of 2023, this progress enabled DCA to improve its IT operations and related management, thus resulting in an increased level of capacity and efficiency.

Likewise, worth noting was an effort involving several COs working closely with internal IT specialists to find and implement ways in which information technology can help mitigate the challenges of shrinking civic space.

Regarding the specific strategic focus areas of IT included in DCA's GRF 2023-2026, DCA managed to conclude the development of the 'DX CRM solution ecosystem' in 2023. This is an IT solution for managing information on and communicating with the organisation's broad constituency. DCA also initiated special efforts around cyber security in 2023 aimed at achieving relevant accreditations in 2024. Furthermore, new ways of presenting management information were introduced to bring together information users and information developers across the organisation in an agile development setup. A reporting platform was created across systems to improve data quality and accessibility. This platform is a precondition for supporting DCA's commitment to impact through data, and hence for enabling DCA to use big data, data-driven analysis, and leverage new and disruptive technologies in this respect.

08.3: Competences and Capacity

DCA is committed to strengthening staff satisfaction and retention by being an attractive workplace with a good work-life balance, opportunities to influence and perform meaningful tasks, and reasonable work demands. To this end, 2023 included a revision of forms and guidelines for implementation of the Employee Development Review (EDR).

This revision ensured that all staff had an EDR with a more clearly defined focus on performance, wellbeing, mutual feedback on cooperation, as well as goals and competence development for the coming year. In relation to this, all relevant managers attended mandatory online training in facilitating the EDR.

Data from early 2023 show that 56% of HO and international staff (excluding student assistants and telemarketing operators) had been working with DCA for a minimum of 3 years. Once a HR system is in place, DCA will start collecting these data globally.

In 2023, DCA also invested considerable effort in preparing for the next round of the Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) to be held in second half of 2024. Among other things, the ESS will measure DCA's employee satisfaction regarding demands of the work, and the proportion of staff who feel a sense of belonging in DCA. To facilitate the entry of new employees into the organisation, DCA also focused on improving its online onboarding process through targeted segmentation that is tailored to where staff are located (see also Section 8.8). Likewise, DCA continued work to prepare the new National Staff Handbook due to be rolled out in all COs in 2024.

DCA's strategic commitment to leadership development was continued and strengthened through two leadership development programmes: Leadership Diploma, and Global Leadership Training (GLT). As of 2023, almost all Country Directors and HO Middle Managers were enrolled in the Diploma programme and one third had already completed it, while approximately 50% of Head of Functions in COs and HO Team Leaders were undergoing GLT.

In 2023, DCA's enhanced its efforts to advance the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) agenda. For example, DCA expanded its recruitment toolbox by testing non-biased and inclusive recruitment methods while DIB-related questions were also integrated in the new EDR material. Further questions about staff experience with DIB will be integrated into the 2024 ESS.

08.4: Risk Management

As part of DCA's commitment to continue strengthening its risk management practices, a series of workshops were conducted in 2023 with COs and HO Departments to introduce an updated and streamlined risk register template. The workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders across different locations and departments to familiarise themselves with the new template and use it in a hands-on exercise to identify, assess, and mitigate risks.

Following the workshops, COs and HO Departments

completed their respective risk registers by August 2023. This ensured a comprehensive and standardised approach to risk identification and mitigation across the organisation. The reported risks were further analysed and consolidated to provide valuable insights into key risks faced by DCA. The ultimate findings were documented in the Annual Risk Report, which was presented to Senior Management and approved by the Board in October 2023.

The Annual Risk Report 2023 captured a total of seven very high risks which were all addressed through DCA's risk management system. Safety and security related risks were the most prevalent risk type reported by COs at an aggregated level. These risks are mainly managed and mitigated through close collaboration between COs and DCA's Safety and Security team and DCA's Duty of Care Framework. Programmatic risks related to the shrinking of civic space were the primary aggregated risk type reported by HO. These risks are mainly mitigated by DCA's Programme, Advocacy and Learning unit through advocacy processes on anti-terror legislation, transaction of funds, and national legislation affecting civic space (see also Section 6.4.4 and 6.4.5).

08.5: Quality Management and Accountability

In 2023, DCA had a total of 11 recommendations identified during CP operations, audits and assessments that fell into the very high-risk category. All the recommendations have been compiled into an internal DCA tool 'Recommendation and Requirement Overview' and addressed by COs, middle managers, and senior management.

A mid-term audit of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability was conducted, and the findings indicated that DCA had addressed all 'very high' risk recommendations, referred to as Corrective Action Requests from the renewal audit in 2021. Two new Corrective Action Requests emerged in 2023, with a deadline for DCA to address them in 2025. These were related to information sharing with community members about expected behaviour of DCA and partner staff, and their commitment to the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).

Accountability and transparency are central values for DCA's work. In 2023, DCA updated the Code of Conduct and related policies (Anti-Corruption Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, and PSEAH Policy), integrating these into DCA's Programme and Project Manual, disseminating them at staff meetings, and publishing them on the DCA intranet and website. In COs, accountability and complaints focal points were trained and requested to raise awareness through sharing the information about updated policies with their colleagues.

DCA produces annual complaints reports to maintain a high degree of transparency and learning, both of which

are important for fighting misconduct and corruption. The 2023 report showed an increase in the number of sensitive cases received compared to 2022 (from 55 and 46). This is likely to be the result of the awareness raising around DCA's complaints systems delivered to staff in COs, as well as the roll-out of the revised CoC and related policies in 2023, which all include a section on complaints-reporting. This increase is also a reflection of how DCA staff use and trust DCA's complaints system, which is essential to ensuring that it is further promoted within the organisation.

08.6: Financial Sustainability

To sustain its long-term development, DCA has set strategic financial goals on turnover, surplus, solidity, and liquidity. In its current strategy period 2023-2026, DCA is committed to meeting the following financial targets:

- Turnover increases by an average of 5% per year during the period;
- Yearly surplus is 1% of annual turnover;
- Solidity ratio is at least 25% by the end of the period;
- Liquidity ratio is at least 130% by the end of the period.

In 2023, DCA met its annual financial targets and is in a good position to meet the long-term financial targets. The annual turnover increased by 5.2% in 2023 compared to 2022, driven by international donor diversification and DCA's strengthened fund-raising capacity in relation to the public in Denmark. The yearly surplus was DKK 11.9 million, corresponding to 2.1% of the annual turnover. The surplus was above the budget, mainly due to currency regulation and unrealised plus-value on financial assets. The solidity ratio increased from 20.2% in 2022 to 24.6% in 2023, driven both by an increase of equity of DKK 22 million and a reduction of DKK 50 million in assets. The liquidity ratio increased from 124.0% in 2022 to 131.3% in 2023, and was above the long-term target set in DCA's Strategy.

08.7: Innovative Financing for Development

In 2023, DCA continued to invest resources in advancing blended finance models in alignment with its Global Strategy 2023-2026. Insights from financial inclusion cases in selected DCA projects highlighted the inadequacies of current grants-based funding mechanisms in supporting more long-term sustainable finance solutions of a revolving nature. Consequently, DCA established a task force and steering group to develop an organisational approach to development finance and test solutions that take a more blended finance approach. In 2023, DCA successfully attracted DKK 230,000 in private capital from a local microfinance institution, along with DKK 210,000 from small private investors for crowdfunding to small rice farmers in **Cambodia** (see also Section 6.3.3). Additionally, the Global Food Cold Chain Council committed more than DKK 400,000 to support cold

chain solutions in the Loss2Value project in **Kenya**, which was launched as one of DGBP projects in 2023 (see also Section 5.5.7). Efforts to develop blended finance models will continue into 2024 in dialogue with key stakeholders and donors who are increasingly looking for operational solutions that combine private and public funding to meet the SDGs and climate goals.

08.8: Innovation

DCA continued to integrate innovation into all layers of the organisation as a core driver of positive change and enhanced impact.

DCA continuously adapted to the exponential growth in technological development and internet access and to the new possibilities that this provides for DCA and its partners to create more impact in new ways. In 2023, 24% of DCA projects utilised the power of technology to provide innovative solutions for promoting human rights and democracy, an increase from 19% in 2022. Partner-led platforms in **Cambodia**, and digital monitoring and reporting tools in **Uganda** and **Palestine** that used language models, social media, and online platforms to amplify and share information in innovative ways, all contributed to increased transparency, accountability, and public awareness.

Across DCA CPs and Denmark, 39% of projects, processes, and interventions in 2023 included innovation, an increase from 32% in 2022. The 'Disarmament of the Heart' project in **CAR** is an example of social innovation where integration of mental health and PSS into peacebuilding efforts contributed to reducing aggression and promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities.

The DCA Innovation Fund supported 16 innovation initiatives with a financial investment of DKK 5.9 million in 2023. An example of an innovation supported from idea to scale is the AE Living Lab in **Cambodia** (see also change story in Section 6.3). With the support of the innovation fund, this project moved beyond testing and scaled up their initiatives to Cambodian local organisations and municipalities, demonstrating relevance and impact. The project found that the AE Living Lab approach provides a suitable framework for engaging farmers in a dialogue with researchers to co-create knowledge and find solutions to their current problems. In **Syria**, DCA in consultation with communities finalised the production of innovative interactive e-materials that support mental wellbeing of children. To support children in Northeast Syria who have experienced violence, trauma, and restricted access to education, DCA developed two innovative tools for offering PSS to children in post-conflict settings. The products focused on providing enough information to children and empowering them with knowledge about how to address issues that impact their

mental and emotional wellbeing, thus allowing them to make informed choices in those situations.

08.9: Learning

In 2023, DCA continued the development of its Learning Framework, including mapping of ongoing initiatives to strengthen a systematic and common approach to learning across the organisation. Data collected during several workshops and events, with representation from 17 COs and 11 HO units, highlighted the necessity to include learning elements as standardised procedures from onset to closure of projects and programmes. Suggestions included an increased focus on outcome harvesting and lessons learnt at project closure, as well as to expand the use of the FABO platform (a member-driven learning community for NGOs) for shared and thematic learning. At the same time, the workshops underlined the importance of DCA's ambition to further expand the practice of knowledge sharing vertically as well as horizontally across HO departments and COs. In 2023, COs in collaboration with their respective partners, focused on knowledge sharing and management in many ways. Examples include: a strategic partnership with an NGO forum to advance the localisation agenda (**Lebanon**), enhancing digital literacy and forming an alliance on AE (**Cambodia**), digitalisation of VSLAs (**Uganda**), a regional sclr hub as a platform for local actors (**Palestine**), a sustainable model for young people's self-employment through a digital learning platform (**Kenya**), coordination of the national learning group on anticipatory action (**Nepal**), and establishment of a safe learning environment for female risk education (**Libya**).

With regards to ensuring access to learning opportunities for staff, 2023 included a revision of the DCA onboarding site on the FABO platform, which resulted in more targeted learning paths tailored to staff location (see also Section 8.3). Additionally, the ESS 2024 will include a question on the DCA staff access to learning opportunities. Furthermore, for strengthened organisational learning and exchange, DCA also introduced a Bring-Your-Desk scheme that provides staff with an opportunity to temporarily relocate to another DCA office (either from HO to CO or vice versa). The scheme aims to increase staff knowledge and understanding of various job functions across the organisation and to enhance inclusion and belonging in DCA through contributing to development of a common work culture. In 2023, this scheme was used by staff from COs in **DRC, Nepal, and Zimbabwe** to work in HO for approximately 3 weeks.

08.10: Environmental Sustainability

In 2023, DCA updated its Climate and Environment Policy to reflect on new commitments, such as the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations that DCA subscribed to in 2023. This update aimed to accelerate

DCA's response to the climate and environmental crises and to respond to internal and external stakeholders' requirements and expectations. The policy set an organisational target to reduce DCA's carbon footprint by 46.2% by 2030 compared to its 2019 baseline emissions. DCA's target is inspired by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) target setting tool to support the Paris Agreement goal to hold the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. DCA's 2019 baseline was estimated with data collected from selected COs and operations in Denmark, including offices and second-hand and Wefood stores.

Based on the baseline and consultations with staff across the organisation, DCA identified levers to reduce emissions, including implementation of energy efficiency measures in offices and retail shops, and installation of solar energy to replace carbon intensive electricity generation at COs. DCA also continued to roll-out green procurement and logistics procedures and tools across the organisation (see Section 8.10 on this), revision and enforcement of travel policies, and, in the longer-term, gradual introduction of electric vehicles into the retail fleet that serves DCA's second-hand and Wefood stores.

DCA will continue monitoring its carbon footprint. Based on previous experience with five COs, the data collection format for this exercise was adjusted in 2023 and the new version will be rolled out to all COs during 2024. This will allow DCA to identify more specific areas of opportunity for implementation of reduction measures. While DCA works on reducing its emissions, it also assumes responsibility for its historic and current emissions by supporting certified community-based forest restoration and agroforestry projects in Uganda. Between 2022 and 2025, DCA will compensate for 165,000 tons of carbon dioxide of its historical emissions. Additionally, in 2023 DCA compensated for its annual emissions related to 2022 HO air travel.

08.11: Procurement

Since 2022, climate and environment has been high on the agenda within DCA's Procurement and Logistics Department. With the four R's – Reduce, Reuse, Repair and Recycle – as starting point, focus has been on strengthening staff capacity, creating awareness, and making information available online. This is reflected in the three main green initiatives implemented by DCA HO in 2023. The first was the series of four Green Round Table Talks facilitated by HO, with a total of 108 participants from the COs. Topics covered included solar energy, waste, recycling, 'thinking green', and the implementation of DCA's Climate Policy. Another initiative was development of an interactive site 'Green Your Office' launched on FABO. Third, DCA launched the 'ECHO Sustainable Supply Chain Requirements' resource site on FABO.

At CO level, a total of 50 practical green initiatives were reported in 2023. These initiatives are divided into seven categories in Figure 8.1 showing that various steps are being taken across DCA to be more climate friendly. However, the pace of these steps varies across the organisation: in 2023

there were four COs that had not implemented any or only one green initiative. All four COs were operating in conflict zones, which indicates that the pace of green transition is slower in countries with immediate humanitarian needs, conflict, and instability.

FIGURE 8.1: CATEGORIES OF 'GREEN' INITIATIVES AT DCA COs IN 2023.

SOURCE: CO ANNUAL REPORTS 2023



08.12: Conclusion

DCA has made good progress in aligning its operations with its strategic priorities and commitments to remain an organisation fit for purpose in 2023. In terms of organisation and structure, DCA took steps to review and adjust its organisation and strengthen IT infrastructure. The development and implementation of new IT and digital solutions, alongside improvements in risk management system and quality management and accountability measures, contributed to enhancing DCA's operational efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, DCA invested into creating initiatives to strengthen competences and capacity, with a focus on staff satisfaction, retention, and professional development. This resulted in an improved onboarding process for new employees, continuous enhancement of leaderships skills at both CO and HO level through GLT, and inclusion of non-biased recruitment methods to attract more diverse competence profiles to DCA.

Looking at the financial targets, in 2023 DCA reached most of its annual targets and even outperformed some of its long-term targets. Innovation also continued to be at the forefront of DCA's approach, with a focus on exploring and providing innovative solutions to address emerging challenges. Similarly, investments in advancing blended finance models, developing a cross-organisational knowledge framework, and strengthening horizontal and vertical knowledge sharing and management underscores DCA's commitment to driving positive change. As an organisation committed to fighting climate change, DCA also continued to make substantial investments to reduce its own carbon footprint, for example, through efforts to 'green' its procurement and logistics.

Looking forward, DCA will continue to focus on reviewing and updating processes and procedures and enhancing its systems and capacities while paying particular attention to measuring results and drawing relevant lessons. ■

Change story – Fit for Purpose (Innovation)

DCA's Mali CO piloted an innovative waste management and recycling approach in Bamako as part of the REVERT project. The initiative linked IDPs with key actors in the waste and recycling sector, aiming to address gaps in environmental protection and access to income. Through a multistakeholder approach, the project integrated socio-economic resilience, environmental protection messaging, and awareness campaigns with circular economy principles. A private waste management company's expertise informed project design, along with a market assessment of waste management value chains. The project facilitated procurement of waste processing machines and equipment, provided tailor-made training on waste recycling, management, and valorisation techniques. This initiative promoted sustainability and socio-environmental resilience through green income-generating activities, and fostered collaboration between IDPs and host communities to strengthen social cohesion.

09. ANNEX 1: Abbreviations

ACT	Action by Churches Together
AE	Agroecology
CA	Cooperation Agreement
CAP	Community Action Plan
CAR	Central African Republic
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
CL	Community Liaison
CO	Country Office
CoC	Code of Conduct
CoP	Cross-Organisational Community of Practice
CP	Country Programme
CPPB	Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
CS	Conflict Sensitivity
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
C4C	Charter for Change
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DCA	DanChurchAid
DGBP	Danida Green Business Partnership
DIB	Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
DKK	Danish Kroner
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRL USDOS	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, United States Department of State
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Commission's Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDR	Employee Development Review
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ESS	Employee Satisfaction Survey
EU	European Union
EU INTPA	European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FES	Fuel-Efficient Stoves
GB	Grand Bargain
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCT	Group Cash Transfer
GLT	Global Leadership Training
GPG	Global Partner Group
GRF	Global Results Framework

HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
HO	Head Office
HR	Human Resources
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRD	Human Rights Defender
HRV	Human Rights Violation
IA	Intervention Area
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IT	Information Technology
KOI	Key Outcome Indicator
LTC	Long-term change
L2GP	Local to Global Protection
MPCA	Multipurpose Cash Assistance
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NAP	National Action Plan
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTS	Non-Technical Survey
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PA	Partnership Agreement
PANEL	Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Linking to Human Rights Law
PaRD	International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSEAH	Prevention from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PSS	Psychosocial Support
SBTi	Science Based Targets initiative
sclr	Survivor and Community-led Response
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDA	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, and Sex Characteristics
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
TAPE	Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation
UN	United Nations
UNOPS	The United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
US	United States
USAID	United States Aid for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WAD	Women's Affairs Department
WRI	World Resource Institute
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation
WLO	Women-led Organisation



DanChurchAid
Meldahlsgade 3, 3. & 4. floor
1613 Copenhagen V
Denmark

Telephone +45 33 15 28 00
mail@dca.dk

www.nødhjælp.dk
www.danchurchaid.org