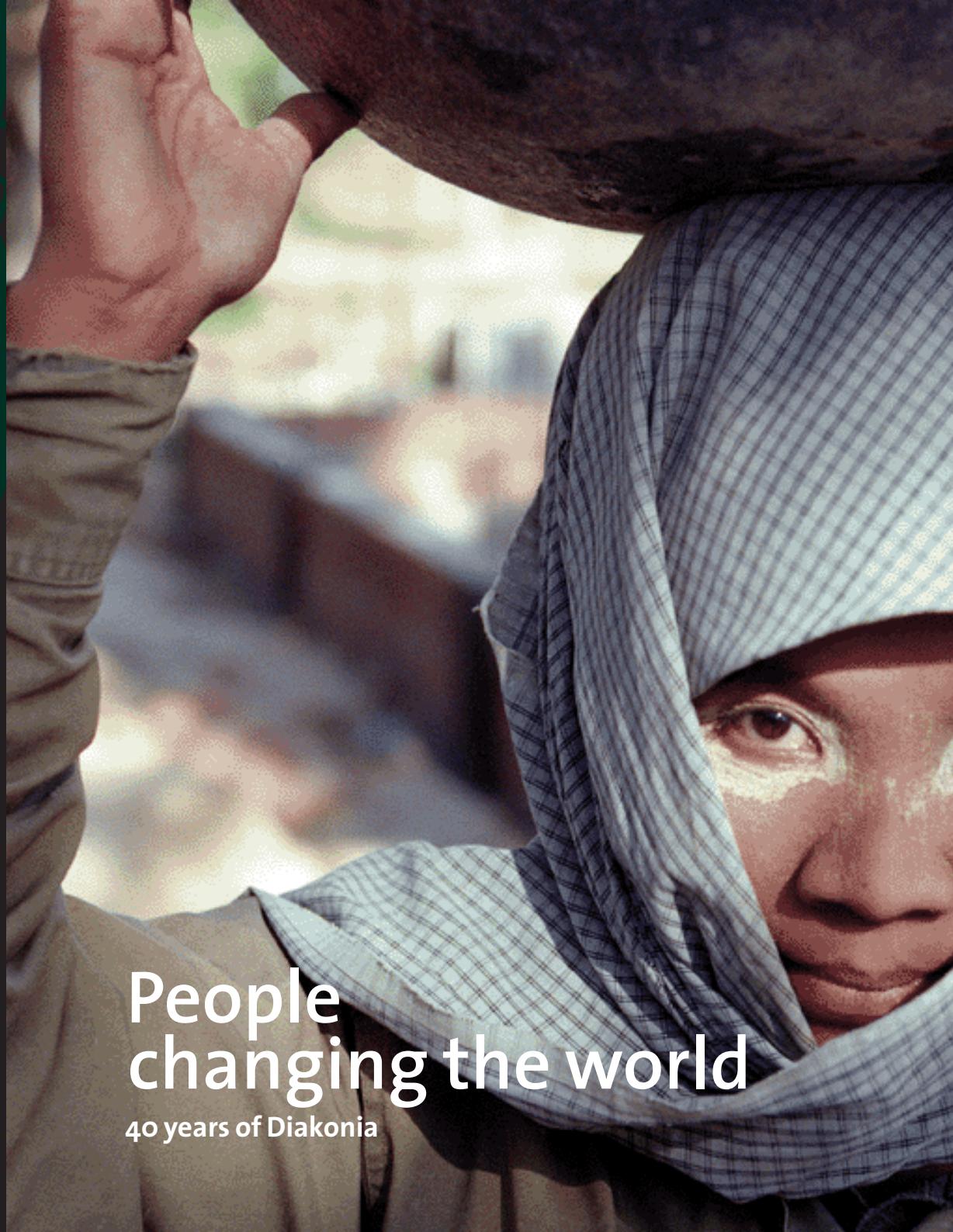
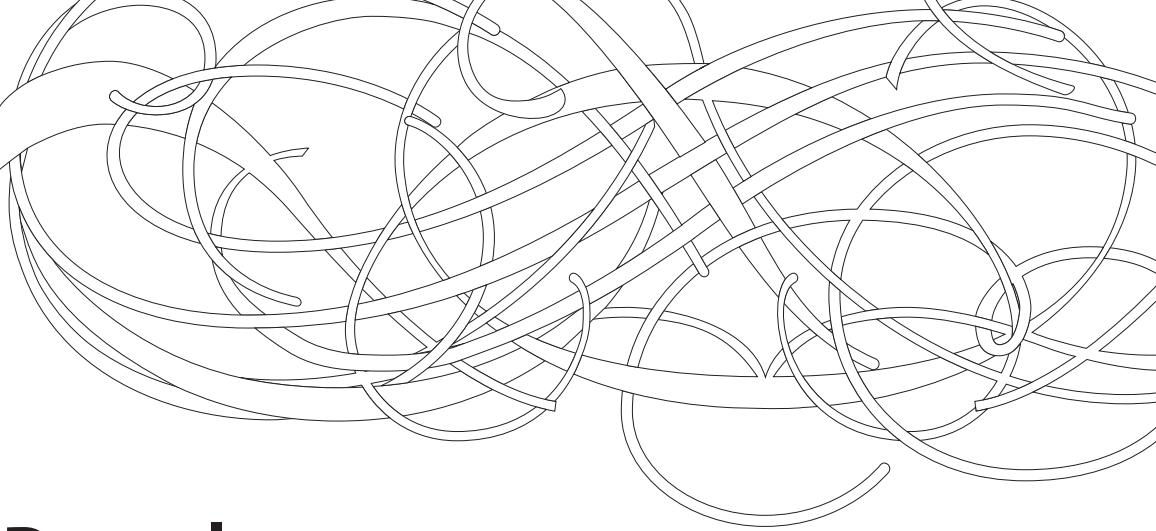




Rachel Norborg-Jerkeby



**People
changing the world**
40 years of Diakonia



People changing the world

40 years of Diakonia

Rachel Norborg-Jerkeby

Translated by Katherine Cash



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Foreword – People changing the world

DIAKONIA HAS, this year, existed and worked for forty years as a Christian development agency. It started as a disaster relief agency named Swedish Free Church Aid (Frikyrkan Hjälper) in the mid 1960s and is today an organisation that works with long-term development cooperation and a clear mandate to challenge decision makers to change the structural causes of poverty and of the oppression of people living in our world.

There have been years of struggle, discussion, development, learning and expansion. But most of all these years have been characterised by work that in every part and at all times has been borne by deeply committed people.

During these four decades a tremendous amount has happened in our world. From the mid 1960s to the present day, numerous events have etched themselves on our memory with headlines such as, for example, the Biafran War, the Six Day War in the Middle East, the fall of dictatorships in Latin America, South Africa's liberation from apartheid, the fall of the Berlin wall - the resolution of the cold war between East and West and now most recently the war in Iraq. Intensively covered by the

mass media when it happened, but with an underlying political power play and drama that we only learn fragments about from the history books. Revolutionary years - and Diakonia was there! In this book you will find Diakonia's perspective on events in some regions. Naturally, it might seem that Diakonia has played a small part in the big context – but don't look down on personal commitment and conviction. The big words and the roles of key decision makers are perhaps given too much weight in the writing of history and we forget that behind the development are people who have struggled and literally given their lives to bring about change.

Sometimes I have been asked what results Diakonia has achieved over the years. Then I usually talk about Central America. How the work with refugees from dictators and civil wars in the countries became the basis for extensive work for peace and democracy.

I talk about South Africa and the struggle against apartheid. How the churches took great responsibility for revealing the inhuman structures and the human suffering they caused to the international community. But above all how they stood on the barricades in the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa without bloodshed and violence.

I talk about Diakonia's work on the West Bank and Gaza over forty years. Humanitarian projects in the region were among the first projects that Diakonia supported. Today the work has developed into an extensive programme to strengthen respect for human rights and international humanitarian law as a basis for peace building between Israel and Palestine. You can read more about this in the book you are holding in your hands.

One part of Diakonia's history and development is of course the relationship and cooperation with our denominations. There has been an ongoing dialogue on the organisation's theological basis in the context of the broader mission and mandate. In recent years the question of closer cooperation and integration has been on the agenda with some of the denominations.

It is not possible to describe between the covers of this book all that has happened in the world and what Diakonia, from its particular perspective, has contributed. That is why we have chosen to be selective and describe Diakonia's history using a few geographical areas to depict the course of political events, the role and development of the organisation and above all what happened to the people involved.

A testimony about people carried by conviction, faith, and courage and by the vision that it is possible to change the miserable conditions under which all too many live in this world. Women and men inspired by hope, who have succeeded in turning that hope into concrete action. People who, through their untiring work, have managed to transform a hopeless situation into a feasible future and a step in the building of God's kingdom.

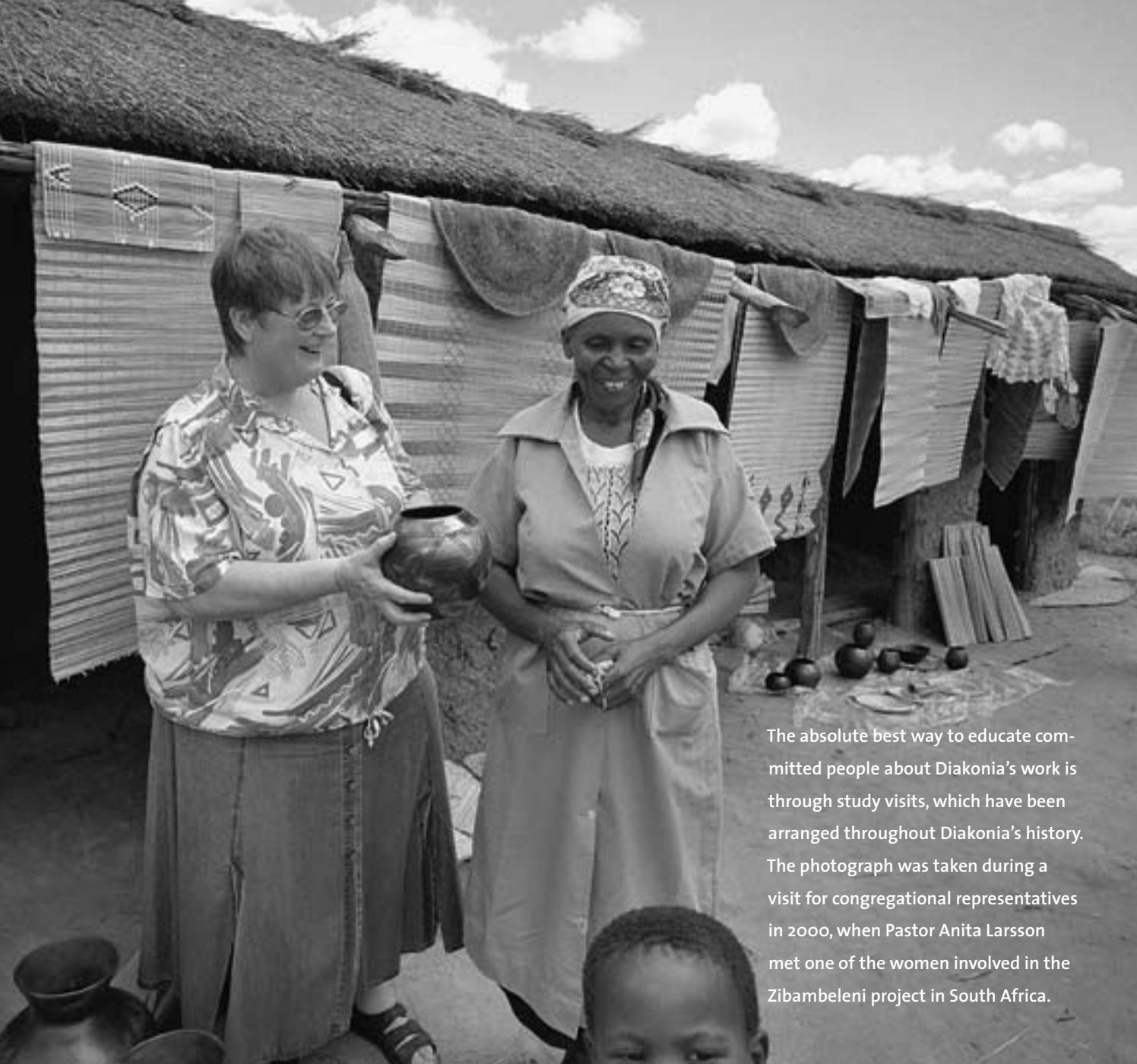
Exciting reading that I hope will inspire you to continued and increased action to create a world where everyone can live a life of dignity. It is people who change the world.

So finally, thanks to Rachel Norborg-Jerkeby who has been a colleague in the organisation for a large part of Diakonia's history and who, over the last year, has spent days and weeks in Diakonia's extensive archives finding facts and background material and has now written this book.

Sundbyberg, January 2006

Bo Forsberg

General Secretary



The absolute best way to educate committed people about Diakonia's work is through study visits, which have been arranged throughout Diakonia's history. The photograph was taken during a visit for congregational representatives in 2000, when Pastor Anita Larsson met one of the women involved in the Zibambeleni project in South Africa.

Author's Foreword

IT TURNED OUT TO BE ME, Rachel Norborg-Jerkeby, who was given the fantastic job of documenting Swedish Free Church Aid/Diakonia's 40 years by Diakonia's board. Forty years might seem like quite a short time, but for an organisation that has grown from one small, limited effort in India into such an extensive network of organisations and people around the world, these have been forty full years.

I have been employed by Diakonia as Information Secretary for 25 years. Being so close to the work may have resulted in me having difficulty in critically reviewing documents and interviews. But it has also been an advantage, as during these years I have had the privilege of meeting so many people, meeting so many partner organisations around the world and have also been part of the Swedish office. In addition to the many stimulating conversations and interviews with people, I have accessed 40 metres of shelving full of documents housed at the National Archives in Arninge.

Throughout the process I have had a working group at my disposal comprised of Ewa Widén, Peter Ottosson and Eric Nilsson. Diakonia's General Secretary Bo Forsberg has closely followed my work, as has the former Director Karl-Axel

Elmquist. Sven Halvardson, a lecturer at the Stockholm School of Theology, has been my supervisor throughout. The advice and comments of all these people have been invaluable for my work.

As Swedish Free Church Aid/Diakonia's work has been so extensive, it was clear from the beginning of the research process that everything and everyone could not be contained in the story. It was decided to begin with a description of the organisation's first five years. It was during these years that much of the policy was formulated that has given direction to the organisation ever since.

My colleagues and I chose to then describe four countries and the regions to which they belong: Bangladesh/Asia, South Africa/Africa, Palestine and Israel/Middle East and El Salvador/Latin America. These countries have to represent all the other countries and situations in their regions. One chapter describes the organisation itself and there the work in Sweden is also presented. In the final chapter the last five years up to the Annual General Meeting in May 2005 are described.

I would like to thank all those who made it possible for me to complete this task. In addition to those of you I have already named, I would like to thank everyone who agreed to be interviewed both here at home and in South Africa and El Salvador. I would also like to thank the personnel of the National Archives in Arninge and all those who have read and commented on the whole or parts of the text.

As I write this, I feel great joy that Diakonia exists and is a tool in God's hands, with the Christian calling as its guiding star.

Notes to the reader

References to items in the minutes are given throughout the text. These refer to the minutes of the Swedish Free Church Aid Committee or of Diakonia's Committee/Board, which are archived at the National Archives in Arninge and at Diakonia's office for the period following the year 2000.



General Secretary Bo Forsberg on a visit to Palestine.



CHAPTER 1

The formation of Swedish Free Church Aid/Diakonia

HAD THE MEMBERS of the Swedish Free Church Council (SFCC) grasped the full significance of the decision they took at their meeting on 5 May 1966, would they have dared to agree to the formation of Swedish Free Church Aid?

Looking at Swedish society in the 1960s, it is easy to conclude that their decision was an obvious one. Increased coverage of world events in the mass media brought the world closer, bringing with it an awareness of how people far away lived. Committed Christians could only answer the cry for help from drought stricken India in one way. The decision of the council clearly shows that organisational and structural issues were not the primary consideration in forming a Christian response. There was a vision to help and it led to action.



For many the changes brought a new radicalism – a collective social movement with a largely shared worldview and the aim of changing the world.



Swedish Free Church Aid (SFCA)

– Born in times of change

It was a time of expansion, characterised by major changes in Swedish society. The economy had taken off after the end of the Second World War. Optimism was high both within the family and in society at large. The concept of the welfare state was increasingly used to describe the new situation in Swedish society. The economy stabilized and industries developed. A larger labour force was needed and Sweden attracted immigrants. New food habits developed, with the arrival of hamburgers and pizza.

The changes were visible not only in new housing estates, increasing numbers of cars and new styles of clothes. They were also visible in people themselves, as society had changed in its essence. For many this expressed itself in a new radicalism, "a collective social movement with a largely shared worldview and the aim of changing the world"¹, and "a new economic world order" was on many people's agenda.

All this was also noticeable in the work of the free churches. Congregations were founded in the new housing estates of large cities and churches were built. The work of the churches held an increasing focus on global issues. More and more people could afford to visit other countries. This

and an increasing knowledge of foreign languages enabled many to experience a meeting with poverty. Radio and television news programmes gave more and more coverage to the situation in what had now begun to be called the Third World².

The war in Vietnam, lasting from 1961 until 1975, became the first war to be followed on TV. Anti-war sentiment in Sweden grew strong. Awareness of apartheid policies of racial segregation in South Africa also led many to take action, for example by boycotting South African produce.

Revelations about the activities of Swedish companies in Africa also created commitment to issues of international justice among Swedes. Two TV documentaries, *Black week in Nimba*, (SVT 2/10-66) depicting circumstances surrounding the strike at Lamco, the Gränges owned company in Liberia, and *Not one figure right* (SVT 25/6-68), highlighting Atlas Copco's involvement in the Cabo-Bassa project in Mozambique, had a major impact on public opinion.

The mission work of the Christian denominations gained a new focus during this period, as many African states were freed from colonialism. Liberation movements from Africa and peoples' movements from the North met in a common commitment to freedom and justice. This also led to an analysis of the nature of partnership

between churches in North and South, which in turn led to sister churches in poor countries becoming independent.

Poverty Challenged

It is interesting to read some of what was written at the time. One example is found in a challenge from the Swedish Baptist Union's Mission Secretary, Sven Ohm, in the Church's magazine *Veckoposten* (29/6 1967):

It is morally perilous to see need and not act.

One day we will meet our Lord: Did you give them something to eat, did you clothe them, and did you give them shelter? Some will probably answer: Yes Lord. They got 0.3% of the Swedish GNP. Others will answer: Yes Lord we sent bandages to Congo, we invited an Indian boy to Easter dinner ...

What do you think the Lord will reply? Do you think he will be pleased? Are you satisfied yourself?

Isn't it time to think again? To radically change ourselves? Is it not obvious that 'crumbs from the rich man's table' aren't enough, that the age of charity is over? It is high time for solidarity with the world, which means that we share, actually share our abundance with the hungry and the homeless. What will happen if we don't ... ?

Development Debate

Commitment to the major issues of social justice was clearly expressed in the development debate that began in 1966. In 1961, the United Nations decided to challenge economically developed countries to increase their contributions to international development assistance to 1 percent of GNP. In the same year, the Swedish Parliament unanimously agreed on this as a target. However no deadline was set for its achievement. In 1962/63 development assistance stood at 0.17% of GNP. The state budget for 1966/1967 increased this to 0.35%.

The slow pace of increase led all of the free-church denominations, SFCA, the Church of Sweden and approximately 30 other organisations to come together in December 1966 to appeal to the Swedish Parliament to increase taxes in order to increase development assistance. The Committee of Swedish Free Church Aid concurred with the other organisations in saying that

[...] The question of the budget for development assistance cannot be solved by limiting expenditure alone, state income must also be increased. We are, however, convinced that the members of our organisations are willing to accept an increase in state income tax for this purpose and therefore suggest that such a measure be the subject of Parliamentary enquiry. (1966 §166)

The debate held in Parliament (19/4 1967) was highly animated. In addition to raising taxation levels, the question of how Swedish society benefits from exploitative relationships with developing countries was discussed. Parliamentarian and Methodist minister Thorvald Källstad, Liberal Party, wrote in the magazine *Svenska Sänebudet* 3/5 1967:

The terms of international trading relationships are biased towards us and against developing countries. This applies to goods such as sugar, cocoa, coffee and a large number of other products. Sweden's import of goods from developing countries stands at between 3 and 4 billion crowns each year. The benefit to Swedish society from unfair terms of trade can be estimated to be an amount of between 500 and 1000 million crowns each year. Even the lower of these two figures, 500 million, exceeds the amount of the current state development assistance budget.

As a result of strong public opinion the state budget for 1968/69 included a rise in the level of development assistance. The budget also stated that the target of 1% should be reached by 1975. In reality it was reached in 1976, to be reduced again in the budget year 1995/6 to 0.94% of GNI.³

Alternative celebrations of Christmas

Celebrating Christmas in an alternative manner was another way in which an awareness of international injustice was expressed. Under the heading "Intending to celebrate Christmas?" the Methodist Church magazine *Svenska Sänebudet* (9/11 1967) wrote the following:

In the run up to Christmas, Christian young people will be raising awareness amongst both church people and others about the real message of Christmas for us as rich people in a world of poverty. Several free-church youth organisations, the Christian student organisations and Church of Sweden youth have [...] experienced the grotesque in our celebration of Christmas and decided to do something about it.

The organisers of this activity also got Swedish Free Church Aid involved. Having heard the Free Church Student Movement and the Free Church/Lutheran Senior High Student Movement's call to action the executive committee agreed to express their solidarity and joy at the action being taken (1967 §148).

The activity continued for several years. Alternative celebrations of Christmas were organised in many places around Sweden through the free church organisation *Ny Gemenskap*, founded in the late 1960s.



This drawing was included in SMCC Youth's magazine for youth leaders 1969.

Nothing was holy. Everything was to be questioned. Even Christmas. The commercial carousel of Christmas celebration became a perfect target for the protest movement. People wanted to create a counterbalance to the commercial frenzy in society, but the main point was to give the many homeless and lonely people of their town a little human warmth and company.⁴

Major Church Conferences

The 1960s were also a very important decade for church politics. The major conferences held were all characterised by the challenge to the Church to reinterpret its role in a world of grave injustice.

Two Key Catholic Processes

At the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome in 1962–1965, questions of social ethics were given great attention. The final document *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World) asserted that it was not enough to merely talk about every person's duty to work effectively for a reduction in inequality between rich and poor.

It also gave concrete details and suggestions about how this should happen. An important point, however hard to realize, was that all work within the church should be appropriate to peoples' needs. The church should be there for them, not the other way around. It's about allowing the light of the gospel to shine on social relationships and problems, which are specific to each time and place.⁵

The second Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín in 1968 was also dominated by discussions of poverty and violence on the continent. The Bishops' analysis led them to conclude that

widespread poverty was the consequence of societal structures and that the violence was largely institutional violence designed to defend unjust structures. In this situation, the Bishops asserted, the Church must stand on the side of the poor.⁶

Uppsala 68

The World Council of Churches' (wcc) fourth General Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968, on the theme *See I make all things new*, was another important Church gathering. In a conversation with Olle Engström⁷, one of the Swedish participants, he told how:

the meeting turned into a challenge to the churches to get involved in current affairs, in issues of peace, racism, and economic inequality. Questions of gender equality weren't seriously debated then. But these other questions were focused on and it was of course the younger delegates, who in part came out of the student protest movement, and the delegates from the Third World who challenged us. The delegates at the youth conference, which was held in parallel to the wcc conference, sat up in the galleries and shouted and yelled and contributed of course to the charged atmosphere. The student uprisings were underway in May 68.

Uppsala 68 was a meeting covered by the mass media. Television and radio broadcasts carried ex-



The free church conference in Örebro 1969, with "The Congregation in the World" as its theme, can be interpreted as a free church response to Uppsala-68.

tensive reports in which representatives of independent churches in the Third World were given much exposure.

Free Church Conference 1969

As only the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS) and the United Methodist Church in Sweden (UMC) were members of the wcc this General Assembly was documented neither in the records of the Swedish Free Church Council (SFCC) nor of Swedish Free Church Aid. SFCC's decision to arrange a free church conference in

Örebro in 1969, on the theme *The congregation in the world* can easily be interpreted as a free church response to the wcc conference of 1968 in Uppsala.

International issues featured highly both in the conference's worship and working sessions. Many who participated still remember, for example, the long debates about the activities of Swedish companies in Mozambique and the Cabora Bassa Project. The conference was preceded by a youth conference, the resolutions of which were important for the decisions of the main conference.

Free Church Cooperation through SFCC

Swedish Free Church Council (SFCC) was the organisation that lay behind the formation of SFCA. In 1918 three denominations, the Baptist Union of Sweden (BÜS), the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS) and the United Methodist Church in Sweden (UMC) decided to form the Free Church Cooperation Committee.

In 1947 the number of denominations participating in the Committee increased with the addition of the Scandinavian Independent Baptist Union (SIBU), the Holiness Union (HU), Swedish Salvation Army (SSA) and the Örebro Mission (ÖM). In 1952 the Swedish Alliance Mission (SAM) also joined. In 1994 SIBU and HU united and later in 1997 merged with ÖM to form a denomination called *Nybygget kristen samverkan* in Swedish and InterAct internationally. The denomination's Swedish name changed to *Evangeliska Frikyrkan* in 2002. In 1963 the Free Church Cooperation Committee changed its name to the Swedish Free Church Council (SFCC).

The basis for the collaborative work of the council was expressed well by Birger Davidsson⁹ "That which we do best together, we shouldn't do separately."

The Free Churches and Social Issues

The minutes of SFCC's meetings and notes of the proceedings of the free church conferences show that social issues played a central role. In conversation on the subject Torsten Bergsten¹⁰ pointed out that:

there have been two branches within the free church movement as far back as the end of the 19th century. One was the evangelical, charismatic, Pentecost focused holiness movement, which warned against involvement in politics. The Pentecostal movement was an a-political movement – no politics. However, since the formation of the Christian Democrats (CD) in the 1960s the Pentecostal movement has been highly politically active. However, within the older free church movements, there was political consciousness stemming back as far as the 1870s. The reformed heritage was one of faith and action. This could be seen for example in the number of parliamentarians who were members of free churches, not least of MCCS.

The denominations that founded SFCA [from 1984 Diakonia] come from both of these branches. The social responsibility of the churches was expressed clearly in a letter that Büs's Mission Committee wrote to SFCC on 10/5 1968:

It seems to be a right development, in line with current efforts at cooperation between the free churches, that we strive to collaborate in the field of social work and work jointly both within Sweden and abroad. In addition, we consider it to be of great worth that the free churches have a joint body that can appeal to the general public for donations for current social relief efforts.¹¹

Since its inception SFCA has been the churches' joint expression of their Christian calling to act to assist afflicted people far away. The self-evident truth that faith must be shown in action is also clearly expressed in Diakonia's policy document from 1991, which bore the name *Faith is Action*¹².

Free Church Social Aid Efforts

SFCC's minutes from February 1965 document that Erik Rudén, Mission Secretary, Büs:

sought opportunities for joint free church social aid efforts for various countries in need. He thought not only of emergency relief efforts but also more generally of joint free church aid work of roughly the same type to be found in England and Germany. It would, in Rudén's opinion, create good will if, at a specific time of year, Sweden's free churches stood together in both donating to joint aid efforts themselves and in appealing to others to do the same (1965 §30).

A 'period of discussion' followed this suggestion and the council chose three of its members to prepare a proposal for a later meeting.

Birger Davidsson believed (11/6-03) that Erik Rudén's suggestion grew from his experience of working as General Secretary for the European Baptist Federation and as the Baptist World Alliance's Regional Secretary for Europe, posts he held for the six years to 1965. In his post he had had the opportunity to work with major international issues and he wanted to bring these issues alive in the Swedish context. In all probability, he had also had contact with Christian Aid in England and Bread for the World in Germany.

MCCS's Mission Secretary, Gösta Nicklasson's attempt at that time to initiate new discussions on a joint free church alliance made Rudén's suggestion well timed and may have made the decision easy to make. "When the denominations could not find their way to a joint free church alliance, there was a large joint project in the form of SFCA/Diakonia. The organisation grew and sought new paths and I believe it had a very stimulating effect on free church ecumenism", said Torsten Bergsten¹⁰. This was also emphasised by David Lagergren,¹³ "It has been healthy for the denominations to have Swedish Free Church Aid and Diakonia."



The vision that lay behind the formation of Swedish Free Church Aid was to create opportunities for joint free church social aid efforts to various countries in need. The photo was taken in the 1980s in Beirut, Lebanon, where Swedish Free Church Aid supported projects in the midst of war.

SFCC continued to discuss joint social action and all of the denominations gave support to the idea. (1965 §13.2)

It was suggested that the denominations should form their own, joint development organisation, to be called Swedish Free Church Aid (SFCA) and should attempt to carry out a fundraising drive during a week in May 1966. At this time there was an umbrella organisation for development work called the Swedish Fundraising Council, of which several of the denominations were members. The denominations were to leave

this organisation, in order that SFCC should instead represent them.

After this initial decision was taken the denominations were, of course, keen to influence the shape of the coming work. Is it possible to see that the denominations differed in relation to the direction they wanted the activities to take even at this early stage? It is very clear that everyone wished to create an organ for emergency relief. ÖM felt that it should be limited to this brief, whilst some others advocated using the organisation for more long-term development assistance.

It was proposed that SFCC should make a decision in principle on the formation of SFCA and "carry out a joint fundraising appeal for the victims of famine in India among the Council's member denominations as soon as possible". In the minutes it was noted that the "Methodist Church was involved in an international fundraising appeal for India. But they would support SFCC's appeal in any case". (SFCC:s AU 1966 §39 and §57)

The decision is made

The decision taken by SFCC on 5 May 1966 was worded as follows: "to undertake a rapid action amongst the denominations linked to the Council for the benefit of the starving in India". Thus Swedish Free Church Aid was founded. The executive committee of SFCC was also to be the Committee for SFCA (henceforth referred to as the Committee). Its task was to lead the work and take responsibility for the distribution of incoming funds. Although it was stated that the action had a once off character, the intention was to allow SFCA to become an annual fundraising appeal. (SFCC:s AU 1966 §57)

An extract of the minutes of the board of HU (1966 §57) illustrates the reception given to the decision by the denominations:

Decisions have, amongst other things, been taken on the formation of a joint free church aid organisation "Swedish Free Church Aid", which is intended to be free church people's complement to the existing aid organisations in Sweden.

Birger Davidsson described how at the time people who wanted to help those affected by a catastrophe somewhere in the world would send money to their denomination. In many cases the denomination didn't have an obvious partner to send this money to. In conversation, Walter Persson¹⁴ described how MCCs had built up aid work and contacts through a programme called "Swedish Mission Covenant Church Aid", via the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches. The idea of a joint free church 'aid agency' became an excellent solution for the denominations.

After just one month the members of the Committee unanimously agreed to propose that SFCC give SFCA "a more permanent character, through which specific causes could be highlighted, for example disaster relief to various countries. It was also agreed to propose that SFCC set fundraising activities for a particular time of year, preferably during the spring." The fundraising work of Christian Aid in England was the model for the proposal. (1966 §9)



The denominational newspapers did all they could to spread information about the fundraising campaign SFCA. This was the front page of SMCC's newspaper 'Svensk Veckotidning' in June 1966. (SMCC's archive)

The first fundraising campaign was successful and it is noted in a minute (1966 §70) that "at today's date 670,835.¹⁷ Swedish crowns have been received". By the end of the year the amount had risen to 856,712.68 crowns.¹⁵

The question of administrative costs has always been important in development assistance. A note exists saying that costs for the appeal "should not exceed 20,000 crowns." (1966 §71) This is further emphasised by a note that, in line with a deci-

sion from the executive committee, the Secretary had, on 8 June 1967, asked permission to change their post giro account number 40 33 04 to a post giro account in the so called 90 series. [Swedish post-giro account numbers beginning with 90 are reserved for approved non-profit organisations.] The response to SFCA's application was that as administration costs for the 1966 India appeal had been so low, he could give immediate approval to the Committee's request (1968 §33). The account number changed to 90 33 04. This account number has followed the organisation since then, in more recent years with the addition of - 4.

The Swedish Foundation for Fundraising Control (SFCC) has the task of ensuring that charitable organisations do not have unreasonably high costs for their work. According to SFCC's guidelines (2005) at least 75% of funds must be used for the charitable purpose and a maximum of 25% may be used for administration and fundraising costs. Today 91% of Diakonia's funds go to development work¹⁶.

From day one, the printed media played a major role in spreading information about the work initiated. The magazines of the denominations and other media were continually supplied with press releases and informative articles about funds raised and how they had been used.

Basic Principles

It is interesting to look at the focus of the support that was given. Only one month after the formation of the organisation there seems to have been no doubt about the principles to be set for the work. Three important basic principles were agreed upon and still (year 2005) apply. Those were that read:

- Support should go to those in most need
- Regardless of the religious profession of the recipients
- The money should be distributed to existing local organisations (1966 §75).

Theologically Rooted

The work of SFCA should be presented in theological terms. This was a basic policy. Articles sent to the magazines of the denominations and to congregations clearly show how various writers had the task of theologically motivating the work of the organisation. For example, Einar Rimmerfors (Member of Parliament, Liberal Party) wrote an article entitled "Starving India" in which he first emphasized the importance of state assistance being given via Sida¹⁷, but, he continued:



In order to use a '90-account' at least 75 percent of funds raised must be used for the charitable purpose and a maximum of 25 percent may be used for administration and fundraising costs. Today 91 percent of Diakonia's funds are used for the charitable purpose. Sfca first folder

(Diakonia's archive, B1B)

Christian love demands now and then a direct and personal expression. Paul has, in a very interesting and challenging way, described this generosity and collective responsibility in 2 Cor. 8. It is in this context that he uses the very topical words 'there will be equality' between those of us who currently enjoy our daily bread in rich measure and those of us who suffer in need. The whole of our policy towards developing countries, need and excess, poor countries and rich countries is contained here as in a nutshell.¹⁸

Looking Ahead

The work of the organisation continued to grow, as information and appeals from around the world came to SFCC's attention. The organisation had still not adopted any fixed structure or policies. It was probably this that led Per-Arne Aglert¹⁹ to give a presentation on developments in the organisation to the meeting in December 1968.

He started by describing the good relations that had developed between Swedish Free Church Aid, the overseas mission work of the denominations and other Swedish development agencies. Where possible the work had been planned in liaison with the personnel of the denominations located in the areas concerned.

SFCA had become an instrument for fundraising, firstly for disaster relief and secondly for development work. It was important that SFCA should continue to have a set time of the year for fundraising, preferably during the spring, when it would take a specific project as its focal point.

Finally, Aglert pointed out that SFCA had no personnel of its own based in the countries concerned to carry out projects and that there were no other plans than that projects would continue to be operated by local organisations (1968 §41).

It is likely that the members of the Council found the presentation so important that the

year after it was decided to invite the Mission Secretaries of the member denominations to attend a similar meeting.

Key Debate

In December 1969 the members of the Committee and representatives of the denominations met to hold a strategic debate on SFCA and the future direction of its work. Unfortunately, space does not allow the minutes of the meeting to be presented in full here. They make interesting reading in which many of the points made by delegates are quoted.²⁰

Several of the delegates began by expressing their joy at being given the opportunity to meet and discuss the continuing development of SFCA and by saying how necessary such a debate was. Everyone agreed that the work should include disaster relief efforts. However, there were differences of opinion in relation to whether projects should be limited to areas in which the denominations carried out mission work or not. Several speakers felt that when a disaster hit an area where one of the denominations carried out mission work the money should be channelled through that denomination, but that relief efforts should also be made when disaster hit a part of the world where none of the denominations were present.

Another clear divide in the discussion related to follow up. What should happen after the disaster phase is over; should work continue or not? Several denominations felt that development work should be carried out by the denominations themselves. MCCS's Mission Secretary Arvid Stenström, said, "There has been a gradual shift in SFCA's work, from disaster response to development assistance. I think this is a mistake. Church of Sweden Aid and the Red Cross have misdirected SFCA. SFCA and SFCC should not be involved in development assistance. The denominations should manage that themselves."

Zeth Abrahamsson, Mission Secretary of the Baptist Union, on the other hand, felt that disaster relief should be followed up on. "We should ask ourselves what became of those we helped in a disaster situation, he said".

The third point of disagreement revolved around fundraising. Nicklasson, MCCS, pointed out that when a disaster has happened SFCA get involved and then it is easy to raise money from the general public. Several others agreed that fundraising for SFCA should primarily take place outside the congregational context. Campaigns should target the general public. Aglert pointed out that large amounts had been raised at ecumenical services and gatherings. When the

Church of Sweden had been involved, Church of Sweden Aid and SFCA had generally shared the collections from these occasions. Aglert felt that if SFCA were not allowed to fundraise amongst their own members, the whole collection would go to other aid organisations.



Folder on the work in Bangladesh (Diakonia's archive, B1B)



Folder from the spring campaign 1969 (Diakonia's archive, A2:1)

In the recurrent discussions on fundraising representatives of some denominations have held that fundraising should not be directed towards the congregations but towards the general public.

Conclusion

The discussion ended with the adoption of the following recommendations: (note that no decision was taken on fundraising)

- a. To primarily focus upon disaster relief;
- b. That SFCA would not involve itself in actual 'mission' work;
- c. That development assistance should in the first place

be given to disaster hit regions in which SFCA has been involved in disaster relief work from start.

From this discussion, we can conclude that SFCA had become an accepted part of the life of the denominations in its own right. But the Committee was divided over which direction the organisation should take. Should the organisation only support disaster relief work or should disaster relief lead to long-term development work? It is worth noting the decision that SFCA would not run 'mission' work (evangelisation, church planting and building) and that there was unity on this point.

In 1973 Aglert wanted to introduce mission work, primarily in Bangladesh. "It would be good if the goodwill created by humanitarian work was followed up by evangelism as part of the denomination's mission work" (1973 §95). ÖM took this challenge seriously and people who had previously participated in disaster relief work in Bangladesh began evangelisation work in the country, under ÖM's leadership in 1973.²¹

Discussions about the future continued and it was decided to arrange a consultative conference (1974 §90). Thorough preparations were carried out, resulting amongst other things in a 30 page paper entitled *Ownership, Mutuality and Development*²². In October 1978 a conference was

arranged for SFCC, SFCA and representatives of the denominations (1978 §6).

One result of discussions of the paper was the adoption of *Policies for Swedish Free Church Aid* (1978 §76.4). Given that SFCA was, in legal terms, part of SFCC the policies did not contain any statutes regulating organisational structures and procedures but were rather an instrument for steering the work itself.

An Independent Organisation

10 years passed before the question of SFCC and SFCA's work and organisational structure was brought up again (1988 §58). The issue grew as the whole shape of ecumenical cooperation in Sweden began to be reconsidered (1990 §39). These discussions led to the formation of the Christian Council of Sweden²³ (1993 §48). At an extraordinary Annual General Meeting on the 25 October 1993 it was decided that Swedish Free Church Aid, which in 1984 had changed its name to Diakonia, should become an independent organisation in legal terms. New statutes were adopted in November 1995 (1995 §107).

Whilst the organisational analysis was being carried out, the process of writing an *exploration of Diakonia's work* was initiated (1990 §39). After

much discussion between the Board and personnel at the head office and regional offices, the document *Faith is Action* was published. Its publication came just in time for Diakonia's 25th anniversary in 1991.

In 1994 the Board decided to initiate a:

thorough process to look at some priority areas such as: theological and ideological basis, an overview of administrative structures and capacity development, the sense of ownership amongst the denominations and relations with Sida (1994 §7).

The process resulted in the policy adopted in 1997 (1997 §45), which was a much appreciated guiding document for work with partners around the world and for work in Sweden. The policy retained the basic principles adopted in 1966, now expressed in the words:

Diakonia's goal is to change the situation of the poor and oppressed through creating the conditions necessary for participation in building society through strengthening democratic structures and culture. This is not a target group that Diakonia as an organisation can work directly with and thus influence. We can achieve our goals only through establishing partnerships with organisations and churches that share these same visions and goals.²⁴

Diakonia increasingly saw the whole of its work, from its supporters in Sweden to the global level, as one integrated programme in which experience and knowledge were channelled in all directions. Experience exchange had become increasingly important in Diakonia's work both between partners in the South and between them and the work in Sweden. Eskil Albertsson confirmed this: "Over the 20 years that I was a member of Diakonia's Board I encountered a great deal of knowledge and experience regarding international development work, and I was able to pass this on through various channels within the denomination".²⁵

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 2005 it was agreed that a revision of the policy document should be made. The situation in the world changes rapidly, new issues arise and Diakonia is constantly challenged to respond to these in its work. The policy therefore needs to be revisited (AGM 2005 §15).

From Swedish Free Church Aid to Diakonia

The Swedish name *Free Church Aid*, adopted by the organisation from the beginning, was a simple statement of purpose. Drought afflicted India was to receive *aid* from the *free churches* in Sweden.



When the major evaluative study was carried out in 1975 the name was called into question:

"Free Church" Time limited, will not apply after disestablishment of the state church, when all churches become 'free' "Aid" International development and disaster relief work should no longer be carried out in the manner implied by the unidirectional work 'aid'. The key word should instead be mutuality, which implies reliance and communication in both directions.²⁶

In 1974 SFCA took the Spanish name *Acción Ecuménica Sueca* (Swedish Ecumenical Action). This name continues to be used in some contexts [year 2005] as it provides a clear statement of the origins of the organisation, which can be important in politically difficult situations.

An interesting correspondence on the issue of the organisation's name has been kept from 1974. The English name Swedish Free Church Aid had been adopted. Leo Liljengren, who worked at the



organisation's office in Bangladesh, wrote to head office to explain how misunderstandings could arise due to the word *church* being contained in the name. This had led the authorities to believe that those working for the organisation were missionaries. (Missionaries were not allowed to work in Bangladesh at the time). Liljengren wanted the organisation to have a name that made it clear that the organisation worked with development.

Lars Franklin from head office answered that there was uncertainty about how to tackle the issue. How would the authorities react if the organisation suddenly changed name, but retained the same personnel and carried out the same work?

Liljengren answered that the authorities had misunderstood the name once more, leading to delays in the import of cement because the word *church* concerned the authorities. A new name was suggested, "SWEDISH AID TO BANGLADESH (in capitals) with Sponsored by Swedish Free Church Aid (in small text)".²⁷ As no decision was taken to



change the name, the abbreviation SFCA began to be used in Bangladesh, a title that no one apparently questioned.

Discussions about the name were concluded on the 2 September 1984 when the name was changed. The new name was *DIAKONIA* (1984 §135). The biblical word *diakonia* is Greek and means service. It also has an original linguistic meaning: to go by horse through evil or uncleanliness in order to achieve change. The new name required no translation.

The logo – two hands cupped around a head of wheat – was used for the first time for the spring fundraising campaign in 1969 (1969 §25).

As a result of working with its corporate identity, the font in the logo was changed in September 2001. The hope was to find a marketing model that would give greater clarity and a better focus on Diakonia's identity. This was also the point at which Diakonia adopted the slogan "People changing the world".



Throughout the years, discussions have taken place on the relations between SFCA /Diakonia and the denominations. This picture was taken during discussions on SFCA and the future in 1978. From the left: Lars Franklin, SFCA, Åke Larsson, UMC, David Lagergren, BUS and Per-Arne Aglert, SFCA. The poster series 'My Golden Bengal' can be seen in the background. (Diakonia's archive, K2:8)

Organisational Structure

Swedish Free Church Aid was originally a part of the work of the Swedish Free Church Council, with SFCC's executive committee as its steering group. From 1967 the committee's meetings were divided so that questions regarding SFCA were dealt with separately and recorded as decisions of the Committee of Swedish Free Church Aid.

In 1969 a specific Committee for Swedish Free Church Aid was elected, consisting of two representatives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, MCCS, and one representative of each of the other denominations. The elected representatives all held leading positions within their respective denominations, several of them being mission secretaries. Eskil Albertsson commented that "SAM (Swedish Alliance Mission) saw its involvement in Diakonia's work as so important that for more than 30 years its Board elected the mission secretary and thereafter the chairperson as representative on Diakonia's Board".²⁵ All minutes were adopted in retrospect by SFCC and the annual report and audited accounts were approved by both SFCC and the denominations.

In 1993 Diakonia became an independent organisation with its own legal registration. The intimate link with SFCC came to an end. Under the new statutes the Board and the Annual General Meeting became the organisation's highest decision making bodies. The AGM was to elect the Board, which was to consist of representatives of all the denominations (1995 §107).

The work grew continually and the political context for the work around the world changed, placing new demands upon Diakonia. Many organisational analyses have been carried out over the

years. One such was carried out in 1996 (1996 §65). It was followed up by a systems audit that aimed to evaluate Diakonia's routines and controls in relation to the work and the finances.

One proposal arising from the audit was the order of delegation later introduced in 1999. It was important to identify areas of responsibility and clearly define the levels at which different kinds of decisions should be taken (1999 §138).

Diakonia's core values were strengthened with the adoption of new statutes on 23 September 2003. The theological basis for the organisation's work was clearly described and the organisation was given a clearer, stronger mandate: "Diakonia is one expression for the Christian congregation's calling to serve people across all divides in the love of Jesus Christ" (more on this on page 42).

Relations with the denominations

Since Swedish Free Church Aid's formation, there have been continual discussions about the relationship between SFCA/Diakonia and the denominations. In 1968 the BUS sent a letter to SFCC in which they proposed "that Swedish Free Church Aid should become a permanent joint instrument for social action for the denominations linked to the council." They began the letter with

highly positive statements about the ecumenical development of social work projects both within Sweden and abroad. If SFCC and SFCA were prepared to take over responsibility, BUS would be prepared to transfer all of their social projects to the organisations.²⁶ The letter is included in the minutes of the meeting, and it was decided that the presentation given was sufficient for the time being. (AU 1968 §133:1)

At this time BUS ran a programme called *The Social Mission*. It was this work (which included support for projects in other countries) to which the letter referred. It would be 10 years before SFCA took over responsibility for BUS's projects in the Philippines and Burma.

Whilst relations with the denominations have basically been positive they have been put to the test on several occasions. The minutes from 1967 tell of one such occasion. In February 1967 SFCC decided to carry out "fundraising work under the leadership of Swedish Free Church Aid" ... "at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner". The purpose was to raise funds for wells in India and the date was set for two weeks in May (1967 §10).

When SFCC's committee met in March 1967, Stenström of MCCS insisted that the decision to run the fundraising campaign be reversed. This was because the denomination had begun cooperating

with the chain store Domus and was providing an exhibition on the theme *1000 wells in India*, which was to tour stores until the autumn. A fundraising campaign was to be carried out in connection with this exhibition. ÖM also requested that no fundraising should be carried out during the spring as they were planning to fundraise around their Jubilee. Nicklasson, MCCS, also said that no fundraising for SFCA should be done during the autumn, as the denomination needed time for its own fundraising efforts. "After discussion it was apparent to SFCC that it would not be possible to initiate a fundraising campaign", and the decision was made to refrain from fundraising during 1967 (1967 §50).

In the following discussion Rudén said, "that he could not help but feel disappointed that such a promising initiative, as SFCA had indeed shown itself to be, could not become a fixed annual activity". Rudén was supported in his view by the representative of the Methodist Church, whose Bishop, Odd Hagen, had expressed concern over the proposal to delay the fundraising, "now, just when Bihar is in such desperate need of help". Despite these voices the decision to refrain from fundraising during 1967 stood. (1967 §50 and §44)

In the Annual Report of 1967²⁹ it states that SFCC decided at the beginning of the year not to activate SFCA that year. The *Six Day War* in the

Middle East, however, forced the executive committee to test the decision for a third time.

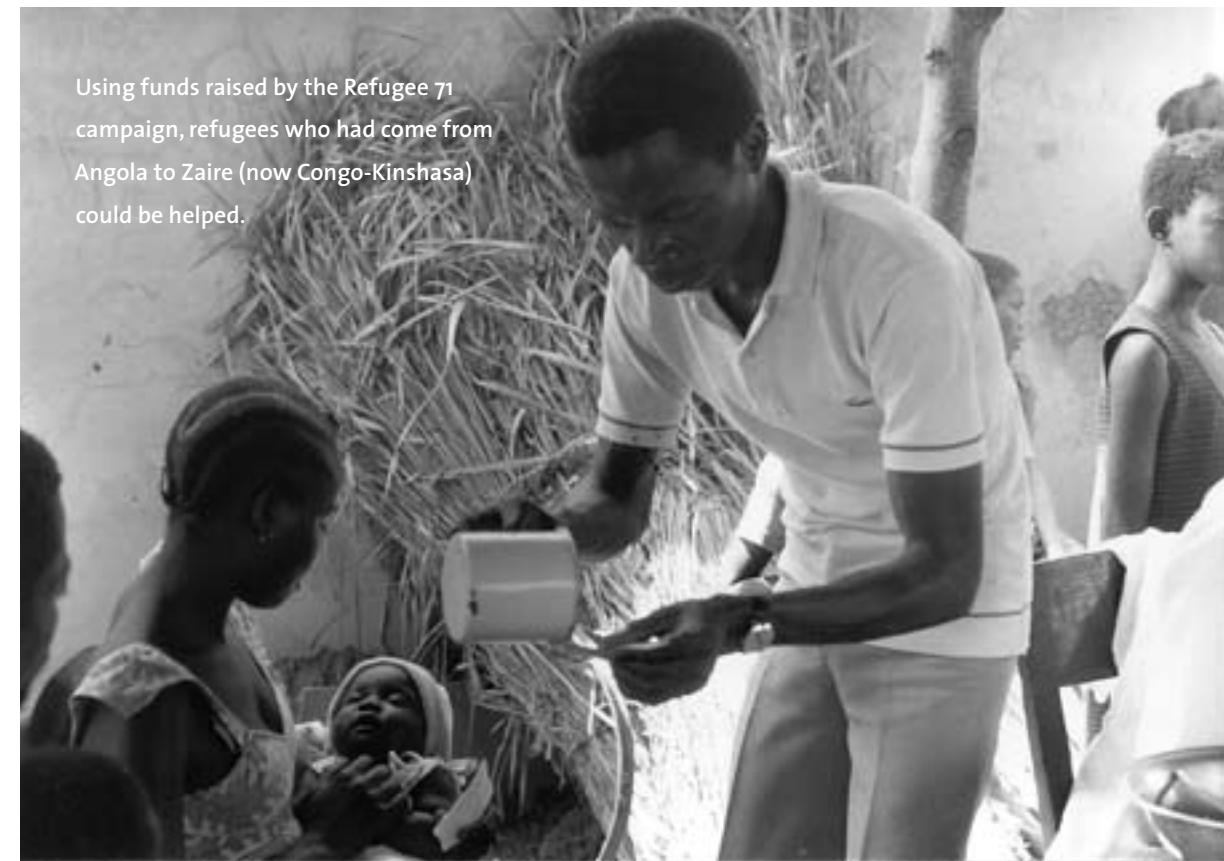
In conversation with Walter Persson he shared that discussions in the Committee up until the 1980s "revolved largely around a struggle over money, and less around real cooperation on the projects".¹⁴

In 1995 Diakonia's Annual General Meeting adopted guidelines for *relations between Diakonia and the international work of the denominations*.

1. In an area where one of the denominations operate mission work Diakonia will liaise with the denomination on possible cooperation.
2. In an area where one of the denominations has a sister church with significant development assistance work, Diakonia's contact should in the first place be with other churches and ecumenical organisations. Where these are not the most suitable organisations for partnership, other organisations and movements may be Diakonia's partners. This includes organisations with other religious affiliations than Christianity, provided that they do not actively work against the Christian faith.
3. When recruiting Diakonia personnel, effort is to be made to find people with Christian faith and a link to the congregations. No particular theological perspective is to be preferred and skills and personal suitability will have great importance for recruitment.

4. Exchange of information and experience between Diakonia and the international work of the denominations is sought by both parties. Exchange of experience in other countries is also encouraged.
5. Diakonia and the mission secretaries of the denominations should keep one another informed about new

work in those regions where both parties are active. Regular meetings are held between Diakonia and the mission offices. These meetings may include all the denominations together, one denomination at a time or regional groupings. (Annual General Meeting 1995 §II).



Using funds raised by the Refugee 71 campaign, refugees who had come from Angola to Zaire (now Congo-Kinshasa) could be helped.

The most recent occasion on which the question of fundraising was taken up was in connection to the Tsunami disaster of 2004. MCCS sent a letter to local congregations appealing to them to raise funds and to pray for the disaster relief work being done by their Indian sister church on the Andaman Islands. In the magazine debate that followed this, former BUS mission secretary Sven Ohm, wrote:

In that which has been said and done in connection with the tsunami disaster, it seems that many, including church leaders, have forgotten that Diakonia was from the beginning our joint tool for disaster relief and development assistance particularly in relation to the general public.³⁰

Reactions came, amongst others, from mission secretary Bertil Svensson, MCCS:

As the disaster occurred in the middle of the fundraising period for international mission in MCCS congregations, we felt that it was difficult to split the fundraising between more than two purposes: the long term mission work and disaster relief via a sister church.³¹

Since the beginning of the 1970s, congregations within the BUS and the MCCS have stood out as being those most active in supporting SFCA/Diakonia. One probable reason for this is that in 1975 ÖM

founded a development assistance organisation called *Bröd till Bröder* (Bread for Brothers), closely linked to its own overseas mission work. Many congregations within SAM and HU/SIBU therefore chose to support *Bröd till Bröder*, as did some congregations within BUS. Involvement in *Bröd till Bröder* meant that neither time nor funds were available for SFCA/Diakonia. Göthe Henriksson described³² how, as part of the overall fundraising work, it became the norm to carry out an annual collection for SFCA/Diakonia. For many years this amounted to 5% of the amount collected for *Bröd till Bröder*. In addition to *Bröd till Bröder*, SAM has also been heavily involved in the Småland based organisation *Erikshjälpen*. There have been recurrent discussions about closer cooperation between SFCA/Diakonia and *Bröd till Bröder*.

Former SAM mission secretary Eskil Albertsson feels that "there is a widespread view within SAM that Diakonia's work complements the mission work of the denomination in a series of important areas, such as rapid disaster response in the poorest parts of the world; concrete and long terms work to eradicate the causes of poverty; bold support of leaders within the struggle for human rights; community level programmes to strengthen women's rights and position in society and much more".³³

In all probability, the percentages of funds raised during the spring campaigns of 1995 and 2002 provide a concrete and representative illustration of how active the denominations and congregations are in supporting Diakonia:

1995: MCCS 77 %, BUS 12 %, SAM 3 %, UMC 2,5 %,

InterAct 5 %, SSA 0,5 %

2002: MCCS 76 %, BUS 14 %, SAM 2 %, UMC 5 %,

InterAct 2,5 %, SSA 0 %³⁴

The question of how Diakonia cooperates with the international work of the denominations was brought up again at the AGM of 1999 (1999 AGM §8).

This question sparked off a process of dialogue between Diakonia and the denominations which, in terms of its effect on Diakonia's statutes, was concluded on 23 September 2003 when new statutes were adopted. Discussions on how to structure cooperation in more practical terms are, however, ongoing [2005].

MCCS President Krister Andersson expressed the following hope:

MCCS expects to see an increase in opportunities to function cooperatively. We hope this will lead to a deepening of Diakonia's roots in the churches and to increased commitment to Diakonia's work and to its form of management and cooperation.³⁵

The dialogue was an interesting process, which began with the preparation of a summary of the international work being done by Diakonia and the denominations. The Board minuted the following comments on the summary:

Are we in agreement about what the problems and opportunities are? Would it be good to have an analysis from someone external to challenge us? What gains can be made by coordinating the work without the denominations having to hand over their work? How can we make the most of the impact that can be made through strong joint advocacy work? (2000 §26)

Diakonia's Director, Bo Forsberg, expressed it in the following way:

The churches represented on Diakonia's Board are mission organisations with responsibility for evangelism and relations with their sister churches, whilst Diakonia focuses on issues of justice and long term development cooperation, working for democracy and respect for human rights.³⁶

In order to meet some of Diakonia's partner organisations and to have time for joint deliberations, the Board and the Director travelled to South Africa. One result of this journey was that the Board decided to propose to the AGM of 2002:

That the Board be given the task of taking regular soundings and looking into possible consequences for the constitution and other key documents and of drawing up proposals for a memorandum of understanding regarding cooperation between the denominations and Diakonia. (2002 §19)

A theology for life

An important part of this work was to clarify Diakonia's mandate and theological basis, drawing upon experiences from the work and on the way in which the organisation had developed over the years.

In its daily work Diakonia is faced with the reality that God's intentions and the world's original harmony have been shattered. Although God continues to be present and involved in people's lives and in history, our world is riddled with conflict, betrayal, greed, wars and suffering.

Christians believe that we meet the incarnate God in the life and work of Jesus, as described in the Gospels. Jesus is also the embodiment of true humanity, of humanity as God intended it to be. Jesus' life expresses the ideals that Christians are called to strive for – justice, love, forgiveness and solidarity. Through living according to these ideals – which form a protest against the order of sin – people contribute to building the kingdom

of God here and now. Christian faith must never be reduced to an otherworldly vision of the next life. More than anything, it is a call to "take up the cross" now, in our present reality.

The church must actively resist and criticize unjust structures that lock people in poverty, suffering and oppression. Only then can God's will be done and the credibility of the church be retained. Or, as the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams expressed it - Christian faith is always about making choices - choosing whose side to stand on; the executioner's or the victim's, the oppressor's or the oppressed's.

Diakonia's current theological basis and clarified mandate were built upon reflections, thoughts and conversations such as these.

Extract from Diakonia's theological basis³⁵:

Jesus himself witnessed the suffering and heard the cries of the people from the side of the road. In the same way, the Church must constantly be prepared to see, hear and seek out situations and conditions where God's will towards humanity is being undermined, and where the value of human life is threatened or where relations have failed or broken down. Hunger, disease, repression and other suffering are all clear cries for help that demand a response from the Churches in the form of cross-border diaconal work. The Church would be betraying its call, if it failed

to respond and act in the name of the kingdom of God, to events affecting people's everyday life.

Diakonia's mandate³⁵:

Diakonia is one of the expressions used for the Christian community's call to, through the love of Jesus Christ, serve its fellows beyond all borders. This involves sharing burdens and thus bearing witness to the Christian faith through a network of human relations.

Diakonia's task is to seek God's will and based on fundamental Christian values perform its mission by working for the freedom and redemption of humanity and to ensure that just and fair structures are created or restored - analysing the forces behind injustices and conflicts from both a theological and social perspective as well as seeking alternative solutions – tackling distribution of wealth issues by exposing unjust structures and working for greater fairness in the distribution of resources.

At the AGM of 2003 it was decided to adopt the following principles for the signing of contracts between Diakonia and the denomination:

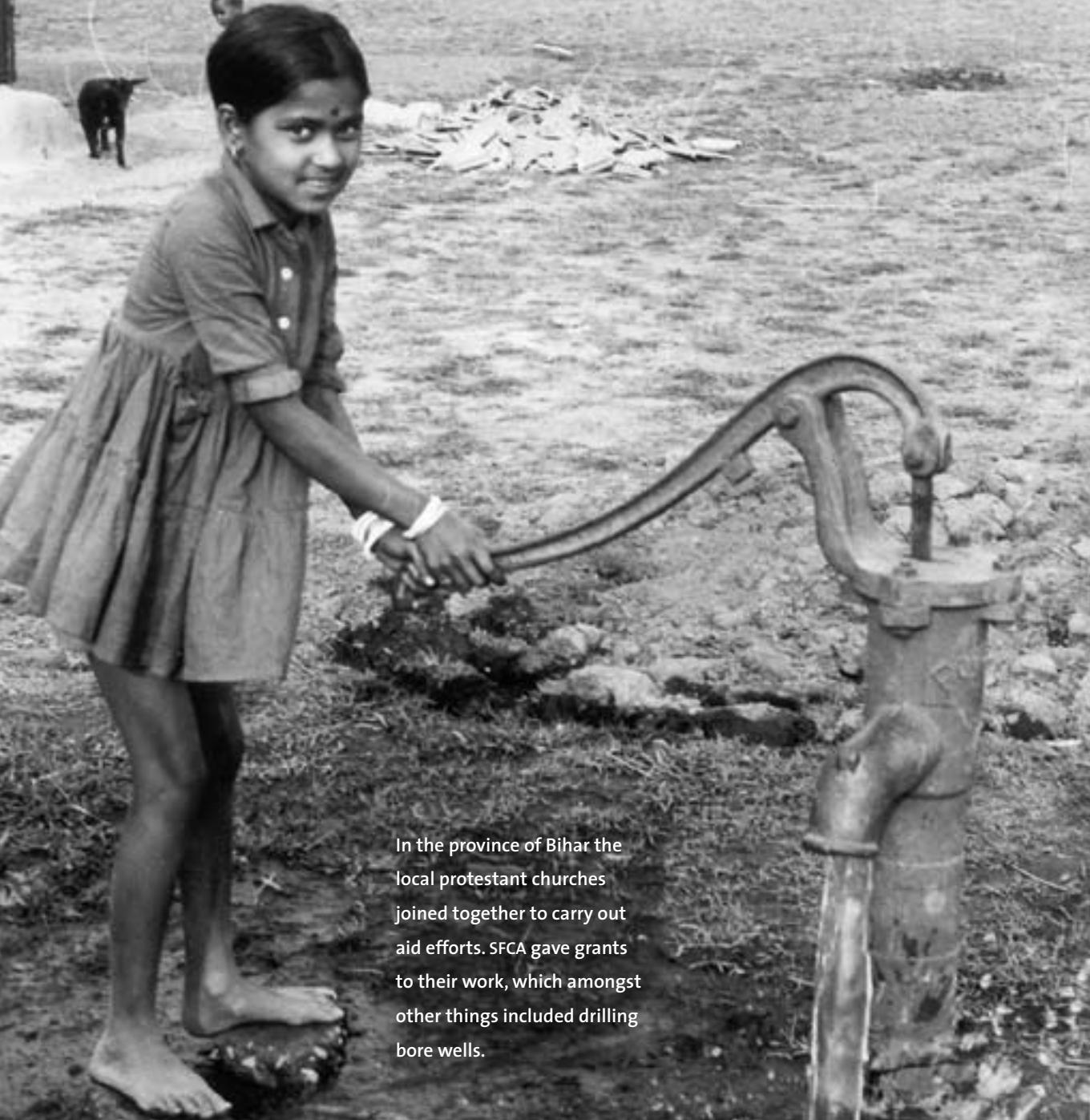
– In the continuing work to find greater integration and closer cooperation between Diakonia and the denominations, each denomination holds the right to sign a separate memorandum of understanding with Diakonia in relation both to work in Sweden and internationally,

– Diakonia and individual denominations have the right to sign separate memorandums of understanding for work in Sweden and international work without the need for approval from the Board in each case, as long as it falls within the framework for the work and the budget agreed by the AGM in order to develop the work of Diakonia (AGM 2003 §11).

The separate conversations with the denominations have in part continued. Representatives for MCCS / BUS and Diakonia have met with some regularity. The most concrete result of this is today found in the Democratic Republic of Congo. An initial contract was signed in 1998 and renewed in spring 2005 in the form of a partnership agreement for joint work to be carried out through one registered legal entity. Swedish personnel have been employed for this cooperation since 1998.

In Thailand close cooperation between Diakonia and BUS began in spring 2005, with BUS and Diakonia sharing office space. It has also been decided to plan for Diakonia to take over BUS's Sida financed development project, whilst BUS becomes a "think tank for theological reflection" (2005 §37).

At the AGM of 2005 the Preparatory Committee stated the following in relation to conversations with the denominations:



In the province of Bihar the local protestant churches joined together to carry out aid efforts. SFCA gave grants to their work, which amongst other things included drilling bore wells.

[...] the question of how we can cooperate between Diakonia and the denominations is at the moment in a state of imbalance between the denominations, between those that are already engaged in conversations and those that are not. The Preparatory Committee considers that questions concerning Information/Development Education/Fundraising are important subjects for discussion with all of the denominations (AGM 2005 §8).

The work takes shape

India – where it all began

It was self evident that the first grants from the newly formed Swedish Free Church Aid should go to India. A note was also made that “pressure for SFCC to do something there [in India] had come from many parts of Sweden”³⁶.

The first funds raised were to be distributed on the basis of need in the worst affected areas: Maharashtra on India’s west coast, Andhra Pradesh on the east coast and Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar in the north east. As it turned out, there were missionaries from Sweden in all of these areas, who were now given the task of investigating the possibility of channelling funding to the worst affected and those in greatest need of help.

In a first round of grants MCCS and SAM, who had a presence in Maharashtra, were allocated

325,000 crowns, ÖM in the provinces Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal 125,000 crowns, BUS in Ongole district of Andhra Pradesh province 150,000 crowns and the Methodist Church in Bihar province was allocated 50,000 crowns. The various missionaries/recipients were to put together reports on the distribution of the funds. These reports were then to be presented in magazines of the denominations and other.

In Bihar province the local protestant churches had come together in a joint relief effort, Action for Food Production (AFPRO). Swedish Free Church Aid gave a grant to the Water Development Society, a department of AFPRO, which amongst other things had responsibility for drilling wells.

In Andhra Pradesh state the grant resulted in 38,000 people receiving monthly wheat rations (9 kg per family) during the first year, drilled 15 wells being for drinking or agricultural purposes, and pregnant women, mothers of young children, the chronically ill, elderly people, orphans and children of lower school age receiving assistance.³⁷

In Maharashtra, extensive medical work was set in motion with a connected food distribution programme. Food distribution was primarily aimed at children in the early school years. Surveys were initiated looking into the drilling of a number of wells for agricultural use and drink-

ing water. The water lay at a depth of 100 m and every well would be costly.³⁸

Many of these first disaster relief projects developed into wide ranging partnerships between SFCA/Diakonia and the recipient organisations. In some cases the partnerships lasted for many years. Support for *Theodori Mission*, the social work of the UMC's sister church in Bihar, continued until 2004.

It can be seen from minutes and annual reports that SFCA continued to engage in areas that had previously received assistance. When the issue of fundraising came up in 1968 no one had any objections. Leo Liljengren, BUS, was employed on a short-term basis to prepare the information materials for the campaign. The challenge that year took the theme '*India prays: Give us water! Wells for Bihar.*' The campaign date was set for two weeks in May. 7000 posters and 10,500 folders were ordered, so it is clear that a major response to the campaign was expected from the congregations. The relief fund of Swedish television and broadcast (Swedish Radio Aid) allocated 100,000 crowns that year to an irrigation and development project in Bihar, supported by SFCA (1968 §8).

In autumn 1968 West Bengal was struck by a terrible tsunami and flood. 370,000 people were made homeless and 15,000 homes were totally

destroyed. Women's Mission Workers (WMW) supported a Norwegian missionary in this region called Olav Hodne, who worked for the Lutheran World Federation in the Cooch Behar Refugee Service project.

SFCC's executive committee gave Per-Arne Aglert the task of looking more closely at the extent of the disaster and what opportunities there were for channelling an eventual allocation from SFCA. It was decided to allocate 30,000 crowns directly to WMW's partner in West Bengal and that Hodne would administer the funding (1968 §31). At the same time SFCC's executive committee took an interesting decision regarding information on the disaster. It was apparent that the information would arouse a major response, but despite or perhaps because of this, they refrained from publication until after Christmas, in order not to disturb ongoing fundraising within the denominations.

West Bengal was the focus of the fundraising campaign in 1969. The following text appeared in the materials sent to congregations and the media:

TSUNAMI TOOK ALL THEY OWNED!

The Tsunami left nothing behind.

Homes, cattle, fields and many, many people were carried away by the wave. All that was left was a chaos of mud, broken trees and the ruins of what had once been homes.



Folder for the spring campaign of 1969 (Diakonia's archive, A2:1)

No, this is not the melancholy future vision of the aftermath of a nuclear war. It is the terrible reality for thousands of people in northern Bengal. A tsunami took all they owned ...

Our homes, friends, supermarkets and industries are still here. We are thankful for it. But think for a moment. How do you think it would feel to lose everything you have worked for in a single moment? Or not to be able to give your children any food at all for several days?³⁹

The story of Bengal (which in 1971 became Bangladesh) has a chapter of its own. Read more on page 93!

The Middle East

The so-called 'Six Day War' between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states was in progress when SFCC met on 7 June 1967. The war was not on the agenda, but whilst discussing the cancelled fundraising campaign for India, the question of "help for the victims of war in Israel and the Middle East" arose. It was decided to "initiate a fundraising appeal as soon as a ceasefire is in place and give the secretariat the task of making all necessary preparations" (SFCC:s AU 1967 §94).

On 9 June, whilst the war was still ongoing, the mission secretaries of the denominations within SFCC signed an appeal for prayer and funds, to be sent to congregations and the mass media as soon as the war was over. The appeal aroused a strong response. A poster and folder were printed and sent to the congregations of SFCC's member denominations.⁴⁰

Once again we see that the Christian calling meant answering calls for help from the outside world. How to organise this help was a secondary question. The decision to send assistance was taken in June, but in August the Committee took up the question of whether they "should start up a separate organisation for assistance to the Middle East or send funds through existing aid agencies". They decided to channel assistance through organ-



In close cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches SFCA was able to support thousands of Palestinian refugees.

isations already in place in the region (1967, §5, §6).

It is interesting to see some of the issues that arose as a result of the decision. One such issue was the role of the World Council of Churches, wcc, in the denominations. Nicklasson (MCCS) and Hagen (UMC) felt that their denominations, as members of the wcc, should participate in the fundraising appeal for victims of war initiated by the wcc. At the same time, given that they had signed the letter to the congregations, they said they would be loyal to the call for funds.

Linné Eriksson, ÖM, was against funds being placed at wcc's disposal, as the denomination

was highly critical towards the wcc's theological standpoint. However, he felt that he would be able to "justify to his board his positive participation in the decision by likening the wcc's role to that of the Good Samaritan" (1967 §6).

The appeal for prayer and funds was very successful. Large amounts were sent in and distributed, in the first place for emergency assistance to refugees. The World Council of Churches (via Church of Sweden Aid) and the Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief, SOIR received the first grants.

The full story of SFCA's work in and for Palestine/Israel can be found in Chapter 4 on page 129.

Refugee 71

The Committee meeting of January 1971 (§§17, 18) received an invitation from Swedish Radio Aid to participate in a joint Nordic fundraising campaign entitled *Refugee 71*, together with the Red Cross, Save the Children Sweden and Church of Sweden Aid. It was decided to participate in the campaign, which was to take place on Sunday the 25 April. Swedish Radio Aid notified SFCA and PMU in advance that they could receive one quarter of the amount raised.

The Committee immediately decided to cancel the annual spring fundraising campaign. Fundraising committees were formed across the country with participants coming from all the organisations involved. The aim was to carry out "operation door knock" to reach the maximum number of givers. Swedish Television broadcast a gala performance from the Royal Theatre in Stockholm on the evening of the 25 April.

The initiative was highly successful. Over 23 million crowns were collected and when the Committee met in May (1971 §66) they received the news that the free church congregations' participation in the campaign was estimated to have raised approximately 1.2 million crowns. An application for funds to the value of 940,000 crowns was sent to Swedish Radio Aid. This included

work with refugees in Gaza, Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The amount allocated was 977,500 crowns, more than had been applied for.



Vietnam

The first time the Vietnam War, which lasted from 1961 until 1975, was mentioned in minutes was in February 1967. SFCC had been asked by the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation to co-host a peace conference in Stockholm focusing on Vietnam. The council declined the invitation on the basis that the member denominations had received the same invitation. "SFCC should therefore, as a matter of order, not take the position of co-host" (1967 §17).

In June, SFCC were informed of a statement made by the Swedish Ecumenical Council on the subject of the Vietnam War. In November the Swedish Vietnam Committee asked SFCC to sign a letter to the US President Lyndon Johnson, calling on him to cancel the bombings of Vietnam over Christmas. This request was also declined on the basis that the denominations had each received the same request (1967 §166).

It was 1970, before the Vietnam War was once again on SFCC's agenda. The council received a letter from Lars Thunberg, Secretary for the Swedish Ecumenical Council, in which he asked "permission to mention SFCA as a suitable vehicle for channelling state resources for the reconstruction of Vietnam, in a letter to the Foreign Minister." Representatives of the denominations were posi-

tive to the idea of Swedish Free Church Aid participating in fundraising work for the reconstruction. The question of whether the WCC, sister churches to SFCC denominations, or other partners in the region were planning work for the post war context was also to be looked into (1970 §10).

In 1971, Vietnamese Professor Cao Ngoc Phuong visited Sweden. Aglert met her and later passed on her description of the country, which "largely had a peace seeking Buddhist population", to SFCC. The Buddhist movement for non-violence could be a channel for eventual aid efforts from SFCA (1971 §56).

Minutes (1971 §91) relate that Nicklasson represented SFCC at a conference focusing on the situation of American conscientious objectors in



Sweden was visited by the Vietnamese professor Cao Ngoc Phuong. She is seen here talking with Per-Arne Aglert (left) and Leo Liljengren (right).



One of the many groups in Vietnam that received support from SFCA.

Sweden. It was decided to award a grant to a project giving social and religious support to these deserters. This question had also arisen in 1968 and been sent on SFCC's executive committee.

SFCA provided support to Vietnam from 1972 until 1975, and large amounts were channelled to the protestant *Tin-Lanh Church* and *The United Buddhist Movement*. When the war ended in 1975

foreign organisations were forced to break off their support to the country. Instead all social work was to be led by the state and domestic voluntary organisations. In 1980 SFCA once again began to provide support to Vietnam⁴, concluding its support in 2004.

Support to Africa

In 1967, the war of independence broke out in Biafra (now the eastern part of Nigeria). The war lasted for three years, and caused grave suffering to civilians. The conflict in Biafra was widely covered in the Swedish media and for many the images published of starving children have been a symbol for poverty and starvation ever since. Once again people from the free churches got involved via SFCA.

When SFCC met in September 1968 they were informed that 18,000 crowns had been received by SFCA for Biafra, despite the fact that no call for funds had been sent out. It was also thought that congregations had in all probability collected large amounts of money, which had been sent to Swedish Radio Aid, Church of Sweden Aid or the Red Cross. This realisation led SFCC to form an 'Action Committee'⁴² to act rapidly in response to disaster situations, on behalf of SFCA.

Throughout the Biafran conflict grants were given via Church of Sweden Aid to the disaster relief work of the Christian Council of Nigeria, Joint Church Aid (1968 §17).

South Africa

Before 1960 the Swedish general public had a fairly low level of awareness of the situation in South Africa, a country with a constitution that, from 1948, legislated apartheid – the separation of blacks and whites. The terrible massacre in Sharpeville in 1960 was given mass coverage in the world media. Insight into the plight of the black population led many people to get involved.

The first time South Africa is mentioned in the archives of SFCA, was in 1971, when Olle Engström visited the Christian Institute (CI) and its leader, the white South African pastor Beyers Naudé.

I was received in Johannesburg by the Swedish Ambassador. He said directly: Be careful not to say anything reckless here. Watch every word you say. You know that the telephones of CI are tapped. So be careful.

The day after my arrival I met Beyers Naudé and was impressed by him and his analysis of the situation, and by his tremendous prophetic power. He was calm in analysis, but very strong in his conviction that something radical must be done here. I left South Africa with the feeling that this is something that we in Sweden must do something about. This was why I wrote to Swedish Free Church Aid.⁷

On returning home, Engström sent an application to SFCA for 10,000 crowns. In addition to the



Before 1960 the Swedish general public had a fairly low level of awareness about the situation in South Africa, a country with a constitution that, from 1948, legislated apartheid.

application there was a document attached which described the increasing repression of the liberation movements. There was also a letter attached in which Engström wrote that “no Christian voice has spoken so clearly or convincingly as this on the tragic situation in South Africa” (1971 §92). Read more about cooperation with South Africa in Chapter 5, page 165.

More countries added

As SFCA gained momentum, its network of contacts increased continually. Here are a few examples that illustrate the breadth of the support given, often via the denominations.

In 1968, 10,000 crowns were allocated to an earthquake-hit area of Sicily. The BUs channelled the funds to the Danilo Dolci Committee in the area. In 1970, the Red Cross received support for work in Peru and Turkey. BUs also channelled funds from SFCA to its sister church in Romania after a flood in 1970. HU received a grant for a children’s home in Tanzania in connection with the fundraising campaign of 1970. In 1971, the Methodist Church received a grant to be channelled to the social work section of their sister church in Rhodesia, Christian Care, for distribution amongst political prisoners and their families.

Support for educational projects was also prioritised. The Swedish Bible Society received a grant for the printing of bible tracts to be distributed in Ethiopia in 1969. The justification for the decision was that the bible tracts were used as reading books and therefore also served the purpose of combating illiteracy. Funds were taken from an account called ‘undesignated funds’ (1969 §71).

Support was also given to Guinea Bissau and *Partido Africano da Independéncia da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) in 1970, for the publication of books. Much thanks to help from other countries in the form of school materials, PAIGC had built 160 schools, which functioned despite the struggle for independence.

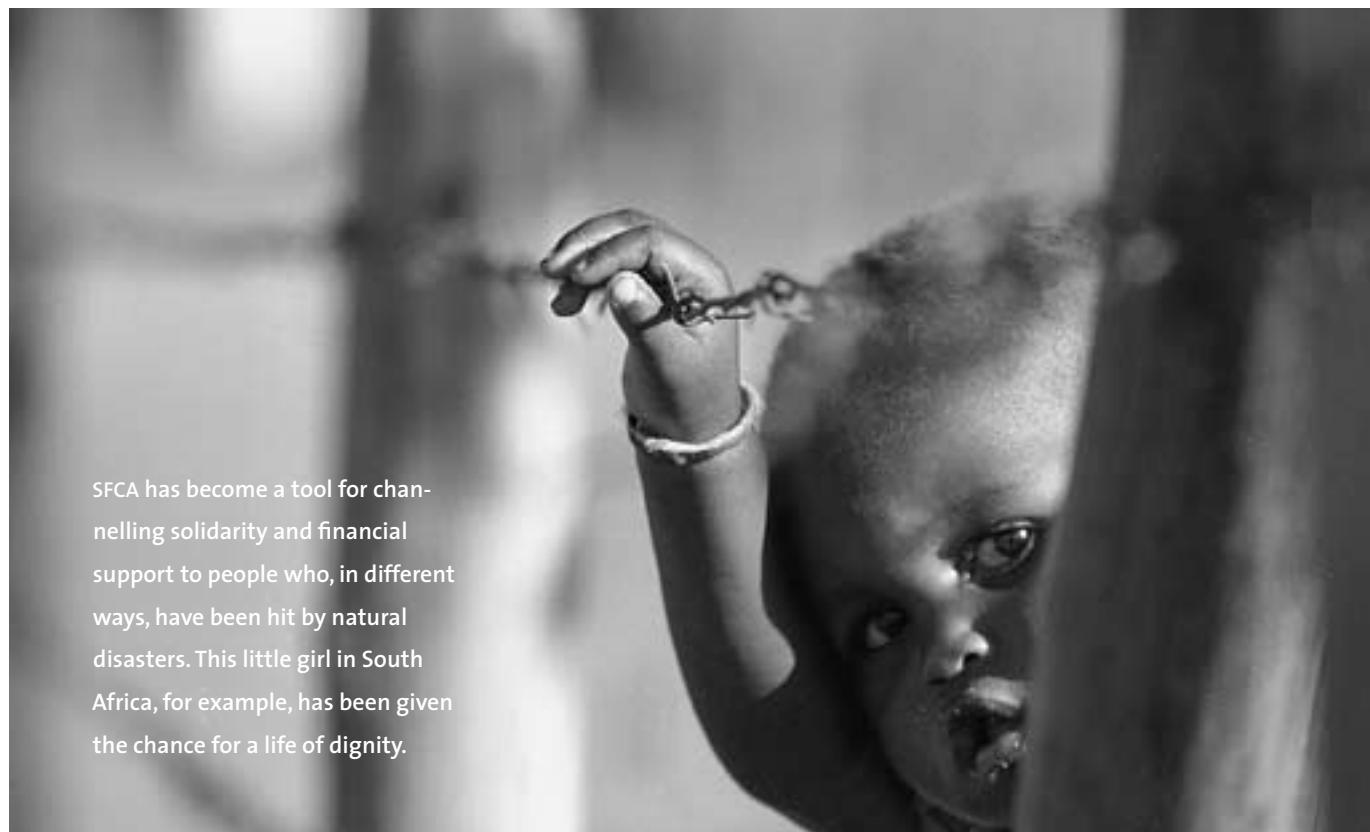
After the joint Nordic Radio Aid campaign *Refugee 71*, SFCA was able not only to provide large grants to projects working with refugees from East Pakistan and the West Bank but also to allocate funds to MCC’s sister Church in Democratic Republic of Congo for their work amongst the 550,000 Angolan refugees in the Matadi region.

The work continued

Within five years the vision that had driven Erik Rudén of “joint free church social aid efforts for the world’s afflicted” had taken on an organisa-

tional form and become a tool for channelling solidarity and financial support to people who, in different ways, have been hit by natural disasters, oppression and poverty. The organisation, SFCA, had successfully established a network of important international contacts, which was to prove important in its continued development. In Sweden, confidence in SFCA as a serious aid or-

ganisation grew, both among free church members and Swedish authorities such as the Swedish International Development Agency and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. However, it was the Christian conviction of the necessity of a just sharing of the world’s resources and the call to stand alongside suffering and afflicted people in the world, that drove the organisation forward.



SFCA has become a tool for channelling solidarity and financial support to people who, in different ways, have been hit by natural disasters. This little girl in South Africa, for example, has been given the chance for a life of dignity.

11 people were sent from Sweden to participate in the school building project in Bangladesh



CHAPTER 2

Organisation

"YOU CAN TRUST DIAKONIA. There are no other interests than a will to do something good for humanity." So said Lena Hjelm-Wallén, Minister of International Development on the occasion of Diakonia's 25th anniversary.⁴³

The *social aid effort* that the Swedish Free Church Council (sfcc) decided to initiate in 1966 (sfcc's AU 1966 §57) grew into Diakonia. To the present day (2005) the organisation continues to grow and has become one of Sweden's well-established development agencies. The organisation's original Swedish name was both a proclamation and a promise – *FRIKYRKAN HJÄLPER* – literally 'Free Church Aid'. Throughout the years Swedish Free Church Aid (sfca) has been able to give support to local partners working for a lasting change for the world's most vulnerable people. For many, the organisation has also been a channel for committed involvement and care.

The decision to start up the work was never hard to make. sfcc was already heavily involved in social issues, and as such Diakonia builds upon a hundred year old tradition of free churchwork for change in Swedish society. The perspective had been widened and countries far away were added to the work. In organisational terms it was simple. A Committee was formed under the auspices of sfcc to take decisions on questions relating to Swedish Free Church Aid. In administrative terms sfcc al-

ready had personnel and well functioning financial management systems that could be made use of.

SFCC rented office space from *Frikyrkliga Studieförbundet* (FS) – the study association for non-conformist churches in Sweden.

The work of Diakonia around the world

Throughout SFCA/Diakonia's 40 years, partnerships between SFCA and local partners around the world have continued to form and grow giving shape to the work, in the manner described in Chapter 1. People's needs have been highly varied in nature. All over the world, there are organisations and people of action prepared to get involved and it is amongst these that SFCA/Diakonia has its partners.

Anders Kompass⁴⁴ confirmed this when he thought back on his time in the organisation and said that he perceived Diakonia's fundamental role as being to unite solidarity, commitment and the will for change with a deep Christian and highly ecumenical pathos.

Sadly, it is not possible to describe all the work supported over the years, in so many countries. Instead, four countries have been chosen to illustrate the work: Bangladesh, Palestine, South Africa and El Salvador. It is hoped that a presenta-

tion of the work in these countries will provide an impression of how long term partnerships have been built up around the world, with people and organisations striving to change a harsh reality.

Close dialogue between Diakonia and its partners has always been a characteristic feature of the work and has built relationships based on mutual trust and information sharing. Through this close cooperation with partners in the South, Diakonia has learnt that poverty, violence and oppression are, above all else, caused by a lack of democracy and of respect for human rights. Regardless of whether the problem is seen in food shortages, abuse and violence, destruction of the environment, or lack of housing, health or education, it is impossible to overcome in the long term without tackling its fundamental structural causes.⁴⁵

This insight led SFCA/Diakonia to go beyond disaster relief. Relief is vital and SFCA/Diakonia has on many occasions contributed large amounts to relief efforts, for example during the drought in India in 1966 (through which SFCA came into being), the terrible famine in East Africa in 1983, Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1999 and the tsunami that swept into Sri Lanka and Somalia in 2004.

In these and other disaster situations, the real challenge has been to keep working when the dif-



The concept of help for self-help has characterised SFCA/Diakonia's support over the years. People's lives have been changed through small-scale interventions. The joy this woman from Burkina Faso feels over her successful onion harvest can't be misinterpreted.

ficult process of rebuilding begins. The concept of *help for self-help* has characterised SFCA/Diakonia's support over the years. People's life situations have been changed through small-scale interventions that have enabled them to live a dignified life. Through its strap-line, *People changing the world*, Diakonia hopes to present its work in a way that highlights the importance of the individual in all work for change.

Diakonia's position on disaster relief is that it is only possible to carry out effective disaster response work if strong relationships exist with part-

ners in the area before the disaster occurs. Diakonia has therefore sometimes chosen to withhold from involvement in responding to a particular disaster because there has not been a cooperating partner present. On such occasions, Diakonia has often been able to channel donations to one or more of the denominations.

Since 1997, Diakonia has aimed for the following four themes to characterise all of its work to change the fundamental structural causes of poverty: Democracy, Human Rights, Economic Justice and Gender Equality. (1997 §45)

Democracy

From its own experience of being part of a people's movement, Diakonia has understood the importance of affected people getting involved and organising themselves, in order to change their societies. People must gain access to tools necessary to influence and participate in building up their societies.

That is why it is important to have functioning institutions. A living democracy is dependent upon a democratic culture, a strong civil society that can respond to people's needs and a will to listen amongst decision makers. In this context interventions such as adult education, civic education and mobilization have played an important role. Work has also focused on how to conduct meetings, organisational development, legislation, education of leaders – not least of women, and other work to strengthen people's identities, competence and self-confidence.

In regions such as West Africa, democracy has played a very important role in the extensive rural development programmes and organisational development work supported. Thousands of village groups have functioned as schools for democracy.

Reconciliation is a key word in working with democracy in several regions. This is true for example in South Africa, Mozambique, South America

and Central America. About ten years ago, these regions were characterised by civil war, low-level terrorism and political violence. Reconciliation means rebuilding trust for one another. It is about opposing groups seeing and becoming aware of how they need each other, so that a functioning society can be built. It is about creating a social contract built on trust instead of fear.⁴⁶

Human Rights

All of Diakonia's partners work to strengthen human rights. Some focus specifically on minority groups and indigenous peoples, others carry out civic education and education on economic, social and cultural rights. In conflict zones such as Guatemala, Colombia, Palestine and the Democratic Republic of Congo, mapping and documenting incidents of abuse are important tasks, as are the education of 'bare foot lawyers' and legal assistance.

In Burma, where all expressions of protest are forbidden, Diakonia provides support to ethnic minorities in rural areas via the churches. The work includes agricultural development, health-care and education. The aim is to mobilize people so that they themselves can demand their rights and influence their life situations.

In Bolivia, Diakonia has given support to an



In Bolivia Diakonia supports an organisation working for the rights of the domestic workers.

organisation working for the rights of domestic workers. Their work focuses on participating in the development of new labour legislation and seeing to it that domestic workers' rights are safeguarded. It also involves reaching out to thousands of domestic workers around the country to inform them about their rights. The project helps them to organise so that they themselves can press their demands.

For Diakonia, the aim is to support human

rights work in a way that directly relates to actual social developments. When access to schools, health care and clean water is expressed in terms of rights, the arguments are sharpened. Many of Diakonia's partners are among the leaders in work to develop methods for formulating human rights in terms of policy and in monitoring implementation.⁴⁷

In the district of Puntland in Somalia, for example, Diakonia has supported a programme to educate the police force and support the judiciary.



Through a project in the Democratic Republic of Congo Rebecca Luishi has found a new life.

Economic Justice

In order for the poorest of the poor to be able to participate in influencing social development, certain basic needs must be met. Without food for the day, health care and basic education, it is hard for people to become mobilized for social action. This is why poverty eradication and economic justice are key phrases in Diakonia's work and why SFCA/Diakonia has always supported projects at local and national level in order to enable people to become financially independent.

SFCA/Diakonia has also been involved in the major international campaigns for debt cancellation for poor countries.

At national level, SFCA/Diakonia has worked closely with other organisations. One of these was *Ecumenical Development Week*, which was set up by a decision taken at the National Conference of All Christians in Gothenburg in 1972. Each year development education materials were ecumenically produced for use by local congregations. These weeks, which always fell in the last week before advent, were very successful both at national and local level until the end of the 1980s. Thanks to a decision by the Christian Council of Sweden the last Sunday before advent has once again become the churches joint *Global Sunday*, focusing on an issue of social justice.

Gender Equality

Diakonia's work with gender equality began in the 1980s through the numerous and strong women's movements supported at the time, not least in South America. Reports were written and conferences held. In the week preceding the UN women's conference in China in 1995, Diakonia gathered representatives from each region to a gender conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The guidelines drawn up at that meeting gave direction to all of Diakonia's continues work with gender issues.

Several large seminars on the theme of gender have been held for personnel and the Board, involving both Swedish and international speakers. Diakonia's perspective has focused on how gender roles are created within people's social and cultural environments. Gender equality is thus a question of the balance of power and not of biology.

Gender equality is not a women's issue. A democratic culture can only be created if both women and men are involved. If long-term change is to be achieved, men must also participate in the process. Because of this Diakonia wants to strengthen both men's and women's self-confidence, knowledge and opportunities to participate in the life of society.

Diakonia's policy on gender equality was finalised in 2001. Amongst other things, work with

gender equality has included the education of female leaders, education in basic health/diet and reproductive health, strengthening of women's rights, income generating activities for women, the education of journalists, increasing the involvement of men in work for gender equality and fighting violence against women and discriminatory legislation.⁴⁸

Diakonia's gender work seeks for women and men to have equal access to basic social services, including education and health care. They should have equal opportunities to participate in political and economic decision making, equal pay for equal work and the same rights to legal protection.

In 2003 a project worker was employed to focus specifically on Diakonia's work with gender.

Number of partner countries:

Year	Africa	Asia	Central Am.	Middle E.	South Am.	TOTAL
1969	1	3			2	6
1974	4	4		1	2	11
1979	4	4		1	2	19
1984/85	19	8		4	4	44
1989/90	15	11		5	2	42
1994/95	18	9		5	6	47
1999	15	9		5	6	40
2004	13	8		5	6	36

The international department

When the vision that led to the foundation of Swedish Free Church Aid took on a concrete form the need for a structured organisation became clear. As the number of projects increased, extra personnel were needed at the office in Sweden and regional offices needed to be set up around the world.

In 1977 two regional secretaries were appointed to work with Africa and with Asia plus the Middle East. The posts were based at the office in Älvsjö, Stockholm. In 1979 another regional secretary was appointed for Latin America. Initially, Latin America was treated as a single region, but in 1981 the extent of the work led to it being split into two regions, Central America (with an office in Costa Rica), and South America (with a regional office in Peru).

In 2000, Africa was also divided into two regions: one for South and East Africa and one for West and Central Africa. The Middle East became a region of its own in 1984. In 2005, Africa and Latin America became single regions again, with two regional secretaries working on each region. One regional secretary has responsibility for economic and administrative issues and the other for methodology and programme planning. In 1996 a coordinator was appointed for the international

work (1996 §82.2), a post that today holds the title Head of International Department.

The work of the regional secretaries, who are based at the office in Sweden, has changed over the years. In the beginning, their task was to lead and be accountable for the work in their region. This responsibility has increasingly been transferred to the regional managers, based at the respective regional offices around the world. In 2005, the Board decided that the regional secretaries should have responsibility for personnel issues, administrative issues and the overall programme. (2005 §8)

In 2005, the Regional Secretariat at head office included:

- 1 Head of International Department
- 6 Regional Secretaries
- 1 HIV & AIDS advisor
- 1 Gender advisor
- 1 Project Officer working on development education regarding the Democratic Republic of Congo

Employees in the regions

In relation to the scale of its work, SFCA/Diakonia has always had a small number of personnel placed overseas. This is of course due to the fact that the operational work is carried out by partner organi-

sations. The personnel have had the task of maintaining contact with partners, national authorities and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs/Sida country offices, and of preparing applications for and reporting on the work to Diakonia's office in Sweden.

In conversations with previously employed overseas personnel, all of them have emphasized the importance of the support they received from Head

Diakonia has always had a small number of Swedish workers placed abroad. This, of course, is because the operative development work is carried out by partner organisations. (Photograph from Burkina Faso)



CHAPTER 2 ORGANISATION

Office in Sweden. "We were shown great thanks for what we did", said Anna-Karin Gauding⁴⁹. During his time with Diakonia Lars Franklin coined the phrase "the task is to walk alongside the people we support". Many also emphasized the importance of visits from Sweden – from delegations from the Board, the denominations and voluntary congregational/regional representatives.

When Sida changed its rules for expatriate

employees in 1988, the conditions for receiving Sida volunteer grants also changed. Diakonia then reworked its contracts with expatriate employees. This, amongst other things, involved changing their titles.

In addition to the Swedish personnel employed at the various regional offices, the number of local employees at regional offices has increased significantly. This is seen both as an advantage in itself and a necessity, as the contract period for expatriate Swedes has been shortened. Through these locally employed the capacity of the staff was broadened as well as the continuance of the work.

– When I in the 1970s and 1980s traveled in Africa and Central America I noticed the young ones sent out by SFCA/Diakonia. I was impressed by their sacrificial will and burning solidarity, said the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Schori⁵⁴

The total number of employees at regional offices in Spring 2005 was 136, of whom 25 were from Sweden. 118 employees on project contracts, who until December 2005 worked in Kurdistan, must be added to this.

Asia

In 1972, Swedish Free Church Aid employed Bengt and Sol-Britt Sundberg as volunteers to work at the children's home in Bohla, Bangladesh (see Chapter 3 page 93). As SFCA could not then apply for volunteer grants from Sida whilst the denominations could, ÖM took on personnel responsibility and employed the Sundbergs. Bengt Sundberg's job was, in part, to investigate opportunities for SFCA to continue providing support to work in Bangladesh.

This reconnoitering work led to the school building project. Leo Liljengren was employed as project leader in May 1973, with his wife Gunnar joining him as accompanying spouse.

The work grew and in budget year 1975, when the number of Swedes employed was at its peak, there were 11 volunteers in post at the various projects in Bangladesh. There were, in addition, a large number of local employees.⁵⁰

The office in Dhaka, which doubled as the project leader's home, was not only the centre point for all the administration and all contact with the authorities but also formed a gathering place for Swedish personnel. Ida Renman, one of the many volunteers, confirmed this in a conversation.



The collected personnel group in Asia 2004.

We felt as though Roland and Ingegerd Einebrant⁵¹ were our parents. There were five of us in Mymensingh and we knew that their door was always open for us. Sometimes they didn't even know we were coming. And the train didn't always run as you expected and that could mean that we knocked on their door at four o'clock in the morning. But Ingegerd was there and always said "Very welcome!"⁵²

As the number of partner organisations and countries being worked in increased, it was suggested that the office be moved from Bangladesh. In 1992, a regional office for Asia was opened in Chiang Mai, Thailand. A country office remained in Bangladesh at which Tomas Das and later Sultana Begum worked as country representatives.

In 2005, 11 people were employed at the Asia

office in Chiang Mai: One Swedish regional manager and 4 Swedish programme officers, together with 5 local employees bearing responsibility for finances, project management, reception, computers and care-taking. In addition there were country representatives for Burma/Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, one of whom was placed at the regional office.

Number of Swedes employed in the work in Asia

1974	7
1979	9
1984/85	2
1989/90	3
1994/90	3
1999	4
2004	5



SFCA /Diakonia has supported organisations working to transform an inhuman slum into a housing area fit for habitation. Prateep Ungsongtom Hata received support for her work to change the situation for the children in Klong Toey, Bangkok.

South America

In 1974 it was decided to open a local office for SFCA in Colombia in order to keep up contacts with the big rubbish dump project there. Inger Björk was the first volunteer employed. In 1976 she was succeeded by Anna-Karin Gauding, who remained in post for Diakonia in South America until 1990.⁴⁹

When the rubbish dump project concluded in 1997, SFCA had become involved in extensive work with refugees, demanding effective administration. The office that was initially placed in Medellín,

Colombia, was moved first to Ecuador and then after just one year to Lima, Peru (1987 §74). The reason for moving was to improved communications, and because the situation in Peru demanded a more intensive and permanent presence from SFCA. The office was located in the same building as the Scandinavian Seamen's Mission (1979 §145). In 1992 the security situation in Peru worsened and the office urgently needed to be moved again. The new location was La Paz, Bolivia (1991 §41).

The extensive work in South America meant that, from 1982, the region needed two offices.

In addition to the office in Peru, a new office in Chile was opened. A-K Gauding moved there and premises were rented from the Methodist Church (1982 §120). The office was given responsibility for contacts with partners in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. In 1995 the offices were amalgamated again and have since then been based in Bolivia (1992 §17). Over some periods individual Swedish programme officers have had their posts based in Peru and Colombia.

Number of Swedes employed in the work in South America

1974	2
1979	2
1984/85	7
1989/90	11
1994/90	9
1999	4 + 2 project workers
2004	5

In 2005, the office in Bolivia had the following personnel: One regional manager and 3 programme officers sent from Sweden, 5 local employees bearing responsibility for administration, project management, book keeping, reception and transport/care-taking. In addition there were country representatives for Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia and Peru.

The Middle East

From 1968 until 1977 Arnold Hjertström, the Swedish consul in Jerusalem, received an hono- rarium as contact person for SFCA partners in the region. He also managed a bank account, through which all grants were channelled.

In 1975, Bernt Ekholm travelled to the West Bank as a volunteer to work with the planning of a project for children with learning difficulties. As the number of projects in the region became sizeable and the scale of financial support large, a strong need for an own presence in the region was felt. In 1984 Desmond Carragher moved from his post as Refugee Secretary for SFCA to become programme officer for the Middle East. He im- mediately began to investigate the possibility of opening an office in the region. This was achieved fairly quickly in Cyprus, from where Carragher was then based. A country office for Lebanon was opened in Beirut in 1986. Journalist Barbro Elfström worked there for two years, and the of- fice was closed when she left.

The regional office was closed in 1990 and the post responsible for work in the Middle East re- turned to the office in Älvsjö, Sweden.

In connection with planning for the build- ing of the Abu Raya Hospital (see page 147) and the launch of the major Community Based



Abu Raya Hospital in Ramallah, Palestine.

Rehabilitation (CBR) programme, Ivan and Agneta Magnusson were employed in 1989, in order to manage the work on location. Their area of responsibility was limited to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Contact with other countries in the Middle East was dealt with from the office in Sweden. The Magnussons completed their posts in 1995.

In 1995 the office in Jerusalem became the regional office for the Middle East, holding the same status as Diakonia's other regional offices around the world. In addition to the West Bank and Gaza the geographical area served by the office included Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

Kurdistan

In 1994, Diakonia began providing support to Kurdistan in northern Iraq and to a newly started home for children with traumatic experiences from the war. Grethe Grimstad from Sweden was employed for the project and in 1997 her husband, Pherda Thorané, was also employed. They left their posts in 2003. In 2005 there is one Swedish programme officer working on the project together with 13 local staff members. The extensive work with the children involved 118 employees in 2005, all of whom will leave Diakonia's employment when the work is turned over to state control.

Number of Swedes employed for the work in the Middle East

1969	1
1974	1
1979	1
1984/85	1
1989/90	10
1994/95	3
1999	4
2004	5

In 2005, the Jerusalem office had the following personnel: one regional manager, two programme officers, one project worker for the IHL Programme, 7 locally employed coordinators for the Rehabilitation Programme, one programme officer, finance manager, an administrator and a caretaker. One Swedish country representative for Kurdistan.

Number of Swedes employed in the work in Central America

1984/85	5
1989/90	8
1994/95	7
1999	5.5
2004	4

In 2005 the Central America Office had the following personnel: One regional manager and 3 programme officers sent from Sweden, plus 7 local employees with responsibility for administration, methodologies, project management, book keeping, reception, transport and care-taking. In addition there were country representatives for El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras.

Central America

With the rapid rise of projects in Central America the Committee decided to open an office in the region. Head Office was given the task of looking into where it should be located, and chose San José in Costa Rica (1980 §22). Three people, Anders Kompass and Anki and Per Sundelin, travelled to Costa Rica as the first volunteers to the region.

Security was the main reason for locating the office in Costa Rica, as the majority of the partners were located in other countries. For many years, there were hopes that the office might move closer to the various partner organisations. This was made possible by the peace treaty of 1992 and the office moved to El Salvador (1992 §36).

Africa

SFCA first volunteers to Africa was sent to Angola. The year was 1976 and Elisabeth Wiechel was given the role of coordinator (1971 §31). Sida provided a large grant to SFCA for the work, a grant which can most appropriately be described as being a disaster relief, as the country was devastated by civil war.

West Africa

The terrible drought that hit West Africa in 1973 was the beginning of SFCA's involvement in the region. Initially, SFCA support to the region was channelled through the World Council of Churches' Sahel Team, which was located in Burkina Faso. In 1984, Swedish Free Church Aid decided to have a presence of its own in the region and the first volunteer, Annasara Svantesson, travelled to the office, which opened in Senegal (1982 §103). When she left in 1987, the office was moved to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, where Lennart and Eva Karlsson worked for many years.

At its peak the office had links with partners in eight countries of the Sahel.

In 2005 the office in Ouagadougou had the following personnel: one regional manager and one programme officer sent from Sweden; 5 local personnel, one administrator/finance manager, one receptionist/secretary/administrator, one chauffeur/handy man, one cleaner and watchmen.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In 1998 MCCS, BUS and Diakonia established a joint office for their work in the region, with one person employed for coordination and network

building (1998 §10). MCCS missionary Åke Johansson was employed and his primary focus was on the development of a democratic culture. This contract was renewed in 2005. Premises for the country office are jointly owned by MCCS, BUS and Diakonia (2005 §37).

East Africa

The ground for Diakonia's support to Somalia was prepared through contacts with Elsie Lundeberg, an EFS missionary. Lundeberg was employed in 1994, following a study into the possibility of providing support to the country, which was severely hit by the civil war. For security reasons she was placed at the office in Nairobi, Kenya, but also had a work place in Garowe, Puntland. The first grant given was to an income generation project focusing on handicraft production among local women's groups. A regional office was opened in 1994 to maintain contact with partners in Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda.

In 2005, the regional office in Nairobi, Kenya had the following staff: one regional manager and one programme officer sent from Sweden, 2 locally employed programme officers, an administrator/finance officer, a finance manager, a secretary/receptionist, a chauffeur, a cleaner. The country office in Somalia had 15 employees in the spring of 2005.

Hanne Södahl, volunteer in South Africa (right), confirmed the importance of social contacts and close relationships to the local population, as seen here with two women from the ecumenical movement.



South Africa

During the apartheid era SFCA could not officially place personnel in South Africa. Church of Sweden Mission and its sister church the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa (ELCSA) therefore employed Ulf and Hanne Södahl as volunteers for service in South Africa. The contract between the parties was signed in 1985 and they left for South Africa in 1986. Officially their workplace was Port Elisabeth.

It was not until Erik and Anna Lysén's period of service in South Africa, when apartheid legislation was replaced by a democratic constitution in

1992, that Diakonia's office in the country could be officially registered. It was initially placed in Cape Town and in 1996 moved to Pretoria, where it remains today.

In 2005, the Pretoria office had the following personnel: one regional manager and two programme officers sent from Sweden, plus four local employees with responsibility for project management, finances and administration, financial management and cleaning. There are also country offices in Mozambique and Zambia.



One of Diakonia's aid shipments arrives in Romania.

Number of Swedes employed in work in Africa

1979	3
1984/85	2
1989/90	3
1994/95	5
1999	6 + 2 project officers
2004	7

Europe

The Committee of SFCA and subsequently the Board of Diakonia have taken repeated and regular decisions not to support projects and programmes in Europe (1991 §37). The basis for this decision has on each occasion been that the denominations within Diakonia have very close contacts in both Central and Eastern Europe. The only occasion on which this principle was deviated from was in connection with the fall of the Romanian dictator, Ceausescu. When the borders

were opened, the systematic oppression that the population had been subjected to was revealed. For several years, Diakonia provided grants for emergency relief, primarily focusing on physically and mentally disabled children through the Romanian organisation AHNCR. Courses for teachers of the disabled and for parents were arranged together with the Department of Special Pedagogy at Gothenburg University.⁵³

How are contacts made?

Looking at all the partner organisations that SFCA/Diakonia has worked with, there are few cases in which Diakonia has initiated the contact. Requests have almost exclusively come from the organisation itself or from someone in close contact with it. Most commonly an application has been handed to SFCA/Diakonia's representative in the region. After this a thorough process is initiated in which the two parties get to know one another after which Diakonia takes a decision about whether the organisation fulfils the fixed criteria Diakonia has for its partners. If these criteria are met then cooperation begins, most commonly with the signing of a contract for a period of one or two years. After this the contract period can be lengthened to three to five years.

Global coordination meetings

The need to coordinate, engage in dialogue and exchange experience led Diakonia to call all Swedish Diakonia personnel to meet for four days in June 1990. Personnel around the world needed to learn about the direction of the work in other regions and about the work being carried out in Sweden. The programme also included conversations with members of Diakonia's Board (1990 §29.2). Since then all Swedish personnel have met, firstly every other year and then every year. In addition to these gatherings, there have been annual meetings for the managers of the regional offices.

As country representatives (who are not Swedish) also need to participate in joint meetings it was decided that, from 2005 onwards, global thematic meetings would be arranged and held in the regions. All personnel working with the respective themes are invited to these.

Peace Prize

In May 1978, the SFCA Committee decided to institute a special prize for work for reconciliation and development. The prize aimed to do the following:

The prize is given with the aim of strengthening and calling attention to high quality work to promote development focused upon 'help for self-help' for under-privileged groups. (1977/78 §163)

The prize has been given on ten occasions, most recently in 1994 to the *Catholic Bishops Conference's Commission for Social Work in Guatemala*, when Archbishop Girardi came to Sweden to receive the prize.

Upon receiving the prize, he said, "The fight against poverty and for peace is an obligatory service which our church must perform".⁵⁵

A list of those awarded the prize can be found in the appendices on page 271.

Personnel in Sweden

When SFCA was founded, Karin Nordqvist was employed [from 1963] as administrator and book-keeper, a post that she left in 1983. Baptist pastor Simon Öberg held the post of salaried executive secretary for three years to the end of August 1967. Birger Davidsson was the Swedish Ecumenical Council/Swedish Free Church Council's unpaid treasurer from 1952 to 1980.

As SFCC's field of work expanded with the arrival of Swedish Free Church Aid, the question of

employing a full time general secretary arose (AU 1967 §8). Baptist pastor Per-Arne Aglert was employed from 1 September 1967 as SFCC's General Secretary and held the post until 1985.

In 1972 the question of increasing the staffing arose again. The work in Vietnam was to be built up, applications to Sida needed to be prepared both for Bangladesh and the West Bank and final reports were due for several existing projects, including reports for Swedish Radio Aid and Svenska Journalen. A programme officer post was therefore introduced. Leo Liljengren who had previously been employed as campaign secretary on a short-term basis filled the post. He was succeeded by Lars Franklin in November 1973 (1973 §91).

The volume of work grew and in 1974 the question of additional personnel arose again. On this occasion, the posts concerned and related to information for supporters in Sweden and an additional secretary. As a result, Orvar Alinder was employed as information secretary and Margaret Bäckman as a secretary in September of the same year (1974 §47). Bäckman's responsibilities also included purchasing so called 'Material Aid'. After a couple of years Alinder's position moved to SFCC as he became involved in work for refugees. I myself filled the post of information secretary in September of 1980 (1979/80 §276).

In personnel terms 1977 became an important year. Karl-Axel Elmquist was appointed as SFCA's Executive Secretary, and Margaret Bäckman's post changed. She became the first regional secretary – for Africa (1977 §47). In the same year, Göran Jonsson returned home after a period of service in Bangladesh and was employed at the office, first with responsibility for information work, but later as regional secretary for Asia and the Middle East. Latin America gained its regional secretary in 1980 with the appointment of Anders Kompass (1980 §286).

When Per-Arne Aglert left the post of General Secretary at SFCC in 1985, Karl-Axel Elmquist filled it, but later left in 1989 in order to work full time as Diakonia's Director (1989 §109). Elmquist retired in 1994 and was succeeded by Bo Forsberg, who at the time of writing still holds the post. The title of Director was changed in 2005 to General Secretary.

Unfortunately it is impossible to name all those who have worked and today work at Diakonia's head office. There have been many, as can be seen from the following statistics.



Per-Arne Aglert left the post of General Secretary in 1985. Here he is being thanked by Karl-Axel Elmquist.

Number of employees at SFCA/Diakonia's office in Sweden

1969	2
1970	4 + 1 person on National Service for conscientious objectors (NCSO) ⁵⁶
1971	9 + 1 NCSO
1984/85	14 + 1 NCSO
1989/90	16 + 4 short-term project staff
1994/95	19 + 4 short-term project staff
1999	22
2004	22 + 1 short term project staff
2005	26

Office Premises

When Swedish Free Church Aid was founded, SFCC rented an office from the study association for non-conformist churches in Sweden (FS) at 15 Mälartorget in Stockholm's old town. In 1972, FS began building an office in Älvsjö and Swedish Free Church Aid was asked if it would like to rent office space in the property.

In the early 1990s discussions about the formation of a Swedish ecumenical council intensified and the question of sharing an office building arose. Diakonia was given the opportunity to rent premises at 18 Lästmakargatan in central Stockholm, where the Christian Council of Sweden was to have its offices (1993 §31A). The move to what came to be known as the Ecumenical Centre took place in 1994.

When the six-year rental contract was renegotiated, the whole Ecumenical Centre was forced to seek new premises. A move to offices at 11 Starrbäcksgatan, Sundbyberg was the result. Diakonia moved there early in the summer of 2001.

Finances

Throughout the years, the fundamental prerequisite for SFCA/Diakonia's work has been the funds that private individuals, congregations and businesses have donated and continue to donate. In order

to make the large scale work possible, SFCA/Diakonia has taken it as a given that "grants from organisations and state development assistance bodies should only be a complement to and not a replacement for private donations and fundraising."⁵⁷ The following text is taken from minutes from 1972:

"The Office" [authors note: here meaning Per-Arne Aglert and Leo Liljengren] considered that funds raised should be stretched out using funds from both Sida and Swedish Radio Aid (1972 §49).

In the discussion paper *Faith is Action* the question of state funding was taken up and it is clear what Diakonia considers:

The State is our collective way of organising collective funds for collective needs and tasks. Taking our view of democracy as the starting point 'the state is us and ours', there should be no difference in principle between development assistance run by civil society groups and that run by the state. Civil society groups are not beggars at the door of the state, but rightful custodians of collective resources. The principle is that State and civil society driven development assistance are two equally valuable parts of the totality of Swedish development assistance. That state authorities require monitoring and reporting systems for how their funds are used does not contradict this principle⁵⁸.

Sida gave its first grant to Swedish Free Church Aid in June 1973, for its school building project in Bangladesh. The grant was for 1.9 million crowns. Since then grants from Sida have made up the majority of the total budget. In answer to worried voices, who have claimed that SFCA/Diakonia is effectively controlled by Sida through these grants, the answer has always been that "our own judgements and priorities form the basis for our applications and our work"⁵⁹.

During the 1970s there was a debate about whether churches should accept state funding or not. This debate never influenced Swedish Free Church Aid's position.

Financial summary:

	Fundraising	Sida Grants
1969	501 993	
1974	2 755 902	ca 4 million
1975	2 681 195	10 405 000
1984/85	8 700 000	76 710 688
1989/90	6 842 000	155 951 000
1994/95	8 974 956	170 300 000
	+ 7 518 747 crowns worth of goods sent to Nicaragua	
1999	11 017 373	205 049 750
2004	12 100 000	251 128 000
	+ 6.5 million from the <i>Children of the World</i> fundraising campaign	

Sida funding was first given in the form of grants to development projects. Swedish Free Church Aid also received grants from Sida's humanitarian fund in connection with support for the liberation struggle in South Africa. The same fund also gave major grants to work in South and Central America. The annual report of 2004 states that Diakonia received grants from the following Sida departments: Unit for Collaboration with NGOs (SEKA), Humanitarian Assistance (Hum), Region Latin America (RELA), Democracy and Social Development (DESO), Disaster (Kat), Culture and Information (Info). Each of these grants includes a percentage to cover administrative costs.

The handling of Sida applications and reports has varied considerably over the years. Initially, each application was handed in separately to



the responsible desk officer at Sida. Today (2005) Diakonia produces one strategic plan for the entire international work for a three-year period. The Sweden Department produces its own application for Info. Additional applications are of course made when emergencies and disasters occur.

When Sweden joined the EU, hopes were raised that Diakonia might be able to seek grants from the EU's development assistance funds. In the annual report to Sida for 1998, great frustration is expressed over the very slow handling of matters by the EU, which led Diakonia to wait long periods for a response and then once a decision had been made, wait again for payment to be made. The grant from the EU in 2004 was only 1.2 million crowns.

In addition to Sida and EU grants, Diakonia has in recent years received funding from other financiers including the Norwegian Association of Disabled and multi-lateral bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Financial Credibility

The question of auditing financial statements from international projects in developing countries was taken up in the Committee for the first time in 1970, in connection with two final reports

from India. It is likely that the issue arose as the result of the oft-repeated question of whether money collected for developing countries actually arrives at its intended destination. It was decided to introduce financial statements, audit reports and the discharging of liability for all international projects per financial year or when a project is concluded (1970 §53).

Thankfully neither SFCA nor Diakonia have fallen foul to any significant financial scandals. In retrospect, the mistakes that were made can be seen as costly lessons for the organisation.

The media's negative portrayal of what happens to development assistance funds, for example "Charity donations fraud", "Put charity money in own pocket" (1985/86 §15, §122), led the Committee to raise the question of fundraising ethics and tactics and to give head office the task of preparing proposals for a broader plan of action concerning fundraising for development assistance. Diakonia was already a member of the Swedish Fundraising Council (SFC) at the time. In autumn 1986, the Swedish Fundraising Council adopted ethical guidelines for fundraising organisations. These have since been altered, as fundraising methods and channels are continually changing. The aim is for fundraising to be characterised by respect, openness, credibility and quality⁵⁹.

In autumn 2004 the Swedish evening newspaper Aftonbladet published an article on the salaries of directors within the charity sector. Diakonia's salary level stood out as exemplary, being less than half the salary of the most highly paid directors.⁶⁰

When Swedish Free Church Aid was founded its administration was part of the overall administration of SFCA. Since becoming an independent organisation in 1993 Diakonia has recruited its own administrative personnel.

In 2005 the administration department included:

- 1 Head of Finances
- 1 Head of Personnel
- 4 Desk Officers
 - economy
 - wages and accounting
 - project and accounting
 - IT
- 1 office assistant

Care-taking and telephone services are bought in from the Ecumenical Centre.

The Sweden Department

Until 1988, one person carried out the information work in Sweden. A second person was then appointed as Diakonia's magazine *Dela med* and other media related work required a full time post (1987 §18).



SFCA /Diakonia has always desired to be well known both within the denominations and amongst the general public. This photograph shows Karl-Axel Elmquist being interviewed on the national news by Pia Brandelius.

In 1978 *Zachias*, a project initiated by personnel in Bangladesh involving purchasing developing country goods for sale in Sweden (see page XXX), resulted in someone being appointed to take responsibility for purchasing and sales.

Exchange of experience between partners in different parts of the world has always been necessary and a source of inspiration. In 1987 this need was transformed into a Sida financed information and evaluation project. Lars-Ove Ljungberg was appointed (1987/88 §18) and when the project concluded in 1991, four editions of the journal *Development Mirror*⁶¹ had been published and distributed to regional offices and partners.

SFCA/Diakonia has always sought to be well known both within the denominations and amongst the general public. In 1992 it was decided to introduce a marketing post (1992 §82). This was extended in 1997 with the introduction of a fundraising post.

In 1994 a project post focusing specifically on youth was created in close cooperation with the denominational youth organisations. The project was called '*Ung Gnu*'. The aim was to enable young people to meet to discuss international issues, in particular human rights and democracy. When the project ended in 2000 it was felt that the work had created "a good basis for future development education work among young people"⁶².

The need for a programme officer to work with lobbying and with EU issues was resolved with the appointment of Magnus Walan, when he had finished a short term 'leave cover' post at Diakonia in 1995.

In 1998 the title given to the work done in Sweden was changed from *Information* to *Sverigearbete*, literally Sweden work.

The work of the Sweden department has focused on the need for more developed strategic thinking and better defined goals, methodologies, follow-up, evaluation and continued collaboration internally and externally.⁶³

Gradually, it became necessary to have a co-

ordinator for the Sweden Department. A post was introduced in 2000 with the title Head of the Sweden Department.

Over the years, the Sweden Department has had a number of short and longer-term project posts connected to various campaigns and exhibitions.

In spring 2005 the Sweden Department included:

Head of the Sweden Department together with 11 programme officers having the following areas of responsibility:

- Development education and work with congregational/regional representatives
- Contact with congregations
- Marketing and campaigns
- Fundraising
- Lobbying and public opinion
- Debt /PR⁶⁴
- Trade /WTO
- Press Officer
- Web Editor
- A project post for information and lobbying work relating to Israel/Palestine and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Information work in Sweden

Providing information to Swedes has always been important for SFCA/Diakonia. In addition to providing financial support to India for the drought

of 1966, an information folder was printed immediately and sent to the congregations. Likewise, a folder was distributed on refugee work after the Six Day War in 1967. The extensive development education materials produced for the annual campaigns meant that within just a few years, an additional worker were needed at the office. In 1974 Orvar Alinder was employed on a full time basis as the first Information secretary. I filled the post on 1 September 1980.

As SFCA/Diakonia is rooted in the member denominations, their congregations have been the most important channels for information materials. It has been through their activities that the general public has met SFCA/Diakonia. In order to spread information in the most effective way the Board discussed the formation of a group of representatives.

The first time it was suggested that SFCA should have regional structures within Sweden was as part of the in-depth study carried out in 1974 (1974 §47). As part of the *Refugee 86* campaign, a network of local representatives from participating organisations was formed. Those involved in the network continued to receive information from the office in Älvsjö after the campaign. However, only in 1992 (1992 §11) was it agreed that Diakonia and the denominations would write



The image on the folder and on the poster printed following the Six Day War in the Middle East in 1967. Observe that SFCA had not yet adopted its current logo. (Diakonia's archive A2:1)

to the congregations and challenge them to elect a local representative for Diakonia.

It was primarily MCCS and BUS congregations that responded and registered representatives. The close cooperation of the other denominations with *Bröd till Bröder* and/or *Erikshjälpen* meant that their congregations decided not to elect representatives. At the time of writing in 2005 there are roughly 500 names in the register of congregational representatives. There are also around sixty so-called *Partner Congregations*. The Sweden Department has closer cooperation with these and they are part of an active network for development education and campaigns.

In addition to congregational representatives there are around twenty *regional representatives* around the country. They are responsible for arranging regional educational events and representatives meetings.

The absolute best way to educate committed people about Diakonia's work is through study visits and many of these have been arranged over the years. The Board, church leaders, women, congregational/regional representatives, pastors and farmers are among the groups to have been invited to participate in these visits. These groups have visited one of the regions where Diakonia supports partners. The programmes have includ-

ed visits to a number of partners that have shared their situation and presented their work. "It is encounters that won't let go of you, long after you have returned to Sweden. Imagine if we could be this prophetic, this concrete, take the gospel this seriously". So said one participant, ransacking himself after one of the many visits.⁶⁵ Information and knowledge from the visits are passed on to others. Statistics show that each participant has spoken about their visit on 7-28 occasions and to 1000-1500 listeners each.⁶⁶

It was in connection with a visit for congregational representatives to Burma in 1997 that Diakonia began working with journalist Petter Karlsson and photographer Robban Andersson. Since then they have regularly visited Diakonia partners, contributing materials to Diakonia's publications and the *People Changing the World* exhibition.

Another type of knowledge and information sharing has been when foreign guests, exhibitions or personnel have visited congregations and their visitors, schools and other institutions.

Song is a weapon that SFCA/Diakonia has often used. Many artists have been involved over the years. Tomas Boström, Börge Ring, Ingemar Olsson, Edu Bumba and Ingemar Johansson are just a few of those that have gone on short and

long tours around Sweden. After a visit to Latin America Tomas Boström wrote the musical *The journey to La Paz*.⁶⁷

In 1987 Diakonia gave a grant to the youth choir of Johanneberg Church, Gothenburg for their visit to Nicaragua. The visit inspired work on both the Nicaraguan and Salvadorian Farmers' Mass, which has since been sung by many choirs in Sweden. The lyrics create an understanding of the situation in these deeply scarred countries. The youth choir of Immanuel Church, Stockholm was given a grant in 2002 to travel to South Africa. This choir also shared information about work supported by Diakonia in South Africa.

On two occasions, Diakonia has arranged concerts in Stockholm's Concert Hall. The first occasion was in 1991, for the organisation's 25th anniversary, and the second was in 1994 when director Karl-Axel Elmquist retired. One of the participants to travel furthest was Susan Fernandez from the Philippines, who participated in the concert in 1994.

The Spring Campaigns

As all of the denominations have their own annual fundraising campaigns for various purposes, the Committee did not jointly set aside any attractive

One of the spring campaigns that received the most coverage was the one in 1977 on the theme "Stop Aid to Sweden" (Diakonia's archive B1B)



dates for fundraising for SFCA/Diakonia. In the early years the campaign took place in two weeks in May and in recent years they have been over two weeks at the end of April/beginning of May. The Committee/Board has chosen dates and themes for the campaigns. During the campaigns SFCA/Diakonia has had a free hand to send information and appeals for funds to both congregations and the denominational magazines/newspapers.

The spring campaigns of 1997-2002 were carried out in close cooperation with the denominations, both in terms of planning information materials and activities and in terms of sharing funds between those arranging the activities.

Dela med

In order to keep donors informed about how the money is being used SFCA began publishing the information sheet *Dela med*, which means 'share'. The first issue was published in 1980 and distributed free of charge, as it still is, to those who have made a donation. *Dela med* continues to be a very important channel for information and inspiration. It focuses on developments in Diakonia supported projects around the world, and on educating and sharing Diakonia's standpoint on major international issues of social justice.

For a number of years in the mid 1980s, Diakonia cooperated with the free church pensioners' organisation, RPG, and its magazine. Since the 1990s Diakonia has cooperated with the magazine *Trots Allt*.

Fundraising

The heart of SFCA/Diakonia's finances has always been donations from the public. The response to appeals for funds was great right from the beginning. A large number of congregations and individuals have shown their faith in the work by giving regularly in the form of collections, direct debits and postal orders.

However, it must be said that there have been concerns about fundraising in some years when the budgeted amounts have not been reached.

In spring 1988 the international group in Skövde Mission Covenant Church suggested that the denominations should include an offering envelope for Diakonia together with their own offering envelopes. The proposal was rejected (1988 §178).

Congratulatory and memorial gifts have brought in large amounts each year. For many years the letter of thanks for such gifts bore an illustration painted by the artist Gideon Eriksson.

One result of cooperation with the Gothia Cup was that girls in Burkina Faso started playing football.



Cooperation with Swedish Radio Aid

Since 1968, grants from Swedish Radio Aid have provided an income that is almost taken for granted by SFCA/Diakonia. Grants have been given to projects around the world linked to a wide variety of themes. The longest running campaign has been the Världens Barn (Children of the World) campaign, which started in 1997 and concludes in 2006.

Cooperation with the Gothia Cup and others

SFCA/Diakonia has also cooperated with other organisations, resulting in the distribution of information materials and in the receipt of varying proportions of funds raised. The Gothia Cup, a big football tournament for young people held in Gothenburg, has been one of these. Money contributed by participants in the Gothia Cup enabled a football project to be started up in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso.

Exhibitions

Since the organisation's formation touring exhibitions have been used as one way of raising awareness about work supported by sfca/Diakonia around the world.

The biggest exhibition was *Come along to Banbazar*, an exhibition which was produced together with fs. A Bengali village was built up with a life size hut as the biggest eye catcher. Read more about this on page 126.

At the well was another big exhibition, which was displayed in many places around the country over an eight-year period in the 1990s. Amongst other places, it was displayed at denominational conferences and four different *Kvinnor Kan* (Women can) exhibitions. Through the exhibition Diakonia wanted to highlight the situation of women around the world.

See the world as it is was an on-screen exhibition in which the visitor was able to meet three people who each represented a Diakonia supported project.

People changing the world is the most recently produced exhibition. It is a photographic exhibition using material from photographer Robban Andersson and text by journalist Petter Karlsson. The exhibition was on display for over two months at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm in 2004.

Development Education

sfca/Diakonia has always sought to be a channel for participative, informative development education materials. This has perhaps been most clearly visible when committed local people have used material from sfca/Diakonia in study and discussion groups in order, if possible, to relate it to their own day-to-day lives.

Walter Persson described¹⁴ how study visits began to be arranged to parts of the world where sfca/Diakonia were providing support through close cooperation with fs and its rector Herman Holmgren. "Through these visits we could celebrate each others work, see things in the same light and deepen our cooperation."

Much of the development education work has taken place through cooperation with fs/the educational association Bilda. The most recent project called *Glokalforum* aimed to increase awareness, knowledge and commitment to a more just world through study circles, lectures, debate evenings and various kinds of campaigning activities.⁶⁸

Publications

Even if sfca/Diakonia hadn't been involved in sales, it still has released a number of publications. The most well known are the wall and desk calen-



Imagine being invited to dinner by someone on the other side of the world. Marit Paulsen gives this message in the foreword to THE WORLD'S KITCHEN cookbook. It was published in connection with the spring campaign of 1994, which took the theme *Shared Bread, Renewed Life*.

(Diakonia's archive B1B)

dars which, since 1984, have been imported from the English publishers, New Internationalist.

Another much appreciated publication was the cook book *Världens Kök* (*The World's Kitchen*), that was published for the spring campaign of 1994. It had the theme *Shared Bread, Renewed Life*. Staff at the regional offices provided recipes from their respective regions. Photos and text from the book were turned into an exhibition displayed at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, in the summer of 1995.

A number of books have been produced over the years. The publications have chiefly focused on a topical situation in a country or in the world, or on telling the stories of several people's lives.

Films and slide shows have also been key products for sharing information and creating awareness about situations in the world and for giving insights into how support from sfca/Diakonia has contributed to change.

Lobbying and public opinion

sfca Aid hadn't been in existence long before the organisation started to get involved in issues of social justice. At Christmas 1969, Swedish Free Church Aid participated in the *Alternative Christmas* campaign and the spring campaign of

1977 titled *Stop Aid to Sweden* received a great deal of coverage and public attention.

The campaign for 1% of Gross National Product (GNP) to be given to development assistance has been part of the organisation's agenda since 1966, when SFCA got involved, together with a number of other organisations. Since then there has been one campaign after another for 1 percent. And perhaps now the target is within sight, as the government has declared itself able to set aside 1 percent of GNI for development assistance in 2006.

SFCA/Diakonia has also been very active on campaigns for public awareness of the situation and societies systematically violating the human rights in countries such as South Africa, Vietnam, Chile, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo and Colombia - to name just a few.

Much of the lobbying and work to influence public opinion carried out in recent years has taken place in cooperation with other national and international organisations. For example, Diakonia played a leading role in Sweden in opposing the rich countries of OECD in relation to their stand on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (the so called *MAI process*) in 1988. An agreement such as this would have had devastating consequences for issues of democracy and

development. The international campaign succeeded in stopping the agreement.

Jubilee 2000 was another international campaign that Diakonia participated in, this time for the cancellation of poor countries' debts. The campaign developed into an international organisation with branches throughout the world. Diakonia was one of the organisations who participated in gathering names for the petition handed to the G8 countries at their meeting in 1999, as the new millennium approached.

Conclusion

The challenge of reaching the poorest of the poor, regardless of their religious or political convictions has characterised SFCA/Diakonia's work from its formation to the present day. The basic approach has always been to promote a 'bottom-up' perspective on development. Those implementing the programmes and projects have always been local organisations that understand local conditions, organisations that allow people to participate and influence the shape of the work. SFCA/Diakonia quickly realised the importance of following with developments in the countries where programmes are in place through a relationship to partners characterised by an ability to listen,

flexibility and humility. Despite the major expansion that has taken place in the organisation, this approach to the work remains intact.

SFCA/Diakonia has, through its information, lobbying and development education work in Sweden been a strong Christian voice in public debate.

In early July 2005 the leaders of the world's rich countries gathered and in the run up to their G8 meeting Diakonia and many other organisations around the world got involved in the *Make poverty history!*-campaign.





CHAPTER 3



Bangladesh

MANY NATURAL DISASTERS will find a place in world history. During SFCA/Diakonia's time two such disasters have taken place in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. The tsunami that hit on the 26 December 2004 was one. The other took place on 12 November 1970 when the coastal areas of East Pakistan were swept by a terrible flood wave. SFCA/Diakonia has been very active in reconstruction work following both of these catastrophes. In East Pakistan we were part of building what in 1971 became a new country- Bangladesh.

When the Committee of SFCA (henceforth referred to as the Committee) met just over a week after the natural disaster hit East Pakistan in 1970, the disaster was of course on the agenda. Per-Arne Aglert had contacted the Norwegian organisation for mission to the Santal people⁶⁹, which was working in the area. It was decided to place 200,000 crowns at their disposal immediately. In addition it was agreed to send out a press release and an appeal to all free church congregations asking them to collect money for East Pakistan during services on the Sunday before advent (1970 §80).

How Bangladesh was formed

In 1970 the country of Bangladesh did not exist. It was then a part of Pakistan. A map from the time shows how strange the geography of Pakistan was: a country located in two completely separate parts, West and East, with a distance of more than 1500 kilometres between the two. In terms of population size the two areas were roughly equal. However there were major economic and cultural differences. All development worthy of the name had taken place in the West. The East had raw materials but industries were built in the West, as was the entire military power base. East Pakistan received only a fraction of the international development assistance to Pakistan.

The basis for the division was religious. Conflicts began as early as the 13th century when Islam became established in the region. This part of Asia was then Hindu and the newly arrived Muslims were not accepted by the Hindu population. In 1947 the crown colony of India was divided into an Indian state, with an overwhelming Hindu majority, and a Pakistani state with a Muslim majority. The division of the country involved dividing the state of Bengal, as both Hindus and Muslims lived there. West Bengal with a primarily Hindu population became part of India and East Bengal with its Muslim majority became part of Pakistan – and became East Pakistan.

Another important historical fact is that European influence over this part of Asia began in 1498 when Vasco de Gama arrived in India and began trade between Europe and India. Private East India companies were established in the 17th Century in Great Britain, Holland and France. (An East India company was also formed in Sweden in 1731.) During the 18th century the British succeeded in claiming exclusive trading rights and the British East India Company began the merciless exploitation of the Indian population and of the country's natural resources. This continued until 1858 when the British government took control from the East India Company. From 1877 the country was called a imperial power. Both economically and culturally India became more closely tied with Great Britain. By aligning themselves with the major landowners, who amongst other things gained the function of tax collectors, the British laid the foundations for the unequal division of land that exists in rural India to this day.⁷⁰

A third important aspect of the historical background is the Christian mission to the region. According to oral tradition, Jesus' disciple Thomas travelled to India and founded the first Christian church in the country. At the time of Swedish Free Church Aid's formation, five Swedish free churches had mission work in India. Thus a network of churches and contact people were already in place.



Terrible disasters in the region have always hit the already poor population very hard.

Work begins 1966

The first grants were given to the region in connection with the severe drought in India in 1966 [which prompted the formation of SFCA]. Of the large amounts raised for the disaster, the Örebro Mission was allocated a grant of 125,000 crowns for its work in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

ÖM's missionary Jean Malm described the positive results of the grant:

I don't have any statistics on how many people have received food and help yet, but it is many thousands. Ploughing and other work will continue using the tractor and its equipment. Those who receive help will pay the running costs. The same applies to the pumps. We also believe that the boreholes and wells will give results.

We have not yet completed the purchase of the land in Barhaj where we aim to have a nursery for rice and other plants to improve farming. Rector P Dayal in Barhaj is an

agronomist. Both he and Emmanuel Gunnar are interested in developing 'help for self-help' for poor village farmers. May the Lord bless the gifts from Sweden and our efforts to channel them.⁷¹

This hopeful development in the region was completely destroyed in October 1968 when another disaster hit northern Bengal.

Over a thousand people are feared to have died in the terrible floods and landslides caused by the violent rain in Northern Bengal over the last five days, according to reports reaching New Delhi on Monday. An area of 18000 square kilometres, bordered by Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and East Pakistan is completely separated from the rest of India by the mass of water.⁷²

Through ÖM's representative in the Committee, SFCA came into contact with the organisation *Cooch Behar Refugee Service, CBRS*, in the Cooch Behar region of northern West Bengal. Its coordinator was Norwegian missionary doctor Olav Hodne who had been responsible for the CBRS project since 1967, on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation. He received his salary from Women's Mission Workers (WMW) in Sweden. SFCA received an application which stated that WMW's mission had "been given the task of as-

sisting in the rescue and reconstruction work that was underway" by the authorities in Cooch Behar. Hodne led this work. The Committee agreed to an initial grant of 30,000 crowns for projects for the drought stricken areas (1968 §31, and appendix to 1971 §49).

When the Committee met in September 1970, a final report from Olav Hodne was presented. Forty-seven families had received houses, land, water pumps, a pair of oxen and a plough. In addition, there had been enough money to build a handicraft and workshop centre in Khadi for 28 women and for other handicraft workers who received 'help for self-help' in the form of equipment grants (1970 §46).

Tidal Wave

On the 12 November 1970 the five coastal districts of Chittagong, Noakhali, Bakerganj, Patuakhali and Khurna in East Pakistan were devastated by a terrible cyclone. The tidal wave was approximately 9 metres high and reached a speed of 200 km/hour.⁷³ Approximately 400,000 people drowned in the waters.

The Committee decided to send out an appeal to local congregations, containing the following text:

The consequences of the dreadful natural disaster in East Pakistan cannot yet be fully seen. However, everything points to it having been the largest natural disaster to hit the world in modern times. After the devastating and deadly tidal wave, an enormous wave of help is now needed. We believe that all the free church people of Sweden and all those who gather with them at services on Sunday will want to take part in giving a big gift through an extra collection, additional to the previously advertised collection for SFCA.

May the message of the gospel, "I was hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked and sick" receive a practical answer from all of Sweden's free churches, in a tidal wave of help to East Pakistan.⁷⁴

The response to the appeal was huge (1971 §12).

Political Unrest

The terrible tidal wave in East Pakistan revealed the central government's unwillingness and inability to help. Widespread public unrest forced the government to announce the country's first free election, which took place in January 1971. In East Pakistan, the National Awami Party won a landslide victory, and with it seats in parliament. Their manifesto included the demand for self-rule for East Pakistan, which politicians in West Pakistan

led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, refused to accept. West Pakistani troops were put into action against the opposition in East Pakistan. The leader of the Awami Party, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, was taken prisoner in March 1971.

The Cooch Behar district of India became a destination for refugees from East Pakistan after the terrible flooding of 1968. The population doubled to 1.4 million. The refugees lived in extremely difficult conditions. The new flow of refugees fleeing the civil war in 1971 naturally made this situation worse. Missionary, Evert Eriksson of ÖM wrote: "to speak of hoards in this context is misleading in the extreme, there are millions of people who have fled from East Pakistan and about 10,000 more arrive each day."⁷⁵

The war continued and forced 10 to 12 million people into flee to India. When the government of India failed to engage the UN and superpowers in the conflict, India decided to join the war itself. India attacked Pakistan on the 3 December 1971 and after three weeks of conflict the fighting parties came to a settlement and announced the formation of the state of Bangladesh. Mujibur Rahman was released and became the country's first president.



Those responsible for planning the projects in Bangladesh. From the left: Leo Liljengren, Grace Marstorp, Per-Arne Aglert and Bengt Sundberg.

Cooperation on a Children's Home

As part of its support to stricken East Pakistan, ÖM suggested that SFCA should initiate dialogue with Erikshjälpen, PMU and the Norwegian Santal Mission with regards to building a children's home for around 200 orphans on the island of Bohla, one of the largest islands in the delta formed by the rivers Bramaputra, Ganges and Megnah. The Committee agreed to the suggestion (1971 §30).

The aim of the project was to help and reha-

bilitate children who had been orphaned by the tidal wave. The work was to be of a purely humanitarian nature. A special sub-committee was formed by the three Swedish organisations and a leadership group was in place in East Pakistan to lead the work itself.

When construction work was completed in 1975 and the project was up and running the Committee decided to withdraw from the cooperation.

Refugee 71

Awareness of the terrible situation facing refugees around the world led not only free church people to act. To its meeting in January 1971, SFCA received an invitation from Swedish Radio Aid to participate in a joint Nordic fundraising campaign on 25 April 1971, called Refugee 71 (1971 §17).

The lead agencies were the Red Cross, Save the Children Sweden, Church of Sweden Aid and Swedish Radio Aid. *Flykting 71* had already been promised the nationwide collection from Church of Sweden congregations. Even the Pentecostal movement's preachers' meeting expressed support for an extra collection in Pentecostal churches on the same day.

The Committee decided to accept the invitation and to send an appeal to all free churches asking them to participate in the fundraising campaign. In the minutes it is noted that it was considered important that member denominations, via their mission secretaries investigate the possibility of submitting refugee projects. Olav Hodne in India was also to be contacted.

As the SFCA Committee expected a major response to the fundraising campaign, it was decided to cancel the SFCA fundraising campaign set to take place from 21–31 May the same year (1971 §18).

The call to action sent out by the campaign leadership said, amongst other things:

Many of the revolutionary events that have taken place around the world over the last few years have been followed by major flows of refugees. De-colonialisation, the demand for self-rule and the struggle for independence have, together with political tensions in many of the new states, resulted in a continual rise in the number of refugees, particularly in Africa and Asia.

It is estimated that over 15 million people are living as refugees in the world today. Behind the numbers are individuals who need food, clothes, homes and medical care, but not least need to feel accepted in the country in which they have sought asylum.⁷⁶

The response to the challenge was tremendous. At the Committee meeting in May it was reported that the free church congregations together had probably collected in around 1.2 million crowns (1971 §66). An application was sent to Swedish Radio Aid for 940,000 crowns.⁷⁷ SFCA was allocated 977,500 crowns – more than applied for. Amongst other things the grant included an amount of 112 500 crowns for the reconstruction of Burhanuddin village on Bhola and 300 000 crowns for CBRS, India.

First Sida application turned down

SFCA sent its first application to Sida in September 1971. The application related to work with refugees from East Pakistan in the Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts of India, and was for an amount of 2,700,000 crowns. The application was turned down.

The Committee heard of its rejection with regret. The following note is found in the minutes:

PS. The application included reference to a question that member of parliament, Birger Möller from Gothenburg, had placed to the Foreign Minister in relation to refugees from East Pakistan. The answer had been that the government was prepared to provide major support to East Pakistani refugees.

Anders Fosse, Head of the Department of Humanitarian Assistance at Sida gave the following reply to the application:

His Majesty has to date empowered Sida to allocate 26 million crowns in grants towards work with East Pakistani refugees by Swedish NGOs and the United Nations. Of these, 2.5 million crowns have been paid in grants to Swedish NGOs, including support for work undertaken by The Cooch Behar Refugee Service (CBRS) (though not via Swedish Free Church Aid).

The remaining amount of 23.5 million crowns has been paid as a grant to the UNHCR's work among the refugees. Sweden has judged it to be important to strengthen the UN's financial and administrative capacity to act in international disaster situations.

There is currently no possibility of allocating additional funds to disaster relief from Sida's funding framework for bilateral development cooperation. Sida is therefore unable to approve Swedish Free Church Aid's application for funding towards disaster relief. (1971 §82)

Strong public concern over the difficult situation in the newly formed country continued. Informative articles appeared in both the general and free church press. This concern led the Committee to suggest to SFCC that it should challenge local congregations to collect blankets and money for East Pakistan on Sunday 14 November, in addition to the big fundraising appeal already carried out in spring 1971. The importance of collecting blankets was made clear in the appeal sent to congregations, which explained that refugees often arrived with few possessions and almost never more clothes than those they were wearing. The Committee also felt that a collection of this nature would "give rise to a sense of personal involvement in this world disaster, which in this context is not an unimportant matter"⁷⁸. 5,000 blankets were donated.

First personnel placed abroad

Extensive aid work continued, with major financial support for both emergency relief and reconstruction. As time went on the large scale of the work and uncertainty about how the projects should be designed led the Committee to decide to post volunteers in Bangladesh. Bengt and Sol-Britt Sundberg were appointed in May 1972 for one year, on a volunteer grant from öm. Their task included carrying out reconnaissance work in Bangladesh.

In his first report to the Committee Bengt Sundberg wrote, amongst other things:

On my travels I have seen at least some of the devastation, burned villages and blown up bridges. I have seen hungry adults and children standing en masse, queuing to receive a food ration. I have seen masses of people who have lived as refugees during the war arrive in the capital, Dhaka, and camp there after having come home to find their villages looted and burnt down.

The needs are enormous. Indeed they are so big that one does not know where to begin. The most acute needs are for transport systems to be built, for burnt and destroyed villages to be rebuilt, for the distribution of food to starving people, and for care to be provided for children who roam around without knowing whether their parents and relatives are dead or without knowing where they are (it is estimated that there are approximately 1.5 million such children) (1972 §30).



The needs for help in the country were enormous, not least amongst women and children.

In his second report Bengt Sundberg wrote the following:

What I think that we should in the first place focus on is the building of the 35 schools. I have spoken to Sida's education expert and he thought that they would be able to get involved in funding it.

PS I just spoke with Wiklund at Sida. He says that the schools must be recognised by the government before Sida can agree to funding. I will try to get them to move quickly on recognising the schools (1972 §98).

Before the Committee meeting of 6 June 1972, a letter arrived from Olav Hodne in which he informed the Committee that he would no longer be leading CBRS. He suggested that Bengt Sundberg take over leadership of the Oodlabari project within the scope of ÖM's work. He also warmly recommended cooperation between SFCA, the Australian Baptist Missionary Society and the American organisation CARE (1972 §43).

The School Building Project Takes Shape

The partnership that SFCA entered into with the Australian Baptist Missionary Society in 1972 was the start of a whole new piece of work. It was also the beginning of close cooperation with Sida.

The Australian Mission had begun its work amongst the indigenous Garo people of East Bengal at the beginning of the 20th Century. As there were no schools in the area at the time and the population lacked education, the Mission focused on school building and education. When SFCA came into contact with the Mission, the Garo Baptist Church was responsible for administering the work with schools, but needed a great deal of external financial support.

It was reported to the meeting of June 1972 that around 1 million crowns had been raised for Bangladesh. But if SFCA were to decide to start a school building programme more money would be needed. 'The office' [here meaning Per-Arne Aglert and Leo Liljengren] felt that these own funds should be stretched out using grants from both Sida and Swedish Radio Aid. The office, in collaboration with Bengt Sundberg, was given the task of drawing up a long-term plan for support to Bangladesh and, using the plan as a basis, of preparing funding applications (1972 §49). In February 1973 the Committee finally decided to enter into a school building project together with Garo Baptist Union in Mymensingh District (1973 §13).

Liljengren visited Bangladesh and the Sundbergs and drew together the documents and information necessary for an eventual school building



A school building project was started together with Garo Baptist Union in Mymensingh district.

project. The planning and then implementation of the school project took place in close cooperation with the relevant authorities and with Sida personnel in Bangladesh.

The application sent to Sida requested 1.75 million crowns plus three volunteer salaries. The application, amongst other things, states:

It is urgent that this neglected region (Mymensingh) of Bangladesh be provided with the necessary school buildings in order for teaching to reach the standard held in the educational system in the rest of the country. During the civil war in 1971, the people of this border area fled to India. Primary and junior high school buildings and the primary teachers training institute were used as a base and for storage by the Pakistani army. When they left the region the buildings were burnt down or destroyed in other ways.

The population of the project area consists primarily of indigenous peoples, namely the Garo and Hajong peoples, and the majority Muslim people. The schools and teacher-training institute serve students from all of these population groups. The building of these school buildings together with adequate equipment will not only fulfil the immediate need for students to be able to move from learning in the open air and temporary buildings to proper classrooms but will also give the students in this deprived area the opportunity to attend school in significantly better conditions than before the war. As children receive common education,

many of the social, cultural and economic problems incapable in the limited village environment of their parent's generation, will be eliminated. All children within the region will have equal access to the planned schools.⁷⁹

Leo Liljengren described the work of preparing the application as follows:

I had made good contact with Sida and I was to write an application. I prepared it. 12 copies were to be handed in and I took the 12 folders to the desk officer responsible for the decision. Comparing that application with applications today, it was thin. But I had put together all the information I could get. We had no experience to build upon. The mission had experience, but we had little other experience. I can remember the reaction at Sida. When she had written the official response, on the copy for me she wrote, "Leo, are you happy now?" I was probably pushy; I was on their backs. I thought we could achieve something - but all I had was an idea, a vision. I was no technician. I relied upon others being able to do their job.⁸⁰

The first Sida grant approved

Concerning Sida's handling of the application, it was reported to the Committee that the General Director for Sida, Ernst Michanek⁸¹, had authorised the manager of the education department to gather a group of experts to prepare suggestions

on the size of grant to be allocated and the number of volunteers needed for the school project. The expert group was to include a representative for SFCA (1973 §92).

Sida decided to allocate 1.9 million crowns. This was the first Sida grant that SFCA received. The grant was for the construction and equipping of 29 primary schools, six secondary schools, one rectors house and the salaries of three volunteers for two years.

A building committee was set up, reporting to the Garo Baptist Unions Educational Board. The Committee was to include representatives from both SFCA and from the Bengali school authorities. SFCA was to place a project leader, project secretary and building manager at the projects disposal. Other personnel for administration and production were to be recruited from the local population.

When Bengt Sundberg left his post in the autumn of 1973, Leo Liljengren was appointed project leader. As it had previously been decided that SFCA would not have personnel costs for employees abroad, Liljengren was paid by MCCS. The salary paid was the same as that for MCCS missionaries.

Many people were interested in the project. The Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs was one of the many groups to visit Bangladesh



The *Come Along to Banbazar* exhibition was shown at MCC's Youth's big scout camp "Möt mä". Sultana Begum is seen here talking her country and about the support from Sweden.

and SFCA's work there. Leo Liljengren wrote about this in a letter to Lars Franklin: The Committee on Foreign Affairs had been on a 4 day visit to Bangladesh and had spent one day with SFCA. The question of "how much time within this project goes to preaching sermons" came up. The answer came unexpectedly from Sture Palm (a Social Democrat member of the Committee) who promised that after this journey he would no longer demand that grants should in the first place always go to the Red Cross with a smaller sum going to Christian organisations. The Committee decided that when presentations were to be made about

the work of voluntary organisations, representatives from these organisations should be invited to attend, in order for fuller information about the work and about the situations in the countries where they work to be gained.⁸²

A mass of correspondence has been preserved in the archives showing how Sida and its desk officers both in Stockholm and Dhaka, maintained continuous close contact with SFCA's personnel. The correspondence was direct and honest. One example is a report which Brisman, a Dhaka based Sida desk officer wrote about the project and the reply which Leo Liljengren gave:



One of the many schools being constructed.

It can't be reasonable to set aside such large technical and financial resources for the building of 36 schools in Northern Bangladesh. The project is creating primary school buildings of a standard that will not be able to be reached in other villages in the area for a very long time. The local population are learning nothing from the project as all the qualified building workers are recruited externally and most of the building materials are imported to the country.

Leo Liljengren commented on the report by referring to the fact that Brisman had participated in

the planning group's meetings. It was also the case that the type of building chosen for the school was that developed by the Ministry of Education's technical department, and not something SFCA had come up with itself.⁸³

Later Lars Franklin, in one of his many letters to Leo Liljengren, wrote that Sida was 100% happy with the project and its reporting. "Ernst Michanek will recommend that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs continue their support."⁸⁴

Regarding Ernst Michanek, the following text

is found in a report written by David Lagergren after a visit to Bangladesh in 1977:

[...] My visit to Bangladesh coincided with a visit by Ernst Michanek, Sida's Director General. [...] The evening was given over to a discussion of development assistance: motivations, goals etc. Amongst other things the question of how we Christians could be content to focus only on aid work and not conduct evangelisation came up. We answered that helping people is an important part of the task given to us by the gospel, even if we are aware that it is only one part of this task and that our task in its fullness also includes sharing the gospel about Jesus Christ.⁸⁵

Sida informed the Committee that architect Carl Erik Fogelvik had been given the task of travelling to Bangladesh to assess whether the necessary conditions were in place for completion of the school building project. Amongst other things, he wrote that his overall opinion of the project was clearly positive, and that the increase in costs was well motivated. He particularly highlighted the personnel resources devoted to the project, without which an initiative such as this would almost certainly be impossible to complete in the prevailing conditions in the country (1975 §13).

On the basis of this report, the Committee decided to apply to Sida for a grant to build a

further 40 schools over three years. The application was for an amount of 2,575,000 crowns. The amount awarded by Sida was 2,260,000 and the reported costs after completion was 3,109,657 crowns.

Roland Enebrant wrote the following about the significance of the schools⁸⁶

[...] I have not done a thesis on how the situation of women is changed through the schools, but one thing is certain: a school is more than just a school in a village and this can be seen more and more clearly. It is, as a teacher pointed out, not easy for the state, the Red Cross or anyone else to come and talk about family planning unless you have a building with walls where women can take off their head scarf and look, where one can ask without being exposed in front of the whole village, where one can carry out examinations. Even operations are carried out in the schools. A Packa school is something of a community centre. During the big flood many of the villagers could save much of their food and seed thanks to there being at least one sturdy building in the village, which in many cases was the school. It hardly needs to be said that it is an excellent contact for mission work, but it is also a great contact point through which villagers can contact us. They know who we are and if we start up rural development and other projects we will be building on these contacts.⁸⁶

SFCA Teachers Training Project

The leadership of the school building project realised that it was necessary to raise the standard of teaching as well as the standard of the buildings and equipment, so they initiated a training programme for teachers, The Swedish FCA Teachers Training Project. It was discovered that 40 percent of teachers in primary schools lacked education and that their teaching was built upon the method of learning by heart, strongly influenced by the old colonial school system. In 1976 the government, in cooperation with UNESCO, developed a new curriculum, Open Air Education. A Swede working at the ministry made contact with SFCA and asked if they could take responsibility for a pilot project.⁸⁷

The educational idea was to change the traditional method of teaching and start from the pupils' daily environment. The pupils' experiences were to be used in school. School gardens were to be laid, in which the pupils would grow crops and take responsibility for harvesting and selling the crops. The connection between education and the practicalities of daily life in the village was to be central.⁸⁸

200 teachers took part in the 15 week long programme. A training team consisting of a Swedish volunteer team leader with two Bengali assistants,

eight Bengali instructors and a driver was responsible for the programme.⁸⁹ The curriculum later introduced by the authorities in 1980 bore a strong resemblance to this educational methodology.⁹⁰

Cement is love

Leo Liljengren described how missionaries helped the project to get going through their many contacts. The saying "nothing is impossible, but the impossible takes more time" was often in mind.

Through the work of building the school we learnt that cement is love, continued Liljengren. There was no cement in the country so it was imported from Bangkok. The cement came in boxes built of Thai red wood. The wood was used to make furniture and school benches. Each box weighed 1 tonne.

There are many stories about the transport of the cement. It was very labour intensive as the cargo had to be moved from bigger to smaller boats, and then continue its journey by train and then lorry to more boats. People had to carry the load over the river on their heads. Then into lorries again to finally arrive at the main store and be transported out to the 34 places where the schools were built.⁹⁰

The Education Minister of Bangladesh is



There are many stories about the transport of the cement. People had to carry the load over the river on their heads.

quoted in a Sida report as saying that the country could only afford two types of schools - the kind built by SFCA which stand for 25 years with no maintenance costs worth mentioning and the kind which villagers themselves build and rebuild every time they get blown down. Schools of a quality somewhere in between, which require regular maintenance in the form of rebuilding walls, painting every third year etc. would be very expensive for the state.

In 1980 the last volunteers left their posts in both the school building project and the teacher-training programme. All work within these projects had then been taken over by Bengali personnel.

Support for the school building project and teacher training continued until 1982. In total 156 schools had been built, each one intended for 200 pupils. 1800 teachers had taken part in training programmes. The total cost for the building of the schools was 9,636,264 crowns.

The school building project was halted before it was fully completed. A thorough evaluation was carried out which showed that the children of the poorest of the poor who were not those being educated. The project had therefore not had the intended effect. A reprioritisation of SFCA's continuing work in Bangladesh therefore took place.

Christian Health Care Project – CHCP

SFCA made contact with the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh, (NCCB) soon after arriving in the country. The NCCB was amongst other things responsible for a number of hospitals.

A critical lack of medical supplies became apparent during the civil war in 1971, when so many people were injured. The situation was especially difficult for those suffering from orthopaedic injuries or other disabilities. There was no access to rehabilitation or care, as there were neither appropriate orthopaedic workshops nor medical and therapeutic expertise.

On the initiative of a number of Christian and other aid organisations including SFCA, a provisional orthopaedic hospital was opened. It was housed in a polio clinic in a large hospital that was still in the process of being built. Resources were initially limited to 100 beds, but this was gradually increased to 250 beds. It was the only orthopaedic hospital in the country.⁹¹

In 1973 it was estimated that 75 million people lived in Bangladesh. The country then had the eighth largest population in the world and was one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The birth rate was 47 and the death rate 17 per 1000 inhabitants. With an annual increase of 3%, the population was set to double

within 23 years. In the 1970s and 80s, support for family planning was one of the ways in which the wider world tried to curb overpopulation in poor countries. Today (2005), the population stands at 130 million people.

In 1974 SFCA applied to Sida for a Christian Health Care Project focusing on family health. The project was planned for a 5-year period as it was deemed that this was the minimum time needed to gain local experience, and also due to "incompetent public authorities" as it is put in the application. Doctor Mina Malakar, a Bengali senior doctor at one of the NCCB's hospitals, took on responsibility for the project. The project's aim was to integrate family planning with the mother, child and general health care services of seven Christian hospitals and eight dispensaries, together with the national health care programme. Health centres were to be created, located at the hospitals were to be created.

An application for 7 million crowns was approved and included a salary for a Swedish volunteer. In addition to the Sida grant, SFCA also received money from Zentralstelle Für Entwicklungshilfe (EZE) in Germany and Family Planning International Assistance in the USA. In total the project was budgeted to cost 11 million crowns.⁹²

It was apparent at the time that Sida had no

reservations about SFCA's projects. Sida motivated the large grant with the following positive text:

Due to the precarious situation in Bangladesh and thus the project's high degree of relevance and as SFCA is indirectly contributing to the project, the Board deemed it justifiable to deviate from the principle that the Swedish NGO should themselves contribute a significant portion of the project costs.⁹³

CHCP adopted very broad goals for its work, formulating its vision with the words "to fight all

The project's aim was to integrate family planning with the mother, child and general health care services of seven Christian hospitals and eight dispensaries, as part of the national health care programme.



that stands in opposition to life". This was to happen through

1. developing a concept of 'the small family' as a norm for patients and inhabitants in selected communities;
2. encouraging couples of a fertile age to use family planning and limit their family size to two or three children;
3. integrating a broad health programme into work with family planning;
4. integrating the health care programme with small-scale village development programmes such as weaving projects, fish dams, chicken farming and jute processing/handling.

An evaluation carried out after the first year concluded that the project had not succeeded in achieving the goals of the family planning intervention. The most important reasons for this were partly that the hospitals and clinics had taken a long time to get going, and partly that it was hard to persuade people of the benefits of family planning (1974 §64).

Alarming reports on the results of studies on the use of the contraceptive "Depo Provera" reached Sweden in the autumn of 1977. It was injected into muscles and gave a guaranteed protection against pregnancy for three months, but it became apparent that it also caused serious side

effects. Asia Secretary, Göran Jonsson, reported this to the Committee in September.

Investigations had shown a connection between an increase in cases of cancer amongst women and the use of "Depo Provera" (1977 §14). The information was widely covered in the media. A seminar was arranged in cooperation with Sida to which Dr Mina Malakar, amongst others, was invited.

In 1980 Sida decided to cancel its deliveries of Depo Provera. SFCA ended support for the purchase of Depo Provera at the end of 1982, as Sida no longer approved financial support for such purchases. Support for CHCP ceased in 1983.

Literacy project

A literacy programme for adults was developed in connection with CHCP. The methodology used was based on a literacy programme for poor people developed by the Latin American educationalist Paulo Freire.

Göran Jonsson wrote the following to Sida on the subject of Paulo Freire's educational methodology:

Paulo Freire may not be from Bangladesh, but he comes from another developing country, Brazil, and the method-

ology he has developed is entirely based on the developing country context. Its starting point is that oppressed people should recognise their own ability to overcome poverty and not depend upon externally inspired ideologies.⁹⁴

The handicraft project that became Sackus

Through the family planning project the idea for a handicraft project that would sell products to Sweden arose. As the number of children in the family declined, so did the status of women and their workload. The women needed alternative





Sackus – A SFCA project for fair trade.



work. Roland Einebrant wrote to Sweden suggesting that handicrafts could be a means of improving women's status, enabling them to contribute to family income. "This is the backdoor way to get Bangladeshi women out in the open and into a social setting" he wrote and continued:

My idea is that the villages but also CHCP, could be to a certain extent self supporting through these sales. We are not to set up industries but enable the work being carried out at the homes in the villages. The clinics and

hospitals would collect in products, we would organise a quality check, packing and distribution, either in Dhaka or Chittagong, as appropriate. Then you create the Bangla Swedish Trade Corporation Ltd and the distribution can begin.⁹⁵

The idea took shape and in June 1976 the Committee decided to allocate 36,000 crowns as a grant for start up and running costs to the Handicraft Centre via the Church of Bangladesh. It was also decided that a test order of goods from India and Bangladesh would be carried out together with the British organisation Tear Fund (1976 §§26, 27).

The first goods were imported in 1976 for the project, which from the outset bore the name *Sackus – an SFCA project for fair world trade*. In August of the same year a letter was sent to congregations inviting them to participate in the trial project by buying a 'standard package'.

It is easier for a rich westerner to give a poor person from a developing country fifty or a hundred crowns than it is to give him a job. But just imagine if we could do both! This is what SFCA is going to try to do this Autumn through a campaign to sell jute handicrafts from Bangladesh.⁹⁶

Anti-diarrhoea Programme

In 1980 SFCA received a grant of 5 million crowns from Sida to provide three years of support to the Bangladeshi organisation Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) for its anti-diarrhoea programme. Diarrhoea was one of the causes of high infant mortality. The programme focused upon teaching each household in five districts to give a simple sugar-salt solution to children, when they got diarrhoea. When the programme was completed in 1987 it was estimated that around 7 million households had received this practical training.⁹⁷ Sultana Begum, Diakonia's country officer for Bangladesh, said that the support for this campaign was the best support SFCA/Diakonia had given. Today all Bengalis know how to treat diarrhoea and everyone has a tin of salt and sugar at home.⁹⁸

The Lathyrism Programme

In 1978 SFCA applied for and received a grant of over a million crowns from Sida for work amongst people affected by the paralysing disease Lathyrism. In addition to those affected, patients' family members and other landless people from the same social class were also included in the target group. The organisation responsible for

the project was Bangladesh Bhumyhyn Sramajibi Sangathan (BBSS), at the time one of SFCA's new partner organisations.

Lathyrism is a disease caused by the poisonous plant khesari, which was the only staple food for many poor people in northern Bangladesh. During the severe drought of 1974 the incidence of the disease had risen rapidly. Many land owners paid their labourers with the plant. It appeared that primarily men and boys were those affected being paralysed from the waist down, rendering them unable to work to support themselves and their families. The majority of Lathyrism sufferers were men in the 15 - 45 age group. Female hormones are thought to give women more resistance to the disease.

The disease presents two challenges that became the focus of BBSS's work: 1. To spread information on the dangers of eating the khesari plant and ensuring that people have another staple food. 2. Finding an income generating occupation for the paralysed. Working groups were formed to implement the programme, with 20-35 people in each group.

As silk was one of the raw materials in the area and many people gained their income in the silk industry, it was thought that working with silk would be a good alternative for income generation

for the paralysed. Some families were given the task of farming silk worms, whilst others worked with spinning. A hand-operated spinning wheel was constructed and became an important tool.

Project ideas that come from the outside often turn out wrong. Working with silk was not the patients' own idea, but came from foreign FAO experts. When the Sida application⁹⁹ for 1985/86 was handed in the whole programme was redefined. The programme was now to be based upon group organisation and patient solidarity, and silk farming was reduced to one of several socio-economic development opportunities. The aim was now to build up a well functioning project and patient organisation, which in time would have the capacity to lead the work itself.

Some aspects of the work with silk were retained and a decision was taken to buy land and build a weaving factory. According to the notes of a personnel meeting in Dhaka on 22 October 1987, approval had been given in Sweden to the purchase and registration of land in Diakonia's name. This was however only to be temporary and in 1990 the land and factory were to be wholly handed over to the local BBSS group's ownership.¹⁰⁰

The factory was however never handed over. Before Tomas Das left his post within Diakonia in 1995, he decided to sign over the factory to BBSS.

The problem was that the organisation had split into several organisations, none of which had been registered with the authorities. The question since then has been which organisation the factory was signed over to. The case is now [summer 2005] before the High Court and a decision is awaited shortly. As no work is being operated from the factory at the moment and there is no legal registration, the court will probably decide to hand the factory back to Diakonia. If this be the case, Diakonia has decided to hand the factory to the organisation *Partner*.

The work of the Lathyrism project was restructured in 1993, when *Partner* took over re-

As silk was one of the raw materials in the area and many people gained their income in the silk industry, it was thought that working with silk would be a good alternative for income generation for the paralysed.



sponsibility. Diakonia also supported this organisation.

Sultana Begum has confirmed that awareness raising and work with lathyrism has led to the disease being largely eradicated from the country.⁹⁸

The work develops further

SFCA quickly learnt that the best ways to help poor people was to encourage people to use their own initiative, so that they could solve their problems themselves, using their own resources.¹⁰¹ The focus on 'help for self-help' always set the tone in decisions on providing support.

In retrospect, one might think that the path SFCA took in its work in Bangladesh was a self-evident one. What began with disaster relief and continued with work amongst refugees during the war turned into rebuilding after the war. Contact and close cooperation with people in the villages where schools were built and health care was supported led to a re-evaluation of the direction of the work. Poor landless people were living in deprived and oppressed circumstances with high levels of illiteracy and unemployment. In order for this to change, the people themselves needed to be part of the work. New, national NGOs sought and received support from SFCA for programmes supporting village development.

The Bengalis responsible for the various projects realised that if the vulnerable situation of poor people was to be changed the underlying causes of poverty needed to be tackled at their root. This insight led the entire direction of SFCA support for Bangladesh to change. The importance of ensuring that support reaches the very poor was realised. It became clear that working with big national voluntary organisations did not produce the desired results. This cooperation was therefore gradually phased out and support was instead given to smaller, local village groups. These new partner organisations raised new issues, such as the possibility of enabling poor landless farm workers to organise or of forming a programme to raise awareness.

In 1983 these challenges led SFCA to invite all of its partners in Bangladesh to a seminar. This led to a process of change resulting in the formation of the Social Association for Rural Advancement (SARA). Teachers working within the school building project took the initiative to form the organisation, whose members were independent groups of landless people.¹⁰²

Nowadays, Diakonia's work in Bangladesh is primarily focused on support for organisations that work to organise the landless people of the villages. As the result of an accelerating process of impoverishment, the landless now



The nationally employed personnel in the mid 1990s.

form a full 60 percent of the population in the countryside. By building interest groups, the landless can resist further exploitation (through, for example, introducing savings schemes as an alternative to the money lender), demand their legal rights (e.g. access to communal village land and food aid) and contribute to the group's economic development (through income generating activities, activities to increase wages etc.) and increased social status (through education and socio-political activities).¹⁰³

One result of the new direction in the work was that SFCA, in addition to the Swedish personnel at the office in Dhaka, began to appoint Bangladeshi country officers. Tomas Das joined in 1983 and Sultana Begum in 1985.

In an interview with Sultana Begum on how

she viewed SFCA/Diakonia's support to Bangladesh she said that there was a great need to support for health care programmes, education and school building in the newly formed state.

Supporting this was the right thing to do then. Rehabilitation was needed. But if you want to build a nation, a country, you also need to build people. This was the challenge that led SFCA/Diakonia into the process it embarked upon.⁹⁷

The support focused increasingly on organising landless people. They formed interest groups to demand better social and economic conditions, higher wages, a just share of state resources and state assistance. As the organisation of groups quickly

took on the character of a people's movement, these collective actions were often successful.

The groups' own savings schemes enabled them to get bank loans for various income generation projects such as fish farming in dams, threshing of rice, bicycle taxis, handicrafts, chicken and goat rearing, vegetable production and the production of silk thread. Basic education for both children and adults, vocational training, cooperative training and leadership development were linked to this. The aim was to reduce the vulnerable population group's dependence upon the village elite, the large-scale farmers, the moneylender and the grocer, and instead create opportunities for financial self-sufficiency and social respect.

When, in 1986, the Bengali government decided to divide government land (referred to as Khas land)¹⁰⁴ amongst landless families, the landless people's movements played an important role. The implementation of the land reform depended upon cooperation between district councils and voluntary organisations. The council gave land, the NGO was responsible for building housing, and the state gave loans for farming the land. But the voluntary organisation had to take responsibility for organisation, awareness raising and follow-up.¹⁰⁵

The organisations supported by Diakonia aimed to strengthen peoples' ability to organise

themselves and thus shape their own future. The methodology used was adult education and awareness raising. Particular weight was given to educating and organising women. The villagers formed village committees, which together formed a workers' movement at regional and national level.¹⁰⁶

The organisations supported by Diakonia joined together in 1989 to form a group for experience exchange, evaluation and training of project personnel. The primary task of the organisations was to enable landless people to organise. They could never represent landless people directly, as the representatives of the organisations were not landless themselves. They therefore began to work towards landless people being able to take over the projects.¹⁰⁷

In recent years, Diakonia has worked with landless people who need to be given opportunities to influence development in Bangladesh. In order for this to happen people need an awareness of their own situation in relation to the political decisions being taken in the country. A strong democratic people's movement is also needed, in order to have the power to create change. Together with around ten NGO's in Bangladesh, a democratic people's movement is now being built up from village to national level. The organisation has been formed, and works independently without external financial support and has around 40,000

members. At the same time the various NGOs continue work in new areas to educate, organise and structure groups of people who want to join the people's movement being built. Today there are around 250,000 people organised in groups at village level. The aim is that the independent people's movement will take over work with these groups within three years. The 'landless people's movement' will then be the largest democratic people's movement in Bangladesh.¹⁰⁸

In order to avoid long-term dependence, Diakonia decided at the end of the 1980s to use the phase out method for its work in Bangladesh. In the Sida application for 1990/1 this was described as follows:

For several years Diakonia, via around 50 partner organisations, has aimed to build up a people's movement for and with the landless people of Bangladesh. In 1990 the first five organisations will begin to hand over their work to the landless. A five year plan starting in 1990 details the various stages of the phasing out of the organisations concerned, in order for the new people's movement to be built up.¹⁰⁹

When Sultana Begum was appointed as country officer at Diakonia's office in Dhaka in 1985, she came from a post in a national women's organi-

sation. She described how difficult it was to get male colleagues to understand the importance of working to strengthen the position of women. At the time, women in Bangladesh faced a very difficult situation, living with oppression rooted as much in tradition as in culture and religion. Girls did not have the same opportunities as boys in relation to education, health care or position in society. Now, she says, so much has changed.

Work with gender issues has led all of Diakonia's partners to focus on the particular situation and needs of women in their work. The participants receive education, training and support to become aware of their problems, the causes of these problems and to see possible solutions. The education provided includes basic reading and writing skills, but also seminars on gender awareness, health issues and farming methods. Savings are encouraged and credit is given to income generating projects. Training in gender issues for teachers and students is set to be held in a number of schools.¹¹⁰

Programmes instead of projects

This new direction to the work - supporting poor people's struggle for a more just society instead of 'projects' - led the work to become increas-

ingly focused upon themes or programmes, such as gender equality and democracy. From the outset one problem was finding and training people with the necessary leadership skills to enable the programme to develop at grassroots level.

The new direction of the work led of the organisations to feel the need to learn more about the content and meanings of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, legal aid, and the laws of Bangladesh. The first seminar on these issues was held in 1988. The first publication in Bangla on human rights was published in connection with the seminar, a publication that drew much public attention.¹¹¹

The following overall goal was given for the work in Asia (Bangladesh) in the Sida application of 1998. The text is a good summary of the development that took place and has been increasingly refined since the 1980s:

Diakonia's work in Asia has, as previously, concentrated on work to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable people in society. Through Diakonia's partner organisations, these groups have been given the opportunity to change their own situation through increased participation in local decision making processes and thus in changing society. The situation of women has been particularly focused upon.¹¹²

When the report to Sida was written in 2003 it was stated that

[...] the analysis presented in the application forms the basis for Diakonia's work in the region. No major changes have taken place in the region, but some trends deserve to be highlighted again as they may influence the future of the work.¹¹³

In relation to the major problem of poverty, it must be fought through both national and global changes. Policy on the redistribution of resources and strong measures against corruption and nepotism were mentioned, but it was also about creating opportunities for trade and just forms of investment in order to give all the poor people of Asia opportunities for development.

Divisions between ethnic and religious groups are increasing at local level and in many cases this makes the work of Diakonia's partners more difficult. In some cases, divisions relate to global political events such as the invasion of Iraq by the USA and its allies and the war against terrorism, that have generated tensions between religious groups in many areas.¹¹⁴

US foreign policy on terror has also influenced the situation in Bangladesh. Divisions between different ethnic and religious groups have

increased making the work of many of Diakonia's partners more difficult. Since the fundamentalist BHP party won the election in 2001, persecution of minorities and attacks against women have increased. The freedom previously enjoyed by partner organisations has been replaced by control from the authorities. It is no longer advisable to write openly about the abuses taking place. Sultana Begum likened this to a "political tsunami" cascading over organisations working for democracy. "The tidal wave is drowning the progress we had made" she said.¹¹⁵ This had led Diakonia to increase its support for work to strengthen human rights and the democratic culture.

Recurrent disasters

Bangladesh is hit by floods almost annually. In recent years the well-developed network of partner organisations has been able to contribute to providing immediate assistance to those affected using a jointly developed disaster response plan. Work has primarily focused on distributing water purification tablets and sugar/salt solution, together with medicine and food.¹¹⁶

The terrible tsunami in Bay of Bengal in December 2004 missed Bangladesh almost completely.

Information in Sweden

Time and again the minutes confirm that both the Board and Diakonia personnel understood the importance of informing people in Sweden about the work in Bangladesh, and of giving a positive picture of the work being done. It was important both to confirm for supporters that money raised had been put to good use and to increase awareness about Bangladesh as a country. Denominational leaders visiting Asia were often asked to visit a project area to form their own impression of the work taking place. These visits often resulted in highly positive reports and long articles in the denominations' magazines.

The annual Spring Campaign often included information about the situation in Bangladesh and information about the projects funded through collections and state funding. Swedish Radio Aid has on several occasions also carried out fundraising and shown TV footage from SFCA/Diakonia supported work in Bangladesh.

In September 1973, the SFCA Committee decided to ask Ingemar Berndtsson of ÖM to produce a film on the work in Bangladesh. It was entitled *A Source of Joy* and came to mean a great deal in relation to awareness of the support given to Bangladesh amongst the people in free churches.

The Sida application of 1975 included a budg-

et for a major information project *My Golden Bengal* [the introductory words of the national anthem]. It included a slide show, a newspaper and a teacher's handbook. This material was aimed not only at churches but also at schools.

The handicraft project *Sackeus* (see Handicraft Project, page 113) also turned into an information project in Sweden, as the product packaging carried stories about the people, raw materials and culture of the producing country.

The following text is from a press release about *Sackeus* from 1976:

Trade for the sake of serving

It is the same today. The world system of trade is unjust, because it benefits rich countries at the expense of poor countries. Through this project SFCA, like *Sackeus*, wants to break with this unjust system. Trade for the sake of serving - not for the sake of profit is the slogan.¹¹⁶

The handicraft project *Sackeus* was often the subject of questions at SFCA Committee meetings. Minutes from 1979 note the following:

In discussions, MCCS President Gösta Hedberg expressed the hope that special attention would be given to the *Sackeus* project's constitutional status in relation to SFCC. SAM President Eskil Albertsson wanted opportunities to

contribute to improved local sale of *Sackeus* products in the third world to be included in the study. (1978/79 §195)

This led to the formation of a group to look into the continuation of the work. It was reported to the meeting of May 1980 that:

[...] production and sale of handicraft products has a strong positive effect for some groups in developing countries. In addition to providing some much needed income, the traditional art of making handicrafts is preserved and developed.

In Sweden, products from developing countries help to bring SFCA's work to life and provide opportunities to share information about the situation in various developing countries (1980 §285)

When Diakonia sold its shares in *Sackeus* in December 2000 (2000 §108), a project that had meant a great deal in its most active period came to an end. The shares were sold to the Mexican farmer cooperative that over recent years has produced the *Sackeus* coffee.¹¹⁷

The goods from producers in the South had given the purchaser stories about income generating activities as well as created increased self confidence and hope for change amongst the produc-

ers. One pastor expressed it as follows: "We have two important tables in our church – the communion table and the *Sackeus* table. The *Sackeus* table is a constant reminder to us of the world and our calling in it."

The basic concept behind *Sackeus* was to support local producers and create opportunities for them to find markets for their produce. When Diakonia sold its shares, that intention was fulfilled.

The basic concept behind *Sackeus* was to support local producers and create opportunities for them to find markets for their produce.



'Come along to Banbazar'

In 1976 Roland Enebrant suggested to the office in Älvsjö that they put together an exhibition on village life in Bangladesh.¹¹⁸ It was suggested that the project be carried out in cooperation with the company AB Informationstjänst (fs) (1979/80 §297). The driving force behind the exhibition was the then rector of fs Herman Holmgren.

'Come along to Banbazar' is a big and unusual exhibition. The room in which it is put up takes on the character of a landscape. A village lies in this landscape. A bamboo hut is part of the exhibition (size approx. 3x4 metres with a height of approx 2.75 metres). The hut is the centre of the village and the exhibition.

The village also includes an authentic rickshaw (bicycle taxi) and a large number of everyday items: fishing and harvesting equipment, cooking and household utensils, clothes, toys etc.

Life size photographs, slide displays and indigenous music give further life to the village.

Essentially, the exhibition seeks to shout out the call to Christian service, at home in the congregation and out in the world.¹¹⁹

Dr Mina Malakar, leader of the CHCP project in Bangladesh, was invited to come to Sweden for the opening of the exhibition. On her two-week tour

of Sweden she managed to visit around 20 different congregations. The exhibition was shown for a period of over 10 years at a large number of locations in Sweden. The visually rich exhibition left an unforgettable impression on many visitors both young and old, and received lots of coverage in the local media.

In the run up to the UN Year of the Child in 1978, an initiative was taken to collect in stories from Bengali children. The resulting publication, entitled *Sikina collects rubbish*, included learning materials on Bangladesh.

Study visits

Many individuals and groups have visited Bangladesh over the years and seen for themselves the work supported by SFCA/Diakonia. These people have then passed on stories about how situations of great hardship can be changed.

In 1981 a visit for 17 people was arranged together with fs. One comment afterwards was: "Experiences of a developing country leave you with a duty. Feelings of guilt, insufficiency and frustration over the injustices do not cease when you arrive home."¹²⁰

Conclusion

The support, which began as disaster relief for the drought, has developed into long-term development work through local partners. The support given to Bangladesh has always been extensive. In 2005, six partners in the north and north east of the country are supported. Support is still given to the poorest and least developed regions of the country, today including marginalized groups from the Garos ethnic minority. It was through the large-scale work in Bangladesh that SFCA and Sida came into close contact and the first Sida grants received.

Many years of systematic work with partners to strengthen the position of women and to change men's attitudes to women and women's participation have given concrete results. Previously it was impossible to see men and women working together. Today this is a reality in many partner organisations. Through the work to organise groups, many groups have succeeded in getting women representatives elected to posts in the community.

Today the organisations supported by Diakonia have, together with other local organisations and authorities, succeeded in developing disaster preparedness systems in the areas where they are operative, so that the recurrent flooding does not

have such devastating consequences for people in the area.

The extensive information work about Bangladesh, carried out in Sweden during the 1970s and 80s, has had as its result that the generation, that grew up in free church congregations during that time, still has a strong interest in Bangladesh.

Many years of systematic work with partners to strengthen the position of women and to change men's attitudes to women and women's participation have given concrete results.



CHAPTER 4

Palestine/Israel

"HELP FOR THE VICTIMS OF WAR IN ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The war in the Middle East is over and a cease-fire is now in place. We feel great thankfulness and joy for that. As always, severe need and shortages follow on the heels of war and humanitarian assistance is urgently required from all who are able to help." (Excerpt from a letter from the Swedish Free Church Council, SFCC, to the congregations, June 1967)¹²¹

Short historic background

If we are to understand the events leading to the war in 1967 we need to look back in time. Let our starting point be the time after the first world war when Great Britain governed Palestine with a mandate from the League of Nations. This task was handed over to the UN in 1947. A United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) put together a recommendation for the creation of two states: a Jewish state, controlling 55 percent of the land area of Palestine and an Arabic state controlling 44

percent of the land. Jerusalem was to be an “international enclave” under UN control. On the 14 May 1948 the new state of Israel was created, a decision accepted by the Jews but not by the Palestinians, nor the surrounding Arab states.¹²²

The war that broke out between Israel and the surrounding Arab states in 1948 resulted in Israel taking over large areas of land in the North (Galilee) and in the South (the Negev). At the cease fire in 1949 Jews had occupied 77 percent of the intended Palestinian state. 725,000 Palestinians had fled to Jordan, Egypt or other neighbouring Arab states.¹²³

At the end of 1966, skirmishes between Israel and its Arab neighbours increased alarmingly. In order to pre-empt an Arabic attack, Israel attacked first. In less than a week, in the so-called Six Day War (6-12 June 1967), Israel had occupied the whole of Sinai, the West Bank including the Old Town in Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. In 1967, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 242, giving Palestinians the right to return or to receive compensation on condition that they live in peace with their neighbours. The UN organ UNRWA was formed, with responsibility for looking after Palestinian refugees.

Israel refused to give way to the UN decision and instead began to build settlements on the West Bank, on the Golan Heights and in Gaza.¹²⁵

Israeli policy on settlements has involved the illegal exploitation of Palestinian land ever since.

The war of 1967 and the following occupation of the Palestinian area created a source of conflict that cannot be resolved until the occupation has ended and Israel and Palestine have been given guarantees for their security.¹²⁶

Help for the victims of war

SFCC's AU met on 9 June 1967, in the middle of the Six Day War. The war was not on the agenda, but under agenda point 'SFCA' the question of what could be done for "the victims of war in Israel and the Middle East" was raised. It was decided to "give the secretariat the task of making all necessary preparations" (1967 §94).

A letter was sent out to the congregations, dated 9 June and was signed by all of the denominations' Mission Secretaries.¹²¹ On 15 June, 40 000 crowns was borrowed from the funds for India and sent to the Swedish Red Cross, to help refugees in Amman.

It is clear from the letter that the writers assumed that Swedes were most interested in Israel and that it was therefore important to provide information about the Palestinians and their situation: The Christian does not ask who is friend and who is foe.

Naturally, the thoughts of Swedish free church people go in the first place to Israel and naturally those who can, will send in gifts to help these people. But the wider Middle East, with its refugee masses, needs support and help and we as Christians should also do as much as we can to support these people.¹²¹

The letter received a strong response and many ecumenical initiatives took place at local level to organise fundraising efforts. This positive result led the Executive Committee, at its meeting on 3 August, to take up the question of how they should act 'on the ground' in the Middle East. Should SFCC build up its own organisation or channel support through others? The Committee reaffirmed the policy decision taken one year earlier, namely to support 'existing bodies' already present in the area (1967 §6). This was pointed out in a folder produced in 1972:

SFCA, through cooperation with national mission organisations and authorities, has the ability to help thousands of people. The project does not take on the character of charity, but takes the form of help for self-help, which creates work and food for several thousand people.¹²⁷

In addition to supporting the Red Cross, it was decided to allocate funds to the World Council of

Churches, via Church of Sweden Aid, for projects in four refugee camps on Jordan's East Bank, within its Near East Emergency Programme. The grant was for the purchase of medicines and food supplements.

The Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief, SOIR, and the organisation Israel's Barn (Israel's Children) also received funds from SFCA. The leader of Israel's Barn wrote in a letter of thanks saying, "We must help Israel to help the Palestinians. They need funds for school meals in their schools, funds for day schools for Arabic girls, the building of children's homes and much more".¹²⁸

Theologically sensitive territory

Hardly any other part of the world evokes such great interest as the Holy Land and the issues relating to it. "Palestine is the biggest political issue in Swedish Christianity"¹²⁹ and the questions that generate debate are how we, today, should interpret the words of the bible on the land, the people and the mission. SFCA, with its original vision of helping the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable had no difficulties in deciding to provide support to the region. But as the denominations within SFCA /Diakonia have always held differing views on the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the debate has always been there.

When a study into the future of SFCA was carried out in 1975, a resultant proposal was that:

It would, for example, be a relevant task to try to nuance the debate and the information provided about the situation in the Middle East.¹³⁰

At the AGM of 2005 a similar issue came up when it was decided to give the Board the task of inviting the denominations to a theological discussion on the interpretation of events in Israel/Palestine (AGM 2005 §15)

Sensitivity on the subject also led the personnel of the office in Jerusalem to write to the Board in March 1966 (1996 §51.5).

We in Jerusalem want to have contact with the denominations at home in order to discuss how we should act and react. We feel that we face a difficult dilemma. The Christian Palestinians are hard pressed between the Jews and the Muslims and feel hurt by what Christian Zionists do and say both here and in the West. Can we encourage people to intercessory prayer in our churches? Can we make statements asking for a just handling of the Palestinians? Can we send a message of greeting to the Christians?

The response from the Board was put in the following terms in a press release also published in the denominational magazines:

We, the members of Diakonia's Board, have with great sorrow followed the recent reports on grave acts of terror in Jerusalem. Our thoughts at this time go of course firstly to the families and friends of the victims, whose lives in the space of a few seconds were turned upside down and filled with pain, immeasurable terrible sorrow and despair.

We have also listened to reports and witness testimony from Diakonia's own personnel – Swedish and Palestinian in Jerusalem. They have described the fear felt by both Israelis and Palestinians that the current peace process will collapse. They have pointed out the particularly special and difficult situation of Christian Palestinians.

Let us surround the people of Israel and of Palestine in prayer. Let us pray for reconciliation and respect for life, for democracy and for a peaceful co-existence.¹³¹

Work with disabled people

Arnold Hjertström, the Swedish consul in Jerusalem, became SFCA's contact person on the spot in 1967. He had a strong commitment to disabled Palestinians. Through his negotiations SFCA began supporting work through the Arab Blind Organisation (ABO), whose primary task was to create work opportunities for blind, adult Palestinians in Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron. The workers ability to carry out their work was worsened dramatically after the Six Day War, as the Israeli authorities banned ABO from import-



SFCA supported work done through the Arab Blind Organisation, whose primary task was to create employment opportunities for blind adult Palestinians.

ing the raw materials needed. Instead they were instructed to buy their work materials on the local market at a high price. In order to be able to continue to provide ongoing employment they were dependent upon access to raw materials.¹³²

SFCA continued to support this work for six years. Using the funds granted to the organisation a significant educational programme was carried out, which contributed to the further development of the work.

This was the limited extent of support to the Middle East in the years 1968 to 1970. The drought in India in 1968, the tidal wave in Bangladesh in 1970 and refugee work in Biafra in 1970 took all the attention and received the largest grants in those years.

SFCA rapidly gained a good name as donor organisation in Gaza and the West Bank. This was illustrated for example when the social authorities on the Gaza strip contacted SFCA in 1968 to ask for support for blind Palestinians in the area. The Committee decided to continue providing support firstly to ABO, secondly to education for blind girls in Nablus and thirdly support in Gaza. (1968 §46)

Another illustration was that General Secretary Per-Arne Aglert was called to see the ambassador of the United Arab Republic (now

Egypt and Syria) in Stockholm in April 1969, who described for him the need for aid generated by the fighting in the area around the Suez. Large number of refugees from Gaza and Sinai had crossed the Suez Canal and were now gathered in refugee camps on Egyptian land. The local authorities were unable to provide for the refugees and were now appealing for Swedish support. It was decided to pass the appeal on to the World Council of Churches (1969 §42)

Grant from Swedish Radio Aid

In 1970 SFCA applied to Swedish Radio Aid for a grant of 150 000 crowns for a vocational school for blind Palestinian girls in Gaza to be set up. Swedish Radio Aid responded by allocating 75 000 crowns noting that "the grant should be seen as being a one off".¹³³

In order to cover the rest of the funds needed SFCA contacted the magazine Svenska Journalen and they decided to print and distribute an 8-page folder on the situation of blind Palestinians for their readers. It was also minuted that FS was taking in collections for the benefit of blind Palestinians on its study visits to the Middle East

In addition to being included in the Svenska Journalen, the folder *From darkness to light* printed

in 1971 was sent to congregations in the hope that the informative text would lead people to get involved. SFCA/Diakonia's information has always been like this. There have never been texts and photos appealing to people to 'feel sorry for' and be 'charitable'. It has however been hoped that factual information would result in increased international interest, including giving as way of being financially responsible.

In 1972 the school – the Gaza Strip First Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind – was inaugurated. Israeli Minister of Social Welfare Michael Hazani and Arnold Hjertström attended the inauguration.

Refugee 71

Following the highly successful Swedish Radio Aid fundraising campaign, Refugee 71 (See chapter 1 page 41), the Committee asked Arnold Hjertström to give a presentation on refugee projects in the area. Previously, Leo Liljengren, who had been appointed as Campaign Secretary, had made a reconnoitring visit to the Gaza region and met up with Hjertström, who in turn enabled contact to be made with those responsible at UNRWA. In 1967, following Liljengren's report to the Committee, it had been decided to immediately allocate 100,000 crowns to their work (1967 §33).

Now, the Committee decided to give 515,000 crowns of the Swedish Radio Aid grant to UNRWA's refugee work amongst Palestinians within the Israeli administered territories (1971 §89). The money was sent via the bank account handled by Hjertström.

Liljengren returned to Gaza and the West Bank in June 1971, in order to plan the work to be done. As a result a health clinic including a maternity unit was built in a refugee camp in Gaza and chemistry and physics laboratories were equipped at high schools in Gaza. In addition, the *Society for the Care of Handicapped Children*, also operative in Gaza, received a grant to build a preschool for children with learning difficulties, the *Sun Daycare Center*. There was also enough money for the purchase of prosthetics, hearing aids, wheel chairs for those paralysed in the war, and for grants or loans to individuals, groups or cooperatives who set up businesses that in time could enable them to be self-sufficient.¹³⁴

Aglert also visited the area. Were the frequent visits questioned? Perhaps that is why the minutes record that FS's travel agent, 'Programresor', paid for his visit. His report to the Committee included the following text:



SFCA have strong opportunities to facilitate reconciliation through aid work amongst the population of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"Sweden and SFCA are in a strong position to carry out reconciliation work as part of its aid work amongst the population of both the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Palestinians do not gladly receive help from Israel. UNRWA isn't particularly popular either as it is seen as standing for the USA. Sweden on the other hand is a country one gladly receives help from. In part Sweden has resources and in part there is no fear of Sweden's aid efforts being motivated by any significant political interests. SFCA's General Secretary therefore hopes that the work with various projects for Palestinians in the Israeli territory would continue, as this

help is not only personal help for the people receiving it, but also has the effect of creating reconciliation between peoples." (1972 §51)

Mission Secretary Gösta Hedberg, MCCS, requested a summary "of all the projects in which SFCA has been involved to give to the leaders of the denominations" (1972 §74). Unfortunately there is no note of the motivation for his request. Was Hedberg having difficulty in defending SFCA's strong presence in the area, or was it the number

of projects, their focus or the target group for the projects' work that required further clarification?

Following Hedberg's request, the Committee decided that it was necessary to distribute information on SFCA's current and planned work amongst Palestinians. It was decided to print a folder. In addition to sending the folder to the congregations it was also to be distributed to Swedish tourists in Israel. The material was collated and once again Svenska Journalen paid for the printing (1972 §102).

A drawn out process

The extent to which SFCA's work was appreciated was highlighted in 1972 when both the occupying power and Palestinian organisations asked SFCA to take over responsibility for an institution for children with learning difficulties on the West Bank. The *Arab Orthodox Benevolent Society* (AOBS) had begun building a vocational training school in the village of Beit-Jala, near Bethlehem. The project was planned to include a boarding school for around 100 Palestinian children with learning difficulties, a day care centre and vocational training. However, a lack of funds had led to construction being halted. AOBS was prepared to hand over construction to an organisation with

the ability to complete the work, but hoped to be able to participate as much as possible. The social authorities were prepared to support the project on a continuing basis. It was estimated that half a million crowns were needed to complete construction. The proposal to SFCA was that it should take part in running the project for five years, with a hand over to the local authorities happening progressively over those years (1972 §50).

There was a drawn out process before the planned institution was built. On this occasion finances were not the problem. On the contrary, Sida was very positive about the project from the outset. The difficulty was in finding a suitable partner organisation. After one year of planning, AOBS withdrew. They had decided to take back and complete the half built premises and start a tobacco factory in it.

A new partner organisation was found - the voluntary organisation *An Nahdah* in Ramallah. They had worked for a long time in the whole of the West Bank with social activities including a day centre for children with learning difficulties. A partner contract was signed and the money demanded back from AOBS was transferred to *An Nahdah* [or Annahda Women's Association, as it came to be known].

It was decided that a new building and a re-

vised programme should be planned. Personnel from the Department of Social Care at Stockholm City Council participated in the work. It was important to have a representative based in the area for the planning of the new institution. Berndt Ekholm was appointed for the period 15/6/75 – 15/2/76 in order to manage the work with projects in the Middle East (1975 §61).



A group of girls outside one of the UNRWA schools that have received support from SFCA.

A five-year application for 8.6 million crowns was sent to Sida.¹³⁵ The application was turned down “due to the premises having an inappropriate architectural design and to a lack of clarity and uncertainty about the project’s long term financing” (1976 §52). Aglert and Hedberg travelled to the Middle East and had the task of negotiating alternative solutions with Annahda. A new application was approved in 1977 and in the spring of 1980 the new centre was inaugurated.

The story continues. The Sida application of 1983 reports that the building, financed with support from SFCA was only partially being used, due to financial problems. In addition the organisation had difficulties in covering the running costs.¹³⁶

Diakonia still (2005) supports Annahda.

The Committee Visits

It grew to be important that members of the Committee visit the organisations being supported. Therefore, a visit to Syria, Jordan, Gaza and Jerusalem was arranged for March 1976. Due to unrest in the region, the group was denied permission to visit Ramallah and the projects supported there. Birger Davidsson, HU, who participated, described how he experienced the visit as politically biased.

HU’s theological interpretation was that Israel is God’s chosen people, whilst Sigbert Axelson, who led the trip, believed that the congregation is the people of God, unrelated to the state of Israel. SFCA’s work was focused on the Palestinians and from the outset the principle was to support those who were in most need. And that was the disabled. In the area we visited it was revolutionary to spend time with the disabled. People were almost embarrassed by so much attention. But the families gained another perspective on the children. And SFCA/Diakonia has done a really good deed in highlighting this and getting people think in new ways.⁹

The work grew

The Head of Social Services in Gaza had the impression that SFCA had a strong commitment to the situation of children. This led him, in 1972, to request that refugee children in Gaza be enabled to attend holiday camps. The camps were to take place on Israeli land and would give Palestinian children the opportunity to meet Israeli children and children from other countries. This work was funded for several years (1972 §100).

The work of the *Sun Day-care Center* grew and in 1976 support was given for an extension including further classrooms, an office space and a training workshop for around 50 children. The centre

had a psychologist and a social worker. Through contacts which Stockholm’s Department of Social Care, the social worker was invited to Sweden to participate in a six month further training course in the care of people with learning difficulties (1976 §25). In 1980 the organisation’s leader, Abu Ghazaleh, was invited to Sweden.

Another institution supported by SFCA/Diakonia for many years was the *Four Homes of Mercy*. Berndt Ekholm was first contacted with a request for support. He wrote home and described the programme, which included care for the elderly, chronically ill, people with learning difficulties, and orphaned children. The result of this was that SFCA sought Sida funds for a care home for 35 children with Cerebral Palsy. The amount granted was just over half a million crowns.¹³⁷

At this time SFCA was in close contact with the Middle East Council of Churches, MECC. The three newspapers, *Christian in the Middle East*, produced in 1980, were translated into Arabic and placed at the MECC’s disposal. One of the main issues covered was the Christian presence and Christian witness in the conflict-ridden Middle East. In 1980 they arranged a conference on this theme and a report from the conference was sent to SFCA. The Committee, together with SFCA, decided to arrange a similar ecumenical conference in Sweden.

Information in Sweden

In parallel to supporting projects on the ground it was extremely important to distribute information and raise awareness about the situation in the Middle East in Sweden. When Göran Jonsson returned to Sweden from Bangladesh in 1977, he was employed at the office in Älvsjö amongst other things to produce information materials.

The spring campaign of 1978, themed *Fleeing* was an important opportunity to distribute information about the situation of refugees in the Middle East. This group among others was presented in a folder that took the form of an worn out passport and in a poster exhibition. A study manual was written in cooperation with FS looking at why people become refugees and how refugees live. The Committee also decided to produce a slide show, *Born Without Peace*, on the situation in the Middle East. Sida provided a grant for the production.

It is apparent from the text accompanying the slide show that it was assumed that many Christians in Sweden went on tourist and study trips to the Holy Land.

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land can never be reduced to a trip into the past. It places us in brutal contact with war, unrest, political intrigues and suffering people. Things

were the same in Jesus time, nearly two thousand years ago. Then it was Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus who were without peace, and fled to a foreign land... (Slide 6)

[...] Today it is the Palestinians, who are stuck between politics and a struggle for power. Almost four million Palestinians, have been refugees for thirty years, of these 1.7 million have UN refugee status. (Slide 7).

In 1980 the information materials were expanded to include three posters on the theme *Christian in the Middle East*, that were printed and sent to congregations. The first newspaper gave an overview of developments in the region from Jesus' birth to the present day. A map showed the number of Christians in each country. The second described the emergence and splintering of the churches. The third newspaper provided information about educational projects supported by SFCA in which Christians and Muslims worked together.

Development continued

SFCA approved an application from the World Council of Churches for financial support for the periodical 'Report on the Palestinians under Israeli Rule', which was issued by a Jewish publishing house in Paris. Reports in the periodical were compiled from news from the Arabic and Hebraic

press and described the situation of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories. The periodical was distributed to organisations, universities and journalists all over the world. A consultation on Jerusalem and the Middle East, also on the initiative of the WCC, received support.

It was at this time, in 1981, that SFCA began to give grants to a local fund to support families punished by the Israeli occupiers on suspicion of political crimes. The punishment was often in the form of blowing up their home.¹³⁸

Support to the West Bank and Gaza continued throughout the 1980s through existing partner organisations. The focus remained on children with learning difficulties.

The MUMS Programme

For many years the *American Friends Service Committee* AFSC (the Quakers), in cooperation with the Quakers in Sweden, operated pre-schools and a special programme for the pupils' mothers. Both of these initiatives received support from SFCA. The work was characterised by a high quality of content but lacked sufficient materials and equipment.

The Quakers had begun looking into creating income generating opportunities through an

employment programme, such as a workshop or small factory. It was hoped that the profit from this could be used to run the preschool programme. SFCA thought this an interesting suggestion, as it might create a future work place for some of the young people with learning difficulties who completed their education at the Sun Day-care Center.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem had developed a method for enabling mothers to teach small children various skills, the so-called *MUMS Programme* (Mother's Understanding Method of Schooling). The programme included the ability to identify colours and shapes, sizes and numbers, to orient themselves in a room and to build up fine motor skills with scissors and pens. The Quakers were given permission to translate the material to Arabic and adapt it to the situation of Palestinian refugees. It was important that small children, who often lived in highly meagre environments, were enabled to learn these skills. Skills they were assumed to have upon starting school.

250 children participated over a period of 30 weeks. During the programme, project leaders kept in close contact with all of the mothers, and the mothers received a workbook. It was important that the mothers to play their part in the work. Discussion played a central role in the programme



It was important for the mothers to play their part in the work. Conversations played a central role in the programme and improved not only the child's language skills, but also the mother's vocabulary.

and improved not only the child's language skills, but also the mother's vocabulary. This process led the participating mothers to gain an increased sense of self-worth and a sense of satisfaction, which in turn stimulated their personal development. SFCA's support for the project continued for many years.¹³⁹ The MUMS Programme was also carried out at a preschool in a refugee camp on the West Bank, again with support from SFCA.

There were plans to expand this programme with an employment project for women. In addi-

tion to creating work in the economically underdeveloped Gaza, this provided a certain amount of local income for the ongoing projects. Cooperation with the Quakers continued until 1994.

The Ecumenical Youth Centre in Beit Sahour

Ecumenical youth work had been set up in Beit Sahour with participants from most of the orthodox and protestant churches. Most churches, however, lacked children's and youth work and young people didn't have a group to find support or to feel at home in. This was an important need, as the occupation created enormous psychological pressures on young people. When SFCA came into contact with the group it comprised 150 Christian young people.

The work included bible studies and discussions about the Christian faith. The aim was to increase the young people's awareness of their Palestinian identity, enabling them to feel proud of being Christian Palestinians and of living on 'holy ground'. It was hoped that this might help prevent young people from emigrating to other countries, a process which had seriously affected the Palestinian churches. The work also aimed to reach out to the Israeli occupiers with Christian love, not hate.

SFCA approved an application for support for another youth centre. There, Christian, Muslim and Jewish young people could access language courses in Arabic and Hebrew.

The education was primarily run by unpaid volunteers. They had received permission to start work from the Israeli Department of Education in Bethlehem, permission that would be granted for one year at a time.

The paperwork given to the Committee for their decision describes thy the support had to be interrupted :

The application was due to be handed in during the first week of December 1981. On 14 November something happened that changed everything. Some Arab teenagers threw homemade petrol bombs, known as Molotov cocktails, at two Israeli buses passing Beit Sahour. In addition to the young people being arrested and later tried, the Israeli army carried out their own reprisals on the night between 15 and 16 November. The houses owned by the parents of the arrested teenagers were blown up.

At midnight, soldiers came to the Rock family's house and gave the residents 2 hours to move themselves and their possessions. The Israelis 'helped' with the move by throwing the furniture over a two metre high drop, resulting in the furniture breaking.¹⁴⁰

Peace Prize

In 1983, the SFCA Committee decided to highlight the struggle for peace in the Middle East by awarding SFCA's Peace Prize to the organisation *The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace* and its leader Avi Oz. The following motivations were given for the Committee's decision:

1. We wish to highlight a group striving for peace in the current conflict in the Middle East.
2. We wish to influence Swedish public opinion by calling attention to groups within Israel that are striving for peace, and thus counteract a completely negative image being painted of the Jewish people.
3. We want to give the peace movement in Israel the recognition it deserves in the difficult situation it now finds itself in after the war in Lebanon.

In preparatory documents for the decision, sent out in 1982, fears that the prize might lead to cooler relations between SFCA and the Israeli authorities were mentioned. It might lead to some difficulties for the aid work. At the same time it was stated that SFCA already had a fairly cool relation to these authorities, as it had insisted on an independent choice of projects and partners, and had then largely chosen to work with organisations which had not found favour in the eyes of

the Israeli administration. When Avi Oz, Professor at the University of Tel Aviv, came to Sweden to receive the Prize it was given out in SFCC's name, by its Chairperson Gösta Hedberg (1982 §16).

Another visit by the Committee

As new members joined the Committee, the need to form a first hand impression of the work being supported arose again. It was therefore decided to go on a joint visit to the West Bank and Gaza in May 1985. Due to the severe political unrest in the area the visit was delayed. It was almost two years before the visit could be undertaken, in the spring of 1987.

New Swedish Radio Aid Appeal

The extremely severe refugee situation across the world, partly caused by drought in Africa and war in Afghanistan, together with very positive memories from the campaign of 1971, led Swedish Radio Aid to plan another campaign for the benefit of refugees for 1986. Diakonia were contacted, as were Save the Children Sweden, the Red Cross and Church of Sweden Aid. Diakonia accepted the invitation to participate. The Committee decided to appoint a project leader and to allocate funds

for information materials (1984/85 §57, §135).

The fundraising went very well: 65.5 million crowns were raised. Of this Diakonia received 15 million crowns. The annual report of 86/87 describes how the money wasn't the only important result. Information about the refugee situation in the world was given a great deal of coverage in the media during the campaign. "Swedish people realised that refugees were not just an innumerable mass waiting to sweep in over Sweden's borders. For many it was an eye opener to discover that only a tiny proportion of the 15 million refugees living around the world come to our country". The campaign also meant a lot for Diakonia. "From having been a relatively unknown organisation, many people realised that Diakonia was a big development agency with many qualities".¹⁴¹

Project development

More detailed information about the situation in Gaza was given to the Committee when a number of project decisions had to be made at their meeting in February 1986. By way of introduction it was stated that support had always been given to projects that were the initiative of local organisations and that aimed to increase the economic independence of the local population. Support had

also aimed to help vulnerable population groups with particular needs such as children, disabled people, people with learning difficulties and elderly people. During its 15 years in the region UNRWA had the task of developing projects that would enable the Palestinian population towards economic independence. They had not succeeded; unemployment in the occupied territories was still very high. A positive initiative was a workshop producing school uniforms started by the Quaker Service, in which Diakonia participated by providing a start up grant. Around 30 women gained work at the factory.

Another project, also motivated by high unemployment levels, was support for the growing and development of the Jojoba plant. Desmond Carragher, Diakonia's Middle East Secretary, was in contact with the *Arab Scientific Institute for Research*, which worked with creating industries from the oil-bearing plant. The project application presented a scenario in which the Jojoba plant could play a whole new role within the farming sector. The plant was said to be a tough and profitable oil plant, as it was harvested earlier than the olive tree and was more drought resistant. At the point of application 80,000 plants had been planted at a number of nurseries with around 20 small-scale farmers and 10 workers em-

ployed (1985/86 §114). The project continued until the mid 1990s.

With the grant from Swedish Radio Aid *Refugee 86* fundraising campaign, Diakonia was able to provide support for existing projects and establish new contacts. International Christian Committee (ICC) became a new partner. In the village of Nuba, appropriate premises were provided for the village's health care services with Diakonia contributing 40 percent of the costs and the villagers 60 percent. ICC also channelled support to provide water and electricity supplies needed in four villages, necessary both to improve health and increase incomes.

Cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) became increasingly important. As an international development agency they could initiate new activities something local organisations were forbidden from doing by the Israeli occupiers. Using funds from *Refugee 86*, they built a language-learning studio for English. Language studies could be offered to all students participating in MECC's vocational training. Trained academics could also be given the opportunity for language learning as part of improving their ability to compete for work opportunities both within and beyond the Gaza strip.

The first Intifada

The political problems of the region were complicated. The Palestinian right to self-rule collided with Israel's right to safety and security. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip held the Palestinians in poverty and many people lived without the ability to even have their most fundamental human rights fulfilled.

Conflicts between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities on the West Bank and Gaza strip intensified in the late 1980s. In 1987 the Palestinian uprising known as the Intifada broke out. The fighting which lasted until the beginning of the 1990s, between the well equipped Israeli army, and for the most part, stone throwing Palestinian youths, led to the death of many hundreds of people and to thousands being injured. Many injuries led to life long disability. People were kidnapped, held in custody without trial or executed. People were forced to stay in bomb shelters for long periods or limited in their movements by curfews. This led people to lose their incomes. For long periods people lacked access to food, water, heating, health care and social assistance. Hundreds of thousands of children and university students lost further years of their basic education. More and more lost hope that their lives would improve in any meaningful way, and those that could emigrated or fled their homes.

The various international efforts to bring about a peace conference failed despite the PLO's change in position to various UN resolutions. Israel's immigration policy and barely masked plans to settle immigrants in the occupied territories created further barriers to the peace process and to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson visited to the region in spring 1988. The visit led him to invite Diakonia to take responsibility for the establishment of a rehabilitation centre.¹⁴² After much consultation Diakonia, Sida, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Sweden and the *Patients Friend's Society* on the West Bank agreed to enter into cooperation. This was to become Diakonia's single largest project ever.

"The region's political crises and military conflicts have contributed to worsening economic, social and cultural situation for the majority of those living in the crisis hit areas".¹⁴³ The need for supportive measures for those affected rose as the violence escalated. The physical injuries resulting from the Intifada created the need for specialised hospital equipment. *Ahli Ahli Arab Hospital*, in Gaza, *Makassed Hospital* in Ramallah, and the *Princess Basma Jerusaalem Crippled Children Centre* (ICCC) received large grants for the purchase of equipment. The grants meant a significant increase in the volume of Diakonia's work and the addition of new partners.

Abu Raya Rehabilitation Centre

The project began with planning for the rebuilding and extension of a school building in Ramalla that had never come into use. After this equipment was purchased for what would become the *Abu Raya Rehabilitation and Training Centre*. The total project cost was estimated at 23 million crowns. Ivan Magnusson, together with his wife Agneta, was appointed to lead the project. Diakonia's Board were constantly informed of the work's progress.

Magnusson reported that he had begun planning the construction work and that the whole project could be divided into four parts:

- Delivery of certain equipment to Makassed Hospital and the Crippled Children Centre
- Rehabilitation centre in Ramallah
- Swedish personnel
- Coordination and development interventions (1989-§186).

A national director was appointed and a Board, including Magnusson, was chosen to lead the work.



Dr Dajhani at Makassed Hospital was one of those treating the physical injuries resulting from the Intifada.

Throughout the construction phase it was important to plan with a view to local partner in time taking over responsibility for the entirety of the work. This hand over took place successively in 1993/94.

The rebuilding of the centre was begun at the same time as the centre's work programme was being planned. It was decided that Abu Raya Hospital would specialise in spinal injuries, which affected an increasing number of Palestinians due to gun shot wounds.

The work to recruit Swedish personnel (who were needed from the planning stage) took place

simultaneously. 3 physiotherapists, 3 occupational therapists, 2 nurses and a doctor were appointed. They came to mean a great deal for the development of the centre. Local personnel (who worked in parallel with the Swedish personnel) were appointed at the same time. In 1995 the work was entirely run by Palestinian personnel for the first time.

When the Gulf War broke out at the beginning of 1991, the centre was closed and for security reasons Swedish personnel were called home for a few months. During this period the centre was used as an accident and emergency unit.

The orthopaedic workshop at *Princess Basma Hospital* (the organisation had changed name into *Jerusalem Disabled Children Centre*) was enabled to send two Palestinian orthopaedic technicians to Sweden for 5 weeks of study and training. This led to cooperation with the nursing/healthcare college in Jönköping, Sweden. A cooperation that was to last for several years. The rehabilitation project was granted exemption from duties on the import of orthopaedic aids (1989 §84).

It became apparent that there was a total lack of coordination between rehabilitation projects in the region, something to which Sida also reacted. The difficulty was that there was neither a clear picture of the number of disabled people in the country, nor a clear picture of the need for as-

sistance and how these needs could be met. At the same time there were a large number of institutions working with rehabilitation. It was suggested that Diakonia initiate a study to identify what the needs for assistance actually were. This was carried out in cooperation with the universities in Bethlehem and Berzeit. This process led to a national committee for rehabilitation being formed, composed of experts and elected representatives. This proved important in future coordination efforts.

It was during this study that Diakonia and the Norwegian Association of Disabled recognised the importance of coordinating their work with rehabilitation. Cooperation began and continues to this day (year 2005).

The rehabilitation centre was opened at a joyful inauguration ceremony attended by Diakonia's director Karl-Axel Elmquist, amongst others, on 12 June 1991 (1991 §25).¹⁴⁴ Initially only day patients were cared for, however, gradually the 34 bed spaces were also filled.¹⁴⁵ The work was highly successful as it generated new knowledge and developed treatment methods which had not previously been used in the occupied territories.

A rehabilitation centre such as the one in Ramallah cannot function in isolation. If there is nothing 'before' and 'after' the rehabilitation, the centre will be unable to work

according to its stated goals. It can easily become a convalescent home or a long-term hospital instead of an active rehabilitation centre. If there is no follow up with patients in their home environment, no employment creation and no satisfactory housing, the rehabilitation provided by the centre can be totally wasted.¹⁴⁶

When everything was up and running, the personnel trained and the equipment installed the big question about support for future projects arose. Elmquist shared with the Committee the office's suggestion that, if future support for Gaza and the West Bank was to continue to be based upon Diakonia's basic policy of supporting the most vulnerable, projects should focus on children, rehabilitation of the injured and employment (1990 §125). Rehabilitation referred not only to health care and therapy, but also to ADL-training, employment creation, vocational training, mobility, home adaptations etc. Here, the new methodology of CBR, *Community Based Rehabilitation*, came to play a very important role. Diakonia partners in other countries also used the CBR programme.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

The aim of the CBR programme is to enable disabled people and people with learning difficulties

to live as an integrated part of society. The cornerstone of the CBR way of working is that villages and local communities own the process. Local committees are appointed in the communities to lead the work. The work begins with knocking on doors and mapping the number of disabled people and their needs for assistance. Statistics are drawn up from the mapping and projects are then planned on the basis of these. People's attitudes to disability are influenced by providing information in schools, day-care, preschools and to teachers, employers, community groups and the government. In the West Bank and Gaza this meant Diakonia providing support to its partners to educate disabled people themselves, their families, neighbours and local community.¹⁴⁷ How a poor home could be adapted for a disabled person returning from Abu Raya was discussed. Was it possible to build a ramp for the wheelchair? Could the wheelchair get into the bathroom? CBR personnel discussed these and other questions with the families.¹⁴⁸

In 1990 Diakonia began planning a CBR programme to be carried out by an existing partner, but also with other institutions and organisations. The National Committee for Rehabilitation, which Diakonia had initiated, gained an important function in coordination. In cooperation



One very positive contribution to the rehabilitation work was the support given to The Palestinian Federation for the Disabled Sports.

with Bethlehem University, a course was planned and a study guide put together. The university gave participants a certificate on completing the course. Priority was given to participants from Gaza, where the need was greatest (1991 §26). 16 people participated and became responsible for the long term planning of the work. Paediatric care work was carried out based at Princess Basma Hospital.

Once the work had got under way it became clear that the CBR programme formed a natural part of the rehabilitation programme and that the two programmes should be held together. The application to Sida of 1994 describes this as a three tiered structure: local, regional and national level. At the local level, where resources are most limited, the CBR programme forms the main part of the programme. At regional level primary health care is the most important aspect and includes physiotherapy, certain institutions and special schools.

At the national level there were three institutions: Abu Raya Rehabilitation Center (primarily for those with spinal injuries), Princess Basma Center for Disabled Children and Bethlehem Arab Society for Physically Handicapped, a centre for children and adults in Beit Jala (1994 §99).

In June 1994 Sida approved an application for the entire rehabilitation programme for a three-year period, at a cost of 36,630,000 crowns. In that year, the CBR programme in its entirety worked with approx. 500,000 people through 17 different organisations.

One very positive contribution to the rehabilitation work was the support given to The Palestinian Federation for the Disabled Sports. The need for free time activities was obvious from all the young boys injured in the Intifada who received care at the centre and then returned to society. It appeared that the disabled were a completely neglected group. Cooperation with and support for the Palestinian disabled sports movement was a much appreciated and important complement to the other care provided. As a result young people born with disabilities also found the courage to get involved in disabled sports (1994 §100). The activities proved to be important in strengthening local democracy whilst at the same time providing much needed mutual support and friendship in the groups, and a sense of identity and self-worth. One of the many notable events organised was the wheelchair rally on the streets of Ramallah, an activity that would have been impossible before the Intifada.

The Gulf War

In September 1990, Carragher gave a detailed report to Diakonia's Committee on the situation caused by the so-called *Gulf War*. As Arafat had taken the side of Saddam Hussein in the war, Palestinians working as guest workers in other Arab states were thrown out. Their return to the West Bank and Gaza made an already difficult situation, with severe overcrowding and high levels of unemployment, worse. As guest workers they had been able to send money home to their families. Their incomes disappeared, as did the financial support that other Arab states had given to the Palestinians. When the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs learned about this Diakonia, amongst others, was given a grant of 10 million crowns to be shared between old and new partners (1990 §44).

As a result of Carragher's report, the Committee decided to give head office the task of actively monitoring developments in the crisis zone and in the countries where guest workers had been based. If necessary, a special disaster group was to be formed at the office.

When the war broke out in 1991, the situation became very difficult not only in the war zone, but in the whole Middle East. Severe restrictions on communicating and travelling outside the Middle East region were introduced. Elmquist reported

to the Committee that the strict censorship of information in the war zone meant that no information was getting through. He had therefore made contact with the WCC and MECC in order to receive rapid messages about coming needs for aid (1991 §72).

New partners added

As is apparent from the earlier description of the Quakers' work in Gaza, the occupying power opposed the development of Palestinian organisations that involve individuals in projects aiming to take responsibility for the structures and issues faced by local communities. Such organisations were considered political and therefore a threat to Israel's interests. This motivated Diakonia to focus its development assistance work in the Middle East increasingly on organisational and leadership development in voluntary organisations and on support for partners working to influence local and national development. Cooperation, coordination and experience exchange between local and national organisations received increased support.¹⁴⁹

Two new organisations received support from 1991. One was Aid To The Aged (ATTA), which helped older people by providing 'Meals on Wheels' and healthcare via community workers,

most of whom were volunteers. The other was the Galilee Society for Health Research and Services, which worked with primary health care for the Bedouin population in the Negev area. As they lived in so called "unrecognised villages" medical services were almost non-existent. The number of disabled people within this group was high (1992 §66). Within five years, support from Diakonia had enabled 14 villages to be equipped with dental clinics, two day-care centres to be set up and 21 villages to be provided with sewage facilities.¹⁵⁰

In 1991 a partnership was entered into with the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP). Unemployment, poverty, poor housing and sanitary conditions and terrible technical infrastructure affected the mental health of the population. A study showed that the Intifada had psychologically influenced more than 50 percent of the people. Culturally, many questions were asked about children born with physical or mental disabilities. There were parents who regarded these children as a shame on the family. A programme of group therapy was provided for people who were identified through home visits in the community. GCMHP had set up four clinics, of which one was a women's clinic at which victims of violence, primarily children and young people but also adult women who had been subjected to



Through positive reading experiences the children could find help in dealing with their situation, discover new ways of imagining and playing, be stimulated in their development and generally improve their circumstances in life.

aggression from husbands or sons, were received and treated. The organisation also had an educational programme, primarily directed at doctors, teachers and nursery school personnel, aimed at preventing violence.¹⁵¹

The children's book project

In 1991 another project that is still running was started. Agneta Magnusson, employed in Jerusalem, wrote a letter informing Diakonia's Board (1992 §67) about the total lack of children's literature in

Arabic. She felt that as children in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip lived with such difficult experiences from the war the need for imaginative stories was enormous. Children's books would also help develop children's language and understanding.

Mona Henning, owner of publishers Dal Al-Muna in Djursholm, Sweden, had started publishing Swedish children's books translated into Arabic. Magnusson's suggestion was that a grant be given for the purchase of these books. The result of this first effort was very positive and led to the

project being significantly expanded. "Through positive reading experiences children can find help in dealing with their situation, discover new ways of imagining and playing, be stimulated in their development and generally improve their circumstances in life" stated the application to Sida of 2004. The community outreach work of the CBR programme also led to a large number of children and young people in remote forgotten villages gaining access to books.

The programme was expanded to include three aspects: production, purchasing and activities to promote reading. Production included both support for locally published books, and courses for authors and illustrators. Books were bought both locally and from Sweden. The country's national goal was for each child to have access to one book. There was no strong habit of reading and Diakonia gave organisations and schools support for reading campaigns.¹⁵² In recent years this has led to the formation of a broadly based reference group focusing on educational methodology. Further training has been given to authors of educational children's books at Bethlehem and Najjah Universities. The Ministry of Culture in Palestine has established a national plan for children's literature and the Palestinian authors' association has started publishing children's books in

complement to publishers Dal Al-Munas. At day care centres and schools an increasing focus is being placed on reading.¹⁵³

Palestinian Liberation Theology

In 1996 a new partnership was formed with an organisation called SABEEL (meaning "the road" or "the well"). SABEEL is an ecumenical organisation formed by a group of theologians who developed a Palestinian liberation theology to be spread amongst churches in the Arab world. The situation in the region made it difficult to be a Christian and as a result the churches in the region were shrinking due to emigration to the West. As a Christian organisation, SABEEL was important when Diakonia gathered together partners in the region for joint consultations. The participation of Christians in the fight against Israeli occupation was not widely known in the Muslim world. There was a need to increase in trust and understanding between Christian Arabs and the rest of the Arab world.

The Palestinian State

In 1991, Israel and Palestine entered into new peace negotiations. The USA succeeded in bringing the two parties to a conference in Madrid. When the

Labour Party came to power in 1992 all new settlement projects were halted. With the help of mediators from Norway the government negotiated in secret with the PLO and in September 1993 the so-called *Oslo Accords* was signed in Washington. The agreement gave the Palestinians limited self-rule on the West Bank and in Gaza. The PLO formally recognised Israel's right to exist within secure borders and Israel recognised the PLO as representatives of the Palestinian people for the first time.

After the change of government in Israel in 1993, relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians hardened. The blockade of the occupied territories worsened the situation for the Palestinians and created even higher unemployment. The result was continuing Intifada activity. In addition to continuing to support work with disabled people and rehabilitation for those injured in the war through previously established partnerships, Diakonia entered into one new partnership with a voluntary organisation called Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). PHR worked to fight human rights abuses, particularly in the field of medicine. They published studies highlighting the severe health issues facing Palestinians. They also provided legal assistance when abuses had been committed.¹⁵⁴

Many people's hopes for intensified peace

talks were aroused when the Nobel peace prize was given to Arafat-Rabin-Peres in 1993. And of course talks continued despite all the terror attacks. But individual people could see no difference. The blockades of Gaza and the West Bank continued. This brought about a major rise in unemployment as only a few Palestinians were given permission to enter Israel to work. In 1993, Diakonia entered into a partnership with the *International Center for Peace in the Middle East*, ICPME, in Tel Aviv, which works to create trust between Israelis and Palestinians.

The new government in Israel surprised many with its hard stance in relations to the Palestinians. Continued support from the new government in the USA amongst other things in the form of underwriting loans for settlements on occupied territory was also surprising.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the existing strong involvement in disability and social issues, Diakonia's support to the region became increasingly focused on programmes for human rights, democracy, non-violence and reconciliation.

The murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 was the culmination of a long hate-campaign against his politics of peace. In 1996 the peace process halted for long periods and was written off as dead on several occasions after some of the blood-

iest fighting in decades. The subsequent election brought the Likud party and Netanyahu to power.

The theme of Diakonia's spring campaign of 1996 was *They build where war has destroyed*. The text on the folder, "with tears and hope we build our future" summarised the attitudes and feelings of the vulnerable people of the West Bank.¹⁵⁶

Despite the halted peace process, the Palestinians were able to carry out the planned election in 1996. Yassir Arafat was elected president with 87 percent of the votes. Responsibility for education, culture, health care, social care and taxation was taken over by the Palestinians on the West Bank. Hope, enthusiasm and faith in democracy were, however, dampened as people saw the Palestinian authority develop in a highly undemocratic way – as a traditional 'Arab dictatorship' with one strong man controlling everything. Major internal conflicts arose within the PLO, such as, for example, when the human rights activist and leader of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Eyad Sarraj, was arrested. Israel also had a general election in this year and Likud led by Benjamin Netanyahu won a slim victory over the Labour Party.

The tug of war for funds from donor countries was intensive. Health care on the West Bank and in Gaza had largely been run by voluntary organisations. These organisations had fewer economic



Several massive suicide bombs in February 1996 led to seven Palestinian cities being blockaded and people being cut off from work places, hospitals and schools.

resources and therefore had to coordinate their work, or let the state take over. Diakonia tried to contribute to the development of simple models, which were realistic for communities facing further reductions in aid. Even if a strong state was necessary, it was important not to deconstruct the

valuable infrastructure built up by the voluntary organisations too quickly.

For Diakonia it was always important to raise awareness about the work in the West Bank/Gaza and Israel and to engage in lobbying in Sweden. Two important groups visited the region in 1996. One was a group of 11 congregational representatives. After a two-week tour of the region they returned home to share what they had learnt with their local communities.

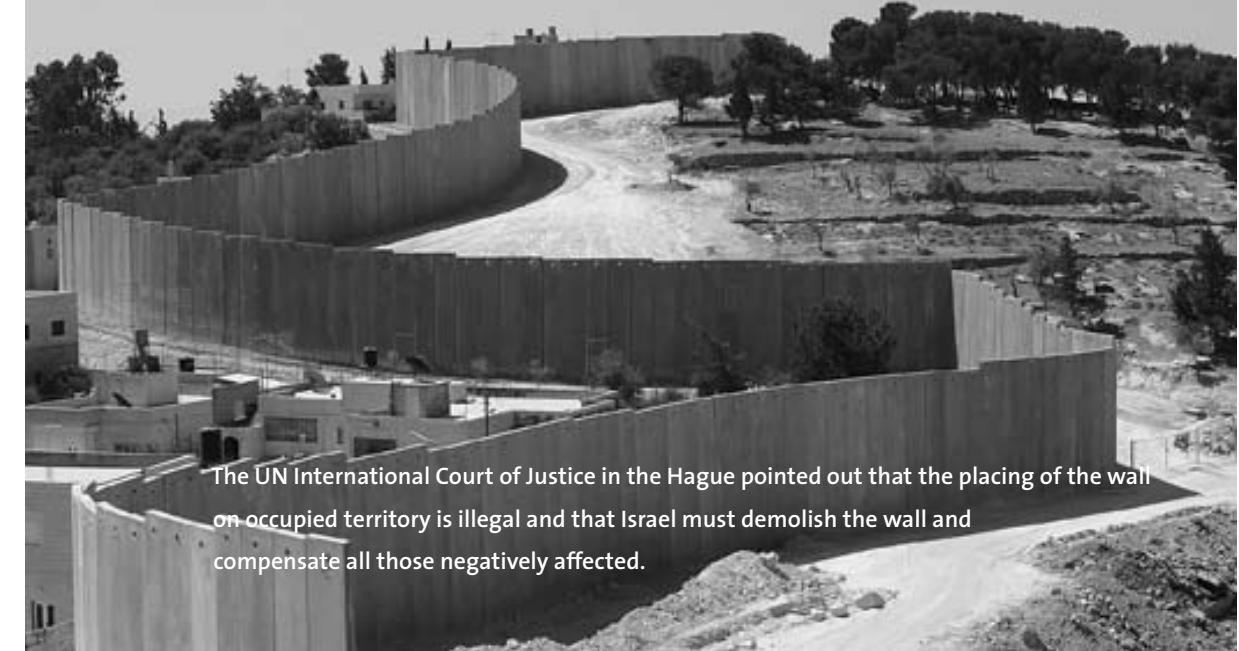
The other group was a delegation of parliamentarians and voluntary organisations from across Europe. They visited places worst affected by the fighting on the West Bank and in Gaza. Ten people from Sweden participated, including half of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Bo Forsberg from Diakonia. This group also aimed to spread information and to influence the political involvement of their countries in the region.

In Diakonia's annual report of 1998, it states that the Middle East region is characterised by tumultuous politics and a lack of democracy. These factors worsened the situation for marginalized groups and contributed to an expectation that the authorities and society at large should prioritise the needs of these groups. In order for these expectations to be met civil society needed to be

strengthened. It was therefore important that support be given to partners working with human rights and democracy.

The peace process resurrected in 1999 after a change of government in Israel was completely shattered on the 28 September 2000 when Ariel Sharon walked up the Temple Mount. His walk sparked off a new Palestinian uprising, sometimes called the al-Aqsa-uprising or the second Intifada. In less than two months 200 people were killed and over 5000 injured. In addition, thousands of people lost their homes and livelihoods.¹⁵⁷ On top of this, the situation of Palestinians became negatively influenced by US led anti-terror campaign following the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, and by the war in Iraq.

The Israeli policy of building settlements on occupied territory and illegally expropriating Palestinian land has been in place since the end of the war in 1967. New settlements have been built with good transport and communication links to Israeli cities ever since. Today (2005), the whole of Palestine is carved up by a network of roads and settlements that economically, socially and psychologically choke the Palestinian inhabitants. The Israeli organisation B'Tselem reported in 2004 that settlements controlled 42 percent of the land on the West Bank.¹⁵⁸



The UN International Court of Justice in the Hague pointed out that the placing of the wall on occupied territory is illegal and that Israel must demolish the wall and compensate all those negatively affected.

The Wall

In 2002, the Israeli government decided to build a security wall around the whole of the West Bank. The directive referred to it as "A wall to prevent motor vehicles from passing". Suicide bombers were to be prevented from entering Israel unchecked. When the decision was taken in Knesset its purpose was stated as being: "to improve and strengthen preparedness and the power to act to fight terrorism".¹⁵⁹

In the city of Qalqiliya the barrier consists of an eight metre high wall. In other places it is a military construction 60 to 100 metres wide, within which fruit and olive trees have

been torn up and houses destroyed, with trenches, electric fences and electronic sensors, barbed wire and watchtowers. On each side a 100-metre wide security zone has been established in which the Israeli army patrols.

Only 15 percent of the barrier follows the Green Line - the ceasefire line from 1949. Residents can only enter and leave through military posts, which are closed at night, and have to apply for permission to travel between their homes and their plantations. 16 000 farmers are affected.

875 000 Palestinians will be negatively affected by the construction. 93,000 people in 63 communities will be trapped between the wall and the green line or be completely surrounded by the wall.¹⁶⁰

On 9 July 2004, the UN International Court of Justice in The Hague issued an advisory statement on the Wall that Israel is building on occupied territory.

The court pointed out that the placing of the wall on occupied territory is illegal and that Israel in part must demolish the wall and in part compensate all those negatively affected. The court repeated that Israel's settlements on occupied territory are illegal.¹⁶¹

This new situation radically changed the context for the work supported by Diakonia in Palestine. Even the day-to-day work of our partners work had to be adapted to maintain a preparedness to respond to emergencies. The blockade of roads by the Israeli armed forces has made it much more difficult for partners to operate. Blockades made it difficult for personnel within the programme to get to work, to carry out necessary transportation and to protect themselves from the prevailing risks. Some of the ongoing work was adapted to provide support in the war situation, particularly the programmes supporting children traumatised by terrifying experiences of attacks and bombings. Despite all the political, economic and social turmoil and change, Diakonia's partners have strived to achieve the programme's objectives.¹⁶²

Internationally established humanitarian law

Israel, like all states, has not only the right but also the responsibility to defend itself and establish security for its citizens. International law must, however, be followed in doing so. In order to increase knowledge of and adherence to international humanitarian law in Israel and Palestine, Diakonia initiated a programme focusing on this theme in 2004. The programme is carried out together with the Israeli organisation the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACR) and the Palestinian organisation Al-Haq. The programme offers organisations and the general public training in humanitarian law. The Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem participates in the programme by mapping and reporting human rights abuses.

Diakonia's continuing support

Support for local organisations has continued, centring upon the Rehabilitation and CBR programmes. The constant objective has been to support the most vulnerable and weak by promoting and strengthening democracy and respect for human rights. By involving large parts of the communities concerned in carrying out the program, Diakonia has hoped to create knowledge and experience which will remain with people long after

the projects are completed.¹⁶³ A strategy has been developed to give disabled people the opportunity to participate in society and demand their rights. This methodology is based on disabled people being able to live and participate in community life on as equal terms as possible, with support from their families and neighbours. The projects have provided civil society organisations with tools to influence the structures of society and given people support to change their own situations whilst simultaneously strengthening democratic processes.

In 2000 the following overall programme objectives were adopted for Diakonia's work in Palestine:

1. To provide civil society groups with tools to enable them to influence the structures of society and thereby influence their own situation whilst simultaneously strengthening the democratic processes.
2. To strengthen civil society's ability to participate in and have influence over decision making processes, and work for legislation based on respect for the individual, with particular attention to marginalized groups.¹⁶³



One of the posters from the series Christian in the Middle East (See page 140)

Lobbying and public opinion in Sweden

Part of Diakonia's role in its very close cooperation with partner organisations has always been to create awareness in Sweden about their situation. Information work has therefore been carried out on a continual basis. Articles have been written for the denominational and general press, posters have been printed, slide shows have been put together and study visits for politicians, church leaders, decision makers and congregational/regional representatives have been arranged. Most recently a visit for parliamentarians from all the

Swedish political parties was arranged in spring 2005. sfca/Diakonia has considered itself to have a responsibility to participate in and influence Sweden's political stance on Israel/Palestine.

In Spring 2004, a campaign was initiated on the theme *For a just peace in the Middle East - End the occupation of Palestine*. Diakonia, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden and the Church of Sweden, amongst others, initiated the campaign.

The campaign materials assert that:

In order to achieve a solution to this long term and deadlocked conflict, both Israel and Palestine's right to exist as two independent states, having peace and security within internationally acknowledged borders must be recognized and guaranteed.

A just peace such as this can only be realised when international humanitarian law, human rights and international conventions are respected.

Bo Forsberg wrote in a press release:

Today, 700 roadblocks prevent Palestinian men and women from providing for their families. Aid is used to support the Palestinian population, which has become poorer as a result of Israel's occupation policies. The proportion of poor people has increased from 21 percent to 60 percent in the last three years. In total 1.9 million Palestinians live on less than 2.1 dollars a day.

It is important that Swedish foreign policy emphasises the importance of states taking their responsibilities and following the conventions that they have signed.¹⁶⁴

The hope is that increased awareness of the consequences of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinians will lead people to get involved in international issues. This is in turn necessary if a just peace is to become a reality.

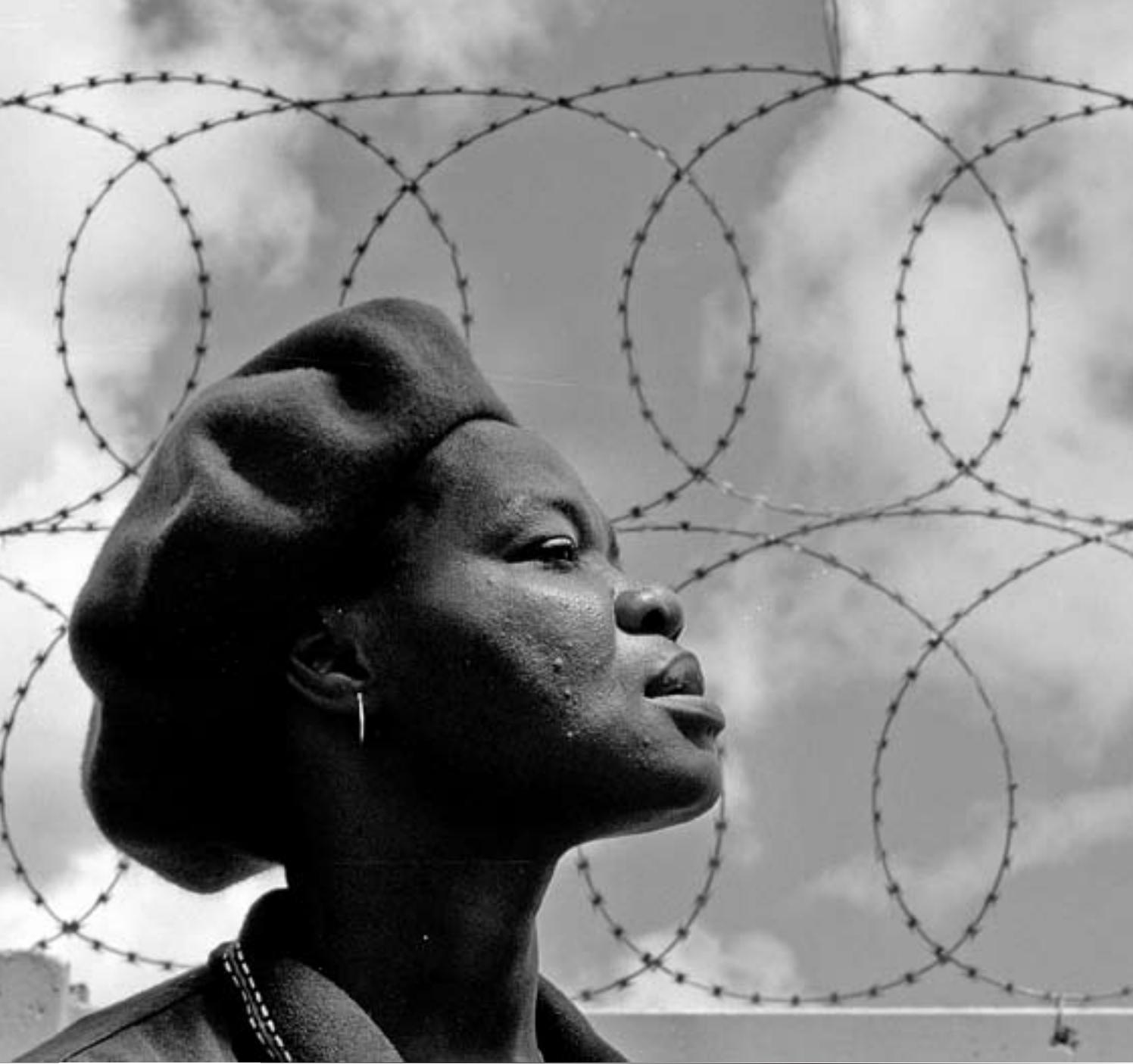
Conclusion

The challenge to "Help the victims of war in the Middle East" has followed sfca/Diakonia since 1967. Those affected remain refugees from war and people living on occupied territory. Their right to a dignified life has characterised both the support given and the awareness raising and lobby work that sfca/Diakonia has carried out in Sweden. sfca/Diakonia's position has always been both theologically and politically loaded.

sfca chose right from the start to support the physically disabled and those with learning difficulties, groups that are deeply vulnerable. This focus has remained over the years and grown into extensive engagement to support everything from village-based work to national health care interventions.

Help to the victims of war is still
Diakonia's mission in the Middle East.





CHAPTER 5

South Africa

ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2004 the white church minister and anti-apartheid stalwart Beyers Naudé was buried.

With this funeral here in the Aasvoëlkop Dutch Reformed Church, a circle is being completed. The man, who years ago walked here through a deep valley of rejection and great loneliness, has come back with his family and thousands of friends [among whom there were two of us representing Diakonia] - South Africans of all races and walks of life – to complete the earthly part of a remarkable life. Love, faith and integrity have triumphed.¹⁶⁵

For 34 years sfca/Diakonia has worked through close relationships with partners in South Africa. Beyers Naudé was one of these partners. It is apparent from documents and testimonies that Diakonia has had the privilege of supporting people and organisations that have played a central and important role in South Africa's process of transformation. From conversations with people involved, it is also clear that sfca/Diakonia's funding decisions were daring. The organisation recognised both the needs and that there were people in South Africa with the necessary capacity.

Perhaps stories about Beyers Naudé, Frank Chikane and Jotham Myaka can help us to understand the development process South Africa has gone through, which sfca/Diakonia has had the privilege of supporting.



This picture of Beyers Naudé was taken when he was General Secretary of the SACC.

Beyers Naudé

Beyers Naudé was born in 1915. His family were Afrikaners, highly conservative and strict in their religion. His father was a minister in the Calvinist tradition. Naudé trained as a minister and gained a position in the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1963 he was elected moderator of one of the regional synods.

A question that concerned him greatly was why South Africa was not going through the same changes as other countries in Africa in the 1960s, with liberation from colonial powers. But he was unable to share his thoughts in his church, as it

had taken a strongly pro-apartheid position, justifying this on Biblical grounds.¹⁶⁶ He studied the bible but found no such justification for racial segregation. "For me there was then no longer any choice, I had to stand up for what was right."¹⁶⁷

It was at this point that he came into contact with the ANC.¹⁶⁸ The question he asked himself was whether in the 48 years of the ANC's existence any white church had given support to the organisation and its aims, to the struggle for justice and freedom for the black majority. He said:

As far as I could see not one resolution had been taken by any white church in the struggle for justice. We must have misunderstood our faith and our witness to faith, as we lived in some kind of cocoon that we have spun around ourselves, warm and enclosed, where the outside world did not concern us; it's their problem. [Translation from Swedish]¹⁶⁹

In 1960 the World Council of Churches arranged a consultation in Cottesloe, South Africa. One of the many resolutions adopted related to church membership and stated that no one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the basis of their colour or race. The Dutch Reformed Church refused to adopt the resolution and thus quit their membership of the WCC.¹⁶⁹

However, some members of the church supported the wording of the resolution, amongst them Beyers Naudé. This group entered into discussions about the situation in the country together with members of other churches. These discussions led to the formation of the *Christian Institute of Southern Africa*, c1 in 1963.

Beyers Naudé was offered the post of director. He was accused of being a communist¹⁷⁰ and sacked from his post as minister.¹⁷¹ The Naudé family found their new spiritual home in a black church in Alexandra township, where his grave is now to be found.

God had displayed his supreme sense of humour when he chose this Afrikaner to stand up and declare apartheid wrong. God had appointed Naudé the midwife in the birth of South Africa's democracy. He gave the credibility of Christianity back to black people.¹⁷²

Olle Engström put Beyers Naudé and SFCA in contact with each other, after his visit to South Africa in 1971 (see page 52).

Attitudes to the South African government's apartheid policies were not only split in the churches in South Africa. In Sweden and on the SFCA Committee the denominations took differing positions. Three of these – SIBU, HU and SAM



Strong international protests are now, in effect, the only force that might trouble the government enough to take a softer and more just stance.

– had mission work in South Africa. Davidsson said⁹ that HU missionaries work with black congregations. They felt that: "If we protest against the regime we will be thrown out of the country. Better to keep quiet, then we can stay."

When South Africa appeared for the first time on the agenda, the minutes recorded:

Three denominations, SIBU, HU and SAM, have refrained from applying for grants from SFCA due to the sensitive

political situation in South Africa. With regard to support for new projects run by the Christian Institute, the work of the Institute should be carefully studied. The question of whether the member denominations have work that could be supported in a similar way should also be looked into. (1971 §92)

None the less, it was decided to allocate 10,000 crowns to C.I. It was, however, noted that Davidsson, HU and Sundbring, SAM, whilst not opposing the decision, did not participate in it. (1971 §92)

When SFCA received information via Church of Sweden Mission that the financial situation of the Institute had worsened and that they were in immediate need of further funds, Aglert paid out a further 10,000 crowns. It was heard that Beyers Naudé was to visit Scandinavia for 10 days. The minutes show a hope that if the members of the SFCA committee were able to meet him, decisions about grant allocations would become much easier to take. (1971 §118)

When the Committee met in November 1972, the issue was postponed once again, despite a new letter having arrived from Olle Engström in which he pleaded for grants for the important work. He pointed out that the free churches in Sweden had a moral duty to support these friends in the faith (1972 §105). The decision to allocate a

further grant of 10,000 crowns was not taken until February 1973. The grant was for roughly 300 women's groups that were being taught about nutrition, needlecrafts, farming, gardening and administration. Reading and writing campaigns were also included in the project.

In 1972 the South African president formed The Schlebusch Commission, in order to "investigate certain organisations".¹⁷³ In September 1973 the first reports of the investigation into representatives of the Christian Institute amongst others were published. SFCA paid an extra grant of \$2000 directly to the Institute to cover the significant additional costs caused by the trial.

At its meeting in October 1971, SFCC was informed about the situation that had arisen. The Council decided to prepare a statement to be given to South Africa's ambassador. It was also sent to the congregations of the member churches. SFCC encouraged SFCA to give a further \$2000 to the Christian Institute (1973 §149).

Excerpt from SFCC's statement:

As we approach Ecumenical Development Week SFCC wishes to focus the attention of the churches and the general public on the political persecution that certain churches and Christian organisations in South Africa are currently subject to. The freedom of movement of organi-



View of the township of Soweto

sations and individuals working for humane and just relations between the races are increasingly restricted. Strong international protests are now, in effect, the only force that might trouble the government enough to take a softer and more just stance towards these organisations and individuals.

[...] As the race issue will be a central theme for Ecumenical Development Week, the theme of which is

"Justice cannot wait", SFCC wish to suggest that the situation of amongst others the Christian Institute be the subject of prayer and public attention.¹⁷⁴

On 13 November 1973 the legal process, which lasted until 19 October 1977, began. The Christian Institute and 17 other organisations were banned¹⁷⁵. The personnel were also banned or arrested. For



Women are most commonly employed within the informal sector, whilst men operate within the formal sector, but are often unemployed.

Naudé, one of the banned, this meant that he was only allowed to speak to one person at a time. He was allowed neither to make statements nor to be quoted publicly. In addition Naudé was sentenced to 30 days in jail. In solidarity with his imprisoned comrades he declined to have his sentence commuted on payment of bail. His stay in jail was however short, only two hours. A local priest paid his fine.¹⁷⁶ As a result of being a banned organisation (Affected Organisation) the Institute was not permitted to receive financial support from outside the country.¹⁷⁷ With the banning of the Christian Institute, its work ceased. Contact between SFCA and Beyers Naudé also ceased.

In 1974 an all-Africa church conference was held in Zambia and Lars Franklin from SFCA participated. In his opening address the country's president, Kenneth Kaunda said: "The South African government is suffering from moral bankruptcy. We have seen people, who call themselves Christians, hold the bible in one hand and a pistol in the other. It is these people who are today responsible for human suffering the like of which this continent has not experienced since the days of the slave trade". [Translation from the Swedish]¹⁷⁸

SFCA's archives include a speech, translated to Swedish, written by Beyers Naudé in 1975. It

was probably smuggled out of the country and sent to partner organisations. Here is a small excerpt from this:

A glimpse in South Africa's future

[...] There appear to be two primary factors that will determine the nature and speed of future social change in South Africa. On the one hand the National Party, if it can and wants to respond positively to the demand for change that will lead to a just sharing of political power and wealth in the way demanded by black groups in South Africa. On the other hand one must take into account the wave of black people's hopes, wishes and demands. These are now supported and strengthened by pressure from surrounding countries and the world at large, and this will strengthen the black community's conviction that these changes must be carried out much more quickly than the white community is currently willing to admit. Is there still any hope that these conflicting goals and hopes can be brought together in such a way that comprehensive and fundamental changes can be introduced without violence and armed conflict? [Translation from Swedish]¹⁷⁹

News of the appalling massacre of school children in Soweto on June 16, 1976 spread quickly around the world. SFCA immediately decided to send financial assistance. This was sent via the World Council of Churches to the South African Council

of Churches (SACC). The money received by SACC at that time was used to start *The Asingeni Relief Fund*. The aim of the fund was to provide assistance for victims of both the Soweto uprising and other similar uprisings.

Peace Prize to Naudé

Together with Mouvement Social Lebanon, the Christian Institute and its director Beyers Naudé were in 1978 awarded the Peace Prize that had been instituted by the SFCA Committee (1978 §163) in May 1977. They received the prize for work for reconciliation and development. The award amounted to 25,000 crowns each. The motivation for giving the prize to the Christian Institute was:

Beyers Naudé has, since the middle of the 1960s, been one of the key leaders of resistance to the politics of apartheid in South Africa. Despite imprisonment and other repressive measures by the authorities, he has worked untiringly to achieve change and gain equality for all citizens of South Africa. (1978 §163)

SFCA received a hand written letter of thanks from Beyers Naudé, dated 24 July 1978. It had been sent with someone who had travelled to Europe. He

told how the South African press had published news about the prize. Whilst he hoped to be able to come to Stockholm to receive the prize, his passport had been taken from him.¹⁸⁰ He received neither a passport nor a visa to travel to Sweden, and Tore Bergman, an employee of the Church of Sweden Mission in South Africa, instead handed over the prize to him.¹⁸¹

Tore Bergman writes in a report to the SFCA Committee that whilst Naudé was not allowed to speak publicly he none-the-less invited the press in order to show them the cheque and the written motivation for the prize.¹⁸²

TV journalist Lennart Winblad was stationed in South Africa at the time. When Naudé was awarded SFCA's Peace Prize Winblad put together a documentary about him. As Naudé was banned, Winblad could not film an interview with him. Winblad did however ask Naudé to pray in front of the camera, as prayer was not forbidden and could be included in the documentary. "The reportage clearly shows that we followed South African law to the letter. Filming him praying was a compromise", said Winblad.¹⁸³



Loving Father, I thank Thee for this new day
A day of joy, of hope, of possibilities, of life
Despite so many restrictions and problems that so many of us in our land are facing
We thank you Oh Lord for your goodness and kindness towards us
Towards us as family, as Christians, as fellow citizens of our country.
Bless all those who strive for righteousness and justice and reconciliation
Liberate us from the forces of evil Oh Lord
Lead us into a new day of peace, of understanding and of living together as you intended us
In Christ name. Amen

SFCA's continued contacts with South Africa where in future channelled through the *South African Council of Churches*, SACC. As neither individual churches nor SACC were included in the banning, their work was able to continue, and they were able to have international contacts.

SFCA began its partnership with SACC in 1974 through a grant of 5,000 crowns for the training of pastors within the *African Independent Churches*. Similarly SFCA was able to channel money to the Institute for Race Relations and its Open School programme via SACC, money previously channelled through the Christian Institute.¹⁸⁴

In 1964 the Swedish government decided to introduce a grant for "humanitarian assistance to African refugees and national liberation movements". It was replaced by "The Committee on Humanitarian Assistance" in 1978, which also then covered Latinamerica.¹⁸⁵ In 1982 SFCA and its director Karl-Axel Elmquist were offered a seat on the committee. (1982 §104)

An application to Sida's Committee on Humanitarian Assistance from 1984 includes the following description of the situation in the country:

The terrible suffering caused by the repressive policy of apartheid has further worsened recently due to the declaration of a state of emergency in certain areas. As a result

there have been increased clashes between the police/military and the black population with 650 people killed and 10,000 arrested during the last year. Several thousands have been injured and many, not least young people, are now to stand trial.¹⁸⁶

In order to help families and individuals with the costs linked to someone being killed, injured, imprisoned or of legal assistance, SACC founded a national disaster fund (*Dependants Conference*). SFCA amongst others allocated money to this fund. As the situation was so difficult for many, funds could also be used for food distribution.¹⁸⁷

When Prime Minister Botha introduced a new constitution that meant that Coloureds and Asians would each have their own 'house' alongside the white people's 'house' in a Tri-cameral Parliament, opponents to apartheid united in a joint organisation called the *United Democratic Front*, UDF. In 1985, as the UDF grew in strength and fatal clashes took place between Zulus of the Inkatha movement and the ANC, the government announced a national state of emergency. This gave the military unlimited power. Knowledge of the situation in South Africa led the USA and many countries in Western Europe to introduce economic sanctions against South Africa. Sweden was one of the countries where many people be-



The apartheid regime forcibly moved the black population to so called home-lands where their lives were characterised by marginalisation and despair.

came actively involved in supporting these sanctions.

One issue that received much attention in the international media was the authorities' decision to forcibly remove people of the Mogopa tribe from the Holgat farm in February 1984. SACC actively participated in defending these people. When they failed to influence the implementation of the decision, land was bought for the people to move to. SFCA supported the project both by providing large grants and by channelling information to the media in Sweden. The fight for the right to move back was won in 1994, and was

the first land rights case that the new government had to take a position on.¹⁸⁸

Personnel based in the country

As SFCA's support grew, in tandem with the growing violence, it became necessary to have personnel based in South Africa. In 1983 Margaret Bäckman¹⁸⁹ came into contact with Hanne and Ulf Södahl, who then had been travelling in South Africa. During their time in the country they had made occasional visits to organisations supported by SFCA, including Open School and Meals

on Wheels. This contact resulted in the Södahls each taking on a volunteer post for SFCA in 1985. Officially SFCA was not able to have personnel in the country, so the posts were administered by Church of Sweden Mission, which was an organisation approved by the South African authorities. The Södahls moved to South Africa in April 1986. Officially their work place was in Port Elizabeth.

In a letter sent home to Bäckman, the Södahls wrote, "I think I am beginning to understand what you mean by embodying our solidarity. The word became flesh ... We are not Christ, but he is our role model!"¹⁹⁰

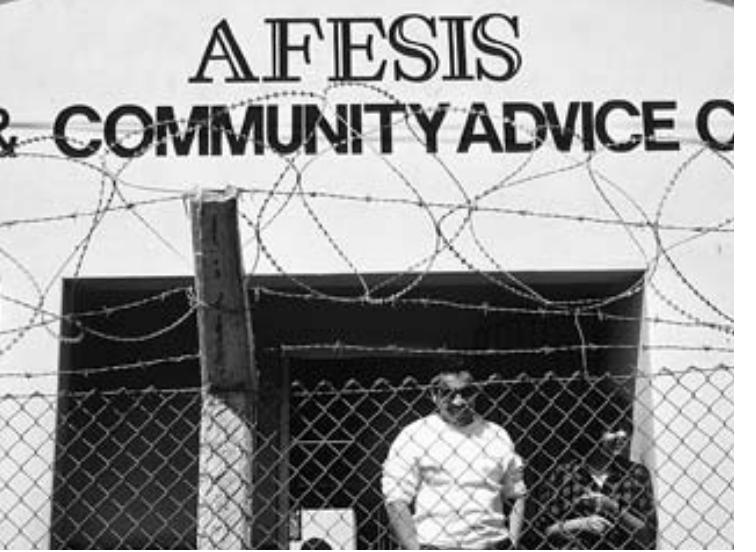
In another letter, the Södahls describe how complicated it was for SFCA's partner organisations to operate. As there was a state of emergency, no work could be carried out openly. Groups were often forced to meet in the evenings or at night. They could not afford to pay too much consideration to the risks, as time was short. The 'next in line' always had to be prepared to take over when someone was arrested. The most important work was to support awareness raising and the political education of the people. Despite all the difficulties, this education was carried out at full pace.¹⁹¹

[...] We had a one-hour talk with Beyers Naudé. We started to talk about the National Emergency Fund. He said that

the need for support for people affected in one way or another by the state of emergency is enormous. The money is channelled through the regional council of churches' Dependents Conference, which has gained a widened brief. Naudé said that he is deeply grateful for the money received so far, whilst at the same time the needs are so great that the fund will never be able to meet them to the full. The cost of bail is shooting through the roof. As there may be 20,000 people arrested (due to the state of emergency), legal aid uses a lot of money.

In contrast with other regions supported by SFCA, the documentation from the 1970s and 80s is very limited. It was dangerous to write openly about the support given to the various organisations as post was read and telephones tapped and the homes of activists were under constant threat of being searched.

Dela med magazine published an interview with one of these numerous activists. He worked at one of the many *Legal Resource Centres* supported by the SACC, amongst others. He and the others at the office lived in constant fear of being raided by the security police. They had all, once or several times, been detained under the state of emergency laws. He admitted that he was afraid, but that the struggle must go on.¹⁹² In another article a young student described how he had been



AFESIS – one of the many legal advice offices to receive support from SFCA.

brutally beaten by the police. "They can do what they like with us, but we have no intention of leaving our organisations. Treatment like this merely strengthens our conviction", he said.¹⁹³

As the situation was so difficult, correspondence between Bäckman and the Södahls had to happen via coded messages. Each partner organisation was given a code name. These were used in correspondence until 1991. If the Södahls home had been searched the code names would have hindered the police from identifying the recipients. The word 'sweets' was the cover name for 'money', and partners were given the names of various kinds of sweets. In one letter Södahl writes to Bäckman:

You should have said "You sweet tooth! Yes, I'll send Marabou's whole nut pistachio rum raisin truffle with cloudberry crisp"!

During a period in the late 1980s payments were even made from different Swedish bank accounts, people and addresses in order to prevent Diakonia from being identified as the source of grants provided. Södahls also describe how they kept all important papers under the bin bag in the kitchen cupboard, in the hope that no one would look there.

That the support was sensitive is confirmed by Karl-Axel Elmquist's story that one night in the late 1980s a break-in took place in Bäckman's room at the office in Älvsjö. Documents relating to work in South Africa were stolen. In order to protect the relevant organisations in South Africa the break-in was never reported to the police, something which Elmquist today says he regrets.¹⁹⁴

Frank Chikane

In 1983 another very important person enters the story of SFCA/Diakonia's cooperation in South Africa. His name is Frank Chikane. He was born in January 1951. His family were Christians, and a house church within the Apostolic Faith Mission was started up in his home.¹⁹⁵



Through the organisation Meals on Wheels poor elderly people could receive one meal a day.

The teaching which he and other black children received during the apartheid period (Bantu education) included nothing about the struggle for liberation which black people had fought against colonialism or about racist policies since the arrival of the first white settlers. Neither was there any information about the ANC. There was on the other hand a thorough description of how European settlers colonised the country.¹⁹⁶

At an early age Chikane started to ask the question of whether whites are rich because God loves them more than blacks. Could the whites defeat the blacks because God was on their side? If he was, could the oppressed pray to the same God that he should save them from their oppressors?¹⁹⁷

Chikane trained as a pastor and took his first post in 1976. His congregation was led by white missionaries who supported the apartheid regime. It was a difficult time for him. He describes for example that the in first church he worked in as a pastor he was told not to use the toilet in the office corridor, but to use the one in the cellar.¹⁹⁸ In 1981 he was excommunicated from his church. He was accused of being a communist as he had taken a public stance against the apartheid regime in the media. His family were ordered to leave their church house and given a deadline for moving out. Chikane was arrested before they found a new home. The family received no help from the congregation. Instead, a delegation of six men came and demanded that

the family move immediately. The family was instead helped by other Christians.¹⁹⁹

Through all of these degrading and humiliating personal experiences Chikane began to understand the meaning of Jesus' words about 'loving your enemies'. He questioned God's power and how God could allow people to treat him in this way. He also understood that "being the church in this world means that the church must stand against the dominating ideologies of power and choose the way of the cross".²⁰⁰

Chikane belonged to a group of theologians who reflected and exchanged experiences on the mission of the church. It was from conversations in this and other similar groups of theologians that the *Kairos Document*²⁰¹ took form. In 1981 these discussion groups were turned into an organisation, the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT), with Frank Chikane as director. The aim of the organisation was to give Christian South Africans theological tools with which to meet the ruling power in the struggle for a just society. It was felt that the established church had failed to provide such tools.²⁰²

In 1983 the first grant from sfca was given to this organisation. Thus began a partnership between sfca/Diakonia, ICT and Frank Chikane that was to last for many years.



Frank Chikane received Diakonia's Peace Prize in 1986. He is seen here together with his two sons Obakeng and Otili.

In a conversation with Frank Chikane in 2004²⁰³ he talked about this time. He said that the work of ICT was highly sensitive, as it aimed to support churches and activists within them, so that they could understand what they were working with in theological terms.²⁰⁴ ICT created a theological basis for debate about the system of apartheid. The work focused on conflict, how one participated in the conflict and which theological instruments were needed.

The *Kairos Document* described the societal system, calling it State Theology, whereby the state abused and oppressed people with bru-

tal violence, backed up by a church and a theology that said that it was the responsibility of the state to do so. There were other religions in South Africa too, but it was primarily the white Christian church that spoke of this responsibility. God was used and abused.

The *Kairos Document* developed thoughts around how Christians, in their pilgrimage towards God's kingdom, must push the devil aside and unite themselves with good and righteous forces. As it is impossible to reconcile God and the evil, the document was strongly critical towards the idea that reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressor can happen without the injustice also being fought.²⁰⁵

The work on all of these issues led to the conclusion that declared the apartheid system as a sin. When a system is concluded to be evil, sinful and illegal, then that system must be got rid of. And you have to be prepared to die in that struggle.²⁰⁶

The *Kairos Document* was not only to become important for Christians in South Africa. Frank Chikane became a member of the *Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*, which primarily consisted of Asian theologians. He says he gained a great deal from this fellowship.²⁰⁴ The document was translated into many languages, including Swedish. The text was also studied in

Sweden and gave many people a new understanding of the Christian mission.

The evangelical churches also scrutinised their own theology and actions in a document entitled *Evangelical witness*. The Swedish Alliance Mission translated the text in a publication called *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, which was distributed in the Swedish congregations.²⁰⁶

When I spoke with Frank Chikane in September 2004 about the partnership with Diakonia, he started by affirming that the relationship with Sweden and the other Nordic countries, particularly the churches there, was special. And he said:

I thank God that our struggle was never corrupted. This is important to remember and people must not forget it. Through our relationship with sfca/Diakonia we were able to receive support without fear of any agendas other than to support the achievement of the objectives we had formulated ourselves. Our actions were respected. There may at times have been some frustration on your part concerning some of the decisions that we took, but never any attempts to impose changes to our agenda. It is a kind of solidarity that truly support our struggle. In that relationship we were able to learn from each other.²⁰⁶

Chikane was also keen to say that there had been another aspect to the relationship. This related to

the way in which solidarity for the struggle of black people in South Africa was expressed in Sweden. It was important to keep Sweden informed about what was happening. The information was often used in press releases to the Swedish media. The boycott of South African produce was also strongly supported by active groups within civil society, including in the churches.

In 1986 Chikane was forced to go underground. Diakonia arranged for him and his family to come to Sweden. During his time in Sweden he travelled to London to deliberate with Thabo Mbeki, who spent part of his exile in England.²⁰⁶ But Chikane did not remain in Sweden. He decided to return home. He had realised that those who could not flee had started to question what would happen if everybody who could were to leave. "What will happen to us then, they cried. I was privileged, I was able to leave, I had friends and my name was well known – but what about all the other people who would never be able to leave. So I decided to return back home again, to be among those people", he said.²⁰⁶

In January 1987 Frank Chikane received Diakonia's Peace Prize (1986 §12). A telegram from Beyers Naudé states:

Please convey to Rev Frank Chikane the heartiest congratulations of the SACC as well as of me personally for the peace award he will be receiving on Jan 11. We regard him to be a worthy recipient of this prize which portrays to the whole world his commitment to justice and peace and the high price which he has already paid for his Christian concern and contribution to the struggle for a new and liberated South Africa where the ideals for which Rev Chikane is sacrificing his life will have been achieved.²⁰⁸

The prize was handed over at a service in Norrmalms Church, Stockholm, at which Chikane also preached. He said, amongst other things, that if faith in Jesus does not have an impact on this world with all its evil there must be something wrong with our creed. He told of the man who was responsible for torturing him during his prison stay. The man was a white member and elder in his own church. Before the torture began, this man had said to Chikane: "I know that you are a pastor in my church, but I have to do my job."²⁰⁹

Chikane continued to live in hiding for four months in 1987, receiving strong support from Diakonia throughout. It was during this period that he was called to take up the post of SACC General Secretary. When he was to be interviewed by the church leaders, he was taken by car to a secret place early in the morning. On the day

that the decision was made, the media announced the appointment. On that day he was to go to Desmond Tutu's house. "Then the police could arrest me there", he said. He saw the police driving in to the street, but Tutu was there with him and simply told them: "What do you want, go away". And they left.

As General Secretary for SACC, Chikane continued to keep close links with Diakonia. The fact that Diakonia was a small organisation made the contact more straightforward. "We spoke as friends and we had no difficulty in understanding each other." And he continued:

"People tend to say that the church in South Africa was wonderful. In reality it was a few prophetic voices that made the church in South Africa look wonderful. It was not the body of the church; the body was *dragged* along. If you look at the Kairos Document, the church leadership during those days had serious difficulties with what was said in the document. In the SACC too, there were those who had difficulties with the document. But none of them would admit that today. At the same time there were many in the SACC who gave their lives during that time."²⁰⁶

He described his time at SACC, when they hid people away to avoid being abused by the police. They were never able to speak about who was hidden or

where they were. At a critical moment in March 1988, Chikane called in representatives of the various churches to participate in a demonstration in Cape Town. Twenty-six of them turned up, "which was not a few!" All of them were arrested, he said, and later freed. "Today we know that not all of them wanted to participate, but they had no choice, they could not say no."

When all democratic movements were banned in 1977 the church was the only organisation left that was free to speak openly. But not even in church was it possible to name those arrested, as this was illegal. On the other hand it was not forbidden to pray to God and name those who had disappeared or been captured. The church became the voice of the people and at the same time targeted by the regime. It was during this difficult period 1987-1989 that Khotso House, the office building in Johannesburg where both SACC and the UDF amongst others had their premises, was bombed. SACC still has its offices in this building. During the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission²¹⁰ it emerged that the apartheid regime was responsible for the bombings. On a visit to the USA during this difficult period Chikane's bags were sprayed with poison and he was very seriously poisoned.

Diakonia provided a large amount of finan-

cial support during this time. Auditors continually reviewed the accounts and conducted financial audits.

Banning order lifted

In the end the pressure upon the apartheid regime became too great. On 2 February 1990, President de Klerk held the speech that totally changed politics in South Africa. He announced that the ANC, PAC, the South African Communist Party and a further 31 illegal organisations, including the Christian Institute, were no longer banned. He also announced that all political prisoners interned for non-violent activities were to be released. "The time for negotiations has arrived", he said.²¹¹ "At the National Party congress in Bloemfontein in 1990 Gerrit Viljoen, minister in the Nationalist government, said: "It was international sanctions that forced us to reverse the banning of the ANC and free Mandela."²¹²

The SACC received support from Diakonia for its work with the repatriation of those South Africans who were now able to return back home. 16,000 people returned in 1991 and 1992.²¹³

The peace negotiations that began were not easy. Several terrible massacres took place, and negotiations were broken off more than once.

The rising wave of violence in the country meant that the SACC once again had to concentrate on emergency support to areas hit by violence and get directly involved in peace work. On SACC's initiative a national Peace Accord was agreed between the major political actors and organisations in the country. Regional and local peace committees were formed with the aim of creating lasting peace in the country. Sadly, the Peace Accord failed to reduce the level of violence in the country, and a highly critical evaluation of the accord was made at SACC's annual conference in July 1993.²¹⁴

Chikane affirms that over the four years of negotiations the church was able to play a key role. It was then that the SACC started the ecumenical campaign 'Standing for the truth'. In concrete terms, the campaign aimed to gather the churches in prophetic action against the evil of apartheid and action for the God of truth, love and justice.²¹⁵ Diakonia provided major support to the campaign. Chikane concluded our conversation by saying:

I have to give you the story from 1992. There was deadlock in talks with the government. The ANC gave them an alternative and the government was supposed to respond to the ANC's demands by a certain date. Following this Mr de Klerk and Mr Mandela did not speak to each other for two months.

It was impossible to mistake the joy over the holding of the first free elections in April 1994.



[...] Being a Sowetan, you could feel that the people on the ground were preparing themselves for the final onslaught. If you make a deadline and don't meet it then the people understand. [...] And I went to Oom Bey²¹⁶ and said, "We have a problem because de Klerk is not going to meet those seven conditions, he'll only meet 2 of the 7 of them. Even if de Klerk tries he will only meet three. It's not possible to meet the other four."

[...] Oom Bey and I went to Mr Mandela and he was grateful for that. We went there and said to him "We have come here as part of the movement". We told him that we

had analysed the situation and that the worst crisis might come in the next 7 days or so. We said that the deadline for the negotiations is coming very close and it can't be met. Mr Mandela felt that de Klerk had to meet the demands, as they [the National Party] were the ones who had made the trouble. We told him what we thought, and he agreed that "de Klerk has no capacity to meet all these demands." We went on and said, "Can't you say – meet the three and we will talk about the other four. Show a sign of commitment." Mr Mandela said that "if de Klerk will agree then I am prepared to – but you have to tell him".

So we said that we were willing to go to de Klerk and put this to him. We flew to Cape Town the following day. When we arrived Mr de Klerk told us that Mr Mandela had called him. They had not talked for two months when he called! Mr de Klerk said "Thank you very much for talking to him. He had said that you have something to describe to me." It was very clear that he was also in trouble; he did not know how to deal with the issue. We put the proposal to him and he agreed. The announcement was made, the crises stopped and all went back to the negotiating table.

It was this role of intervening rather than mediating in the crisis that was so important; he decided to ring. We were not mediators but catalysts changing a situation, giving them the opportunity to do what they should. We pulled back and they solved their problems themselves. This story hasn't been published yet.²⁰⁶

He finished by saying, "Without support from amongst others Diakonia, we would not have been able to do this. All the church leaders visiting South Africa made us feel safe."

Jotham Myaka

A natural continuation of our story comes through Jotham Myaka, the son of a black farmer whose life also was shaped by the harshness of the apartheid regime. He was born in 1958. In 1936 a law

was passed forbidding black people from owning land. His parents were forced to hand over their land. Landless and poor, the family had no rights and no security. Jotham was no more than a few months old when the family was evicted from the place where they were living. And they were soon driven out of the next farm, as his father was not needed.

When Myaka was three years old they arrived at the farm in the little village of Muden, in Natal province, where he grew up. The village lay within the KwaZulu 'homeland', an area scattered in small pockets across the province. Times were hard and none of the children were permitted to go to school. They had to work for the white land-owner. Sometimes he came to their house at night and woke them all up to see which of the small children had grown big enough to start working. The children worked for periods of six months, but were not paid for their work.

Myaka's parents wanted him to go to school. When he was free from work he snuck away to school. Although it was well into the term when he arrived, he was allowed to start. The family home lay far from the actual farm and it was easy for Myaka to take a detour, without the farmer seeing him. "But one day he caught me", tells Jotham.²¹⁷ "He was furious and shouted at me



Jotham Myaka

called him to work amongst the poor in his home village. In his free time he was active in the movement for political liberation. He was many times subjected to the brutal violence of the police. It was apparent that there were informers and infiltrators at the university, both amongst the lecturers and the students. One of his essays was failed on the basis that he had used the word 'politics' in the text.

On completing his university studies in the 1980s, Myaka worked with rural development issues. In 1989 he resigned from his post to return home to Muden. Together with three women, he started to organise the struggle for the rights of black people and against the apartheid legislation. The organisation was called Opathe, the name of the farm belonging to the Lutheran church in Muden. As black people were not allowed to meet on land belonging to whites, all of the meetings were held under the trees at Opathe farm. Sometimes they could hold their meetings in one of the churches building, but then it was referred to as a meeting arranged by the church.

From the outset the difficulty was that there were no funds available for any work. Jotham Myaka had to use his own money. Together with his friends he wrote applications, which were sent to SACC and other organisations that they thought

that I was not to go to school and be taught a lot of rubbish that I would then pass on to others. He threatened to kill me if I left the farm again." As punishment he was forced to work for the whole year from four o'clock in the morning to eight in the evening.²¹⁸

Myaka also describes how after completing his school education he began to study at the university in Johannesburg. He felt that God had

might give them grants. They had no international contacts. All the applications were rejected. In the end there was only pocket money left. They prayed to God, saying that if he wanted to use them in this work then he needed to provide them with the resources to do so. He described how he became so stressed at this time that he ended up in hospital.

One day, he received a telephone call from one of his friends in Pietermaritzburg, who told him that he had met a person from Sweden, who might be able to give them money. This person had said that he wanted to know more about the work. "I prayed to God", said Myaka, "that he would help us, if it was his intention to meet with this organisation". It was 1990 and the Swede was Ulf Södahl, who then worked for Diakonia.

Myaka called him and they agreed to meet in Johannesburg. He lent money and throughout the journey prayed to God that the person he was to meet would be from a Christian organisation and would want to support the work.

Myaka presented the work and the future plans for Södahl, who was moving back to Sweden at the time. He promised to take the application with him, which he thought would be approved. He promised that his successors, Annika and Erik Lysén would go to Muden. They came and met un-

der a tree and read Psalm 127 together. The Lyséns handed over the first grant from Diakonia.

The next difficulty was to decide where to place the money. If they had opened a bank account in the organisation's name the police would have found out that they had received money from Sweden. Instead Myaka used his previous post at the University and claimed that the money had come from there, and was paid into an account in his own name.

In 1992 negotiations on the country's new constitution began. White farmers experienced this process as a threat. And the stronger Opathe grew, the harder the pressure from the white land owners got. For this reason, the Lyséns' visit meant a great deal to both Opathe and Myaka personally. The fact that Diakonia was a Christian organisation gave the blacks in Muden an extra sense of security, as they themselves were Christians.

In 1992 Opathe received another grant from Diakonia. The money enabled them to set up the planned resource centre for rural development, called the *Opathe Resource Center*. From the outset it was not a building, but a meeting place for those who wanted to participate in the work. The programme focused upon organising members, analysing the situation in the area and planning activities that would lead to changes in the liv-

ing conditions of the poor. Committees for development, farming and women's handicrafts were elected. The organisations' documents were stored in the church office.

Names mean a great deal in South African culture. This applies not only to the names of people but of organisations. In 1993 Opathe was given another name, Zibambeleni. It means, "Do it yourself" or "we rely on ourselves" and aimed to show the members that even if the organisation received external funding, it was they themselves that were to do the work. "I have to do something to contribute to development", was many people's comment on hearing the name.

In political terms, one party ruled KwaZulu – Inkatha and its leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Without support from the government in Pretoria Buthelezi would not have gained the position of power that he had.²¹⁹ The presence of Diakonia personnel became important for security within Zibambeleni.

It was the close relation to Diakonia that made Zibambeleni so strong. Jotham Myaka said "We never felt that the Swedes considered themselves better than us because they had money. Instead they always asked what we needed and how they could assist us. In those days we had no computers and we were not very good at writing

applications. When they visited we always went on field trips, the members of the organisation were able to meet with them, as well as local government officials and decision-makers."²¹⁷

Jotham – den rättslöse farmarbetarens son [– the son of a farm worker denied justice] was the title of a book with ten life portraits of people that Annika and Erik Lysén met during their years in South Africa. Two of these people, Jotham Myaka and Walter Menze, were invited to Sweden in 1993, partly to participate in the Göteborg Book Fair. In an interview on the situation in South Africa they said: "Don't be too optimistic. At the local level much of the apartheid system still remains. If the promise to hold elections next year is broken there will be chaos."²²⁰



The aim of Zibambeleni's programme was to organise poor farm workers, offer education and thus create conditions conducive to a democratic South Africa. When the time had come for the first free elections in South Africa, Zibambeleni provided voter education for the residents of Muden, who were now to vote for the first time in their lives.

In Diakonia's application to Sida for a grant from the Committee on Humanitarian Assistance 1991/92, the following is said about the grant for voter education:

Currently all the organisations Diakonia supports are involved in the important work of educating people for the coming election. Thanks to the fact that the organisations have been working with community education for a long time, it has been natural for them to integrate voter education into their ordinary work.

As they are already in place at local and regional level, they can directly reach out to the people who most need information.

A characteristic feature of the organisations voter education is that it not only focuses on the technical aspects of how to vote but also looks at wider issues, such as what democracy means, what responsibilities one has as citizen, how citizen can lobby on issues in a democracy etc.²²¹

In preparation for the vote, 200,000 election officials needed to be trained in order to reach the 20 million black voters.²²²

It was natural to follow up the training with work on land redistribution and other democratic rights. The new government passed legislation for a land redistribution programme and Muden was chosen as a pilot project in its region. It was thanks to the fact that Zibambeleni had already been working to organise poor, black farm workers and had also started work directed at women, (a precondition for the grant) that they were given this task. Muden was allocated a large state grant to use for the purchase of land, which was then reallocated by Zibambeleni.

The law on land redistribution determined that there must be a willing buyer and a willing seller for the land. Black people had the right to get the land back that whites had once confiscated and blacks also had the right to buy the land they lived on. Land redistribution in Muden began with 600 of 2,000 poor families receiving a piece of land each. The poorest of the poor were prioritised and received land first.

Naturally, white farmers were extremely worried about what the law would mean for them. For a long time, Myaka had been cooperating well with one of the white farmers, Janet Channing.



Through the organisation Zibambeleni this single parent breadwinner has gained the opportunity to improve her garden and through it increase her income and self-confidence.

She got involved and did everything she could to create an environment conducive for meetings and dialogue between whites and blacks. It was still no easy process. White farmers in the area had also organised themselves in order to protect their rights.

In 1996, Zibambeleni moved into their own premises with a functioning office. A committee of white and black farmers was formed and a five year plan was developed in order to develop the region in terms of farming, small businesses and eco-tourism.²²³ The annual report for 1997 states that thanks to its work, the majority of the community had great confidence in Zibambeleni, which was useful and important when conflicts

arose. Public participation in society was also advanced by the activities. Both of these factors are important in work with the land reform.²²⁴

When I met Jotham Myaka in September 2004, he told me that Zibambeleni had up to that point helped around 10,000 people to gain access to their own land. This meant that black women also owned land, which previously had been impossible, both legally and according to traditional practice (common law). He felt that land redistribution had become part of the work of reconciliation in South Africa.²¹⁷

The micro-credit scheme has been an important part of the work from the outset. From the bank, started with Myaka's own money and

Diakonia's grant, members have been able to borrow a sum of money to be used for profit generating activities, such as buying plants to produce fruit or vegetables for sale. Interest rates for deposits and loans have been the same. Since 1994, when they gained the right to own land, this programme has contributed to a total transformation in the living conditions of many families. Training on financial issues has been linked to this programme.

Legal advice is another important part of the work. As unemployment in the whole region has been and remains high, people have limited awareness of their rights. Training on these issues is given regularly and 'bare-foot lawyers' give advice to people who have been fired, assaulted or not received their pension.

A new country to build

In 1990 The period of optimism and joy that followed Mandela's release and the unbanning of the ANC and other political organisations was turned into pessimism and hopelessness by the rising violence. It was felt that a 'third force' of right wing extremists and police officers, bent on destroying the work for a peaceful solution to the negotiations, must lie behind such brutal violence at a

time of so much hope. The Inkatha movement²²⁵ in the province of Natal seemed prepared to use all means possible to strengthen their position in the run up to the coming election. It was claimed that the police disarmed ANC supporters just before Inkatha fighters attacked.²²⁶ During this period, grants from Diakonia to the Natal Crisis Fund which worked closely with those affected, were important (1994 §74).

During these first years of the 1990s, the continuing support from Diakonia to the many local legal advice bureaus was important. Legal issues ranged from forced removals, evictions, unemployment, pensions, police assaults and rape to illegal detention. One of many white lawyers involved in the struggle for independence was Howard Varney, of the LRC in Durban, in the severely affected province of Natal. He said amongst other things that "the process of transformation is slow and we must not forget that the apartheid system in essence still prevails".²²⁶

As apartheid legislation was repealed, the situation of Diakonia's partner organisations also changed. Education for democracy wasn't just about everyone having the right to vote once every third years, to a large extent it was about issues such as housing, schools, , access to local government and electricity and water, transport, lit-

eracy, employment, social security for the elderly, and the equal rights of all before the law. These were issues running through the work of most of Diakonia's partners.

The new openness made it possible for Diakonia, at the end of 1991, to arrange a conference attended by all of the partner organisations. It was an important opportunity for everyone to meet and draw up guidelines for how they would like the national development.²²⁷ Experience exchange between partners was to become an important part of Diakonia's continuing support.

As previously banned organisations were now allowed to work in the country, South African NGOs gained a new role.

Opportunities were created for more constructive work for democracy and for just development of society. Resistance could be exchanged for more positive action. This is noticeable in all of the organisations Diakonia supports without exception. They have taken upon themselves the task of building capacity amongst black people in order to build the basis for a democratic society. This is a process that can take many forms - leadership training, organising, legal advice, local projects in which the responsibility is taken by residents themselves, libraries and media projects.

Thus, training and taking responsibility form the core of the work of the partners. The importance of this type of training can only be understood in the light of apartheid's

oppression, which never allowed black people to take initiative or responsibility for community development.²²⁸

The Lyséns wrote in the annual report for 1992-1993 that in the democratic future, the country's NGOs would gain decisive influence through their work to get people at grass roots level involved in development at all levels of society. They reflected that a mistake made in other African countries had been that structures for civil society participation and influence at local and regional level had not been built up.²²⁹

This library in Cradock is one of many to have received support from Diakonia.



The first free elections

Finally, free elections could be announced. They lasted for four days in April 1994. Prior to the elections Diakonia's partner organisations had received grants to carry out much needed voter education programmes. The elections were carried out under the watch of many international election observers. 60 Swedes participated, amongst others Magnus Walan and Ulf Södahl of Diakonia (1993 §16A).

A letter from one of the many partners in South Africa described the election day. It is said that it was an extremely special day in South Africa: the first day of the new South Africa, or to look at it from another perspective, the last day of the old South Africa, the first free elections since 1652.²³⁰

The ANC won the election with 62 percent of the votes. Nelson Mandela commented on the election results, saying:

Some in ANC were disappointed that we did not cross the two-thirds threshold, but I was not one of them. In fact I was relieved; had we won two-thirds of the vote and been able to write a constitution unfettered by input from others, people would argue that we had created an ANC constitution, not a South African constitution. I wanted a true government of national unity.²³¹

Diakonia sent a letter of congratulations by fax to all the partners:

It is with a feeling of joy that we congratulate you today as free elections are at last under way and a new South Africa is born.

We share with you in the exhilaration and enthusiasm of this historic moment and pray that God will continue to be with you in the days that lie ahead and the forming of a true democracy.

With greetings from all of us

*Karl-Axel Elmquist, Margaret Bäckman*²³²

A large number of those who gained senior positions in the new government had participated in the struggle for freedom.²³³ In the many conversations I had in September 2004 with representatives of the various churches and organisations, the problem of them having their friends in government and in central posts within government departments was often brought up. How critical can you be of your friends, was a question often repeated. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in a public statement in 1994 that the task of the church has always been to have a critical stance towards those in power, that the church can never become part of any political party. The SACC's role is to be "in critical solidarity with government".²³⁴

The churches' work with reconciliation, healing and development was to become important even during this time of change. Diakonia's grant to SACC, in addition to being designated towards the work with women, was for its programme of democracy education and its department for communication. The target groups of the programme were employees and lay people within churches, denominations, other Christian groups and the media.²³⁵

Diakonia also provided support to *The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa*, TEASA, an ecumenical network of around 70 churches and denominations, having around 3 million members.²³⁶ These churches had not been active in the resistance and lacked awareness of democratic rights and responsibilities but decided now to also participate in the building of democracy. The training programme "Faith and Politics", run by TEASA for church leaders became important as these could in turn pass on the learning and the importance of engaging with the new democracy to their members.²³⁷

The TRC

When the new government took over it posed itself the question: "What do we do with the huge guilt of the past, the thousands of victims who for decades were forced to live through such in-



Some of the 20 million votes cast are being counted. The ANC won the election with 62 percent of the votes.

comprehensible suffering and with the unknown number of assailants who made themselves guilty of extreme violations of human rights?" The response was to set up the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, the TRC.²³⁸

In the period from 7 February 1996 to 31 July 1998 over 31 000 victims came forward and told their stories. They met the perpetrators. 8000 applications for amnesty were handled. Many of Diakonia's partners participated actively in this work through informing their members about the commission and encouraging victims to step forward. PACSA was one of these organisations. On 3 December 1988, armed men under the command



In the village of Trust
Feed the son of one of
those murdered meets
a woman who survived.
To the question of how
one can forgive they
answered: "We cannot
forgive – it is God who
forgives, but he helps us
to do it. It is the way we
have to go to promote
peace, reconciliation and
healing."

of Brian Mitchell arrived in the village of Trust Feed, where PACSA were active, to eliminate suspected UDF-supporters. It turned into a massacre in which 11 people were killed. During the TRC hearings the villagers had the opportunity to tell their story and meet Brian Mitchell. The meeting led to reconciliation with the major perpetrator of the massacre.²³⁸ To the question of how one can forgive they answered: "We cannot forgive - it is God who forgives, but he helps us to do it. It is the way we have to go to promote peace, reconciliation and healing."²³⁹

Just over a year into the TRC process, Beyers Naudé asked to appear before the Commission. His testimony was: "I have not done enough." And he continued: "We pastors, who should have been the conscience of the nation, failed to prevent the brutality that human imagination was able to conceive."²⁴⁰

The process of reconciliation in South Africa was closely bound up with the TRC. But for the victims of the apartheid system to forgive and be reconciled with their attackers, there must be compensation for their suffering. One aspect of the op-

pression was that the majority of the population had been forced to live outside of a fully functional society, both socially and economically.²⁴¹

New development cooperation agreements with Sweden

In February 1995, Nelson Mandela and Ingvar Carlsson [the former Swedish prime minister] signed an agreement on development cooperation for the period 1 July 1995 – 31 December 1998. The aim of the partnership was to strengthen democratic development and promote social and economic equity in South Africa. Diakonia's part in this agreement related to programmes in the areas of democracy, human rights, education and culture.²⁴²

A concrete need to strengthen and deepen the understanding of development and democracy work amongst partners became all the more apparent. It was therefore decided that from 1996 work would focus on the following themes: policy, capacity building and theology. Policy issues were in the first place focused upon economic justice.²⁴³

In the spring of 1996 Sida began discussing how their extensive support for the area of democracy and human rights could be made easier to manage. Gradually the idea of allowing some larger Swedish organisations to act as interme-

diaries between the embassy and South African NGOs took shape. Diakonia was one of the organisations that might be able function as such an intermediary. In the discussions with Sida, Diakonia had taken a positive stance to such an arrangement. Diakonia took over financing of a number of South African organisations, previously supported directly by Sida.²⁴⁴

When the agreement between Sida and Diakonia was signed in 1997, it concerned financial support for the democracy-building programme for South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique. The annual budget for the region increased from 5 million crowns to 20 million crowns. With this increase in support Diakonia was able to strengthen existing partners and sign agreements with new partners. The challenge was to form a programme through which poor and marginalized groups could be encouraged, through local organisations, to take initiative and themselves contribute to improving their living conditions both socially and economically.²⁴⁵

Leif Newman²⁴⁶ described how experience of supporting these new partners was very mixed. Cooperation is always built upon donor and recipient organisations know each others working culture. Creating functioning new relationships proved far from easy.

When Sida, from 1999 onwards decided to cut its funding for support to NGOs in South Africa, Diakonia was forced to reprioritise support both thematically and geographically. Conflict resolution in the KwaZulu Natal province, the economic justice programme in the Eastern Cape province and capacity building became the three new main areas of work. In addition, support for organisations working with democratic values and local democracy continued.²⁴⁷

In 1999 a conference was held with Diakonia's partners at which they looked at questions of reconciliation, justice and democratic values from a theological perspective. It was easy to see that the church's role had been very clear during the apartheid period, but that discussions must be deepened in regard to the church's role now that democracy had been achieved. When Diakonia's Board visited South Africa in 2002 a theological conference was arranged to which partners were invited along with the sister churches of the Diakonia denominations in Sweden. The discussion held was important for the continuing work with the development of Diakonia's new constitution.

Both applications and reports on the support from the late 90's and onwards focus on this often frustrating work to change the situation of the

poor. It was also then that the UN's member countries had adopted the Millennium Goals, to halve poverty in the world by the year 2015. During the apartheid period the government was the enemy accused of all the injustice and responsible for all the violence. Now when poverty, poor education, housing shortages and inherited attitudes including amongst other things a strong and widespread culture of violence, was on the agenda, it was everyone's democratic responsibility to participate in the work of transformation. The situation was also completely different in that many of the strong leaders of the liberation movement were no longer able to get involved at local level, as they held top positions in the new administration.²⁴⁸

Economic Justice

In order for it to be possible for the poorest of the poor to be involved in influencing society's development, certain basic needs must be met. If needs such as food for the day, health care and basic education are not met it is difficult for people to get involved in society. Diakonia took the position that work for poverty reduction should primarily focus upon the causes of poverty, rather than its symptoms. Thus priority was given to organising and education.



Street theatre is often a way of creating awareness about important issues in society. A group from the organisation Open School is seen here. Unfortunately we don't know the theme of the piece.

The majority of South Africa's population support themselves within the often romanticised informal sector. The difficulty with this is that people active in this sector seldom participate in economic planning and lack infrastructure and institutions. Women are most commonly employed within the informal sector, whilst men operate within the formal sector, but are often unemployed.²⁴⁹

It is clear from Diakonia's programme documents that much of the support has gone and goes to organisations that work to strengthen the abili-

ty of marginalized groups to take initiative. These programmes have been important in the fight against poverty and inequality. In 1999 a project for social and economic justice was initiated. The aim of the programme was to increase organisational capacity. Diakonia supports an economic justice network for the Fellowship of Councils of Churches in Eastern and Southern Africa, FOC-CISA.

Increased gender equality

When Diakonia presented South African women, in its "At the well" exhibition (of 1992) the words "Black and female - doubly oppressed" were used. Such was the situation of black women. There were only a few women leaders in the top echelons of the struggle against apartheid, also in the organisations that from the beginning received support from SFCA and Diakonia. (This is illustrated in this chapter, which presents three men). On the other hand there were strong women's organisations standing on the barricades. The women were also important in enabling everyday life to function in the home and the family, with food and care of children and the elderly. The women often had to bear the heavy burden as a consequence of deaths and disappearances. In the presentations made by partners about their work post 1994, it is clear that they increasingly focused upon programmes to strengthen women's empowerment and participation

Two representatives for South Africa participated in the gender conference that Diakonia arranged in Chiang Mai in 1995. Their reports to the conference described amongst other things the difficult situation, not least economically, of poor women. Many of them had a large families to support. The majority of partners had programmes to

create income-generating activities. Some form of training was often included in these programmes. Several organisations provided day care centres so that mothers could work. In 1994 SACC had set up work to develop gender awareness amongst men and women within the member churches.²⁵⁰

Violence towards women and wife battery has been and is a big problem in South Africa. It has most often been seen as an internal family problem. The causes of violence against women can be many. It is assumed that one of the most common is that men feel themselves to be victims in the prevailing culture of violence and play out their frustration through violence against women.

HIV & Aids

The first time HIV and Aids were brought up as an issue at Diakonia head office was in 1990. In *Dela Med* magazine 3-4/92 there was a long article on the situation of HIV and Aids in Thailand and in the papers sent out for Diakonia's Board meeting in September 1993 there was an annex concerning a "regional programme of support for preventative Aids work in South America"²⁵¹. Although South Africa too was hard hit by the disease, it was not until 1999 that it was named in any of Diakonia's applications. But then the texts were both long and rich in content.

In the strategic plan for 2003 HIV and Aids was described as a human tragedy. It was no longer possible to speak about development efforts without including the question of HIV and Aids. It was estimated that 20-25 percent of the population of 40 million were HIV positive. In 2004, it was reported that 36 percent of the adult population of KwaZulu Natal were infected. Even if the infection existed across all categories of adults in the country, the poor have been hardest hit. The cultural environment had meant that people had not dared to speak about the illness. Fear of being harassed and subject to violence had made people unwilling to find out their HIV status. The low status of women meant that they did not even dare to discuss the use of condoms or the risk of infection with their partner. Despite fighting the spread of the infection being seen as a high priority on the national agenda, not much has been done.

Another important contributory factor to the large number of infected is lack of education. There are still so many myths about HIV and Aids, how the infection is spread and how one can be cured of it. Diakonia therefore supports a strong and forthright education campaign in order to raise people's awareness about the problem and get them involved in solving the problem. In this public mobilisation is critical.²⁵²

Moss Nthla, General Secretary of TEASA, considers the church today to have two big challenges. One is to support those that are HIV positive. The



Phindile Scott, 12 years, with little brother Thulani. They buried their mother 14 days before this photo was taken.
"I didn't get the HIV infection, but my little brother did."

other is to work with the 95 percent of children under 15 who are not HIV positive.²⁵³

Three phases of transformation

Transformation in South Africa has gone through three phases, says Molefe Tsele, General Secretary of SACC²⁵⁴. The first was when international awareness and opposition to the apartheid system grew strongly. It happened through international organisations such as the WCC. He felt that on their own they could never have changed the country.

The second phase started with the Kairos Document. Conversations around the document mobilised people to verbalise the problems. The Christian Institute's work was running and the "Standing for the truth" campaign was carried out.

The third phase was the four years of change in the early 1990s and the time of the TRC. "The challenge then was that we had to participate ourselves in the building of the new South Africa. This challenge was directed at both individuals as well as the church", said Tsele.

"And now we are approaching a fourth phase", continued Tsele. "It is a challenge for the African continent, but it is also global. Today the problems are global. We are talking about ongoing armed conflicts, HIV & AIDS, human rights. The agenda is

of the issues economic justice. The challenge we are facing is to mobilise people at the grass-roots-level in politics and on issues of economic justice."

Awareness raising and lobbying in Sweden

Throughout the years, much attention in Sweden has been given to the situation in South Africa. In addition to all the church and political delegations that travelled there, the visit of the Swedish song group Fjedur came to mean a great deal. They travelled to South Africa in 1978 on behalf of Church of Sweden Mission. In addition to singing themselves, they collected a large number of songs that were sung in the struggle.

The Amandla-songs²⁵⁵, as they were called, were translated and arranged and for many years in the 1980s and 1990s they were regularly sung by choirs, in church services and other contexts. These songs contributed to the strong commitment to the South African liberation movement in Sweden.

Frank Chikane's impression that it was a small number of people that led the liberation struggle within the churches can also apply to Sweden. In most congregations, as in society at large, these people were there, keeping justice in the world, and therefore including in South Africa, on the agenda.

SFCA/Diakonia has, over the years, also been heavily involved in spreading information and awareness about South Africa. Many partners have visited Sweden in order to travel around and share their stories.

In the run up to Christmas 1981, SFCA ordered hand made candles from a Methodist church in Soweto. The production of candles, with the motto "Let there be light", was a way for the congregation to give unemployed people a small income. Through letters and an article in *Dela med* magazine²⁵⁶ people were encouraged to actively support the campaign "Spread light through Swedish Free Church Aid".

The big campaigns of recent years against the sale of the JAS Gripen fighter jet aircraft, on the HIV and AIDS situation and on South Africa's right to sell cheap anti-retrovirals are some examples of the issues that still mobilises interest and action for the country. In 2000, 11 pastors participated in a study visit to South Africa.

Conclusion

The Christian hope and faith in every persons equal worth gave people in the churches inspiration and courage to play an important and decisive

role in the struggle for freedom. Christ's call to action was the basis for the work of many partner organisations. Faith and the church provided a sense of confidence in the work to mobilise people. This expressed itself in everything from the church providing individuals and groups with a physical place to hide or to meet, to the church never being banned during the harsh years of the 1980s.

Experiences and stories from South Africa teach us the great importance and power that people organising and mobilising has in the work to change unjust and oppressive structures in society. They also highlight the strategic importance of international solidarity and development assistance. The support to civil society organisations in South Africa was undoubtedly a deciding factor in bringing about the fall of the apartheid system. These experiences also remind us of the decisive importance that Swedish people's movements had in the democratisation of Sweden in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. This is the inheritance and tradition that Diakonia, as an organisation with its roots in the free church popular movement, has.

The challenge for work in South Africa is now to create a democratic culture based upon human rights, which can grow strong and overcome the hard trials that democracy is facing today.



CHAPTER 6

El Salvador

"FOR ME, DIAKONIA APPEARS LIKE Simon in the story about the crucifixion of Jesus. In the same way that Simon helped Jesus to bear the cross, Diakonia and Sweden have helped the Salvadorian people to bear their suffering and their restoration to justice", so said Baptist pastor Miguel Tomas Castro, speaking of the many years of partnership.²⁵⁸

There is not enough space in this book to describe all the work that sfca /Diakonia has supported in Latin America over the years. Instead, El Salvador, the small country in Central America, will act as an example.



It started in South America

The situations of the various Latin American countries are very reminiscent of one another. Developments from the Spanish and Portuguese colonisations of the 1500s, via independence in the 1800s up until today have brought with them a highly unjust distribution of the continents resources. In many countries land is owned and controlled by just a few families. The majority of the population have been downtrodden into a life of poverty without even their most basic human rights being met. The military has total control in their respective countries and in addition there are many local paramilitary groups, in which men are often forced to participate.

The first time any support was given to South America was when an earthquake hit Peru in 1970. The SFCA Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) decided to grant 10,000 crowns to the Red Cross (1970 §50). No extension of that grant was given.

The next grant, on the other hand, was a major one and stretched over a period of five years. During the National Conference of All Christians in Göteborg, 1972, Per-Arne Aglert met the priest Vincente Mejia from Colombia. Mejia described his plans for a clearance project in the slums of Medellin. The result of this meeting was that

SFCA entered into a partnership (1973 §148).

In 1974 Aglert travelled to South America. He visited the rubbish dump project. As the cooperation had become so extensive, it was decided to open a local office for SFCA (1974 §70). It was also then that SFCA gained its Spanish name, *Acción Ecuménica Sueca* (Swedish ecumenical action).

As Merja was a visionary and an inspirational person, it became natural to put the title "*Jesus at the rubbish dump*" on the slide show presentation that was put together to present the project in Sweden. Sadly the partnership had to be broken off in 1977 due to problems in the project leadership. Over half a million crowns were paid back to Sida (1978/79 §141).

Sida made the following comments when the project was terminated:

[...] Development assistance of this sort – as we are fully aware – is very difficult and it would be impossible to completely avoid making any mistaken priorities. This experience may however, be valuable for your organisations in the continuing development work in Latin America.²⁵⁹

Chile

On 11 September 1973 a coup d'état took place in Chile and President Salvador Allende was thrown out of power. The military junta, under the lead-



Demonstrations have become a way for poor farmers to speak out against the unjust distribution of land ownership. Here the issue is the sale of land in Bolivia to international investors.

ership of Augusto Pinochet, disregarded the democratic constitution and carried out attacks on political opponents on a massive scale.

The military coup in Chile caused SFCC to act. Its Executive Committee announced a day of prayer and giving for Chile's refugees. They also replied to a call from the World Council of Churches for support to a burnt down Methodist Church (1973 §141).

Anna-Karin Gauding²⁶⁰ wrote the following on the subject:

The churches in Chile reacted immediately to the violence that broke out in September 1973. As early as the start of October of the same year the so called 'Peace Committee'

was formed led by the Lutheran Pastor Helmut Franz. The Peace Committee, which was ecumenically constituted, was banned by the military in December 1975. *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, the Catholic Church's human rights organisation, replaced it just one month later in January 1976.²⁶¹

Per-Arne Aglert also visited Chile on his journey in 1974 and at that point initiated cooperation with the Christian aid organisation *Ayuda Cristiana Evangélica* (ACE) and its work to support political prisoners, refugees and their families. The contacts had been made in the spring, when the Swedish Chile Solidarity Committee had asked SFCA to send in an application to Sida for support to ACE, something that was then taken on board. (1974 §44)



During the years of dictatorship in Chile the printing of posters with political messages was forbidden. Sewing wall-hangings was however permitted. SFCA bought a number for a touring exhibition on the struggle for freedom.

In addition to supporting local organisations, SFCA also took up the role of being a lobby organisation in relation to Swedish politicians. Per-Arne Aglert had regular and close contact with then Prime Minister [at that time] Olof Palme, amongst other things about increasing the Swedish quota for Chilean refugees (1975 §98).

As the need for support to South America grew so quickly it became necessary for those responsible at the office in Stockholm to get help in preparing project proposals. Lars Franklin contacted Anna-Karin Gauding for this task. She was active in the Swedish Chile Solidarity Committee and was considered to have the necessary information about the situation. In 1976 Gauding was employed as a volunteer at the office in Ecuador.⁵²

Karl-Axel Elmquist described that the starting point for the work of SFCA work was to give support to work in all of the countries under dictatorship.²⁶² The support was given to churches and other organisation who protected and gave legal support to vulnerable groups. In addition to the people who decided to flee, either internally or by leaving the country, those who participated in human rights groups were also persecuted.

The large that SFCA received from Sida for this work were categorised as "disaster relief" or were sometimes called "the humanitarian relief to

Latin America". The description "disaster relief" was considered to be justified in that the social, economic and political situation on the continent could in several regards be characterised as one long drawn out disaster. "Humanitarian aid" meant primarily support for political prisoners, refugees and others persecuted on the basis of their political views and activities.

In 1976, the Swedish parliament *legislated a particular funding post for humanitarian assistance to Latin America*²⁶³ to be managed by a specially appointed committee. A similar fund had existed for grants for work in South Africa since 1964. SFCA received large sums from this fund. From 1982 SFCA and its director Karl-Axel Elmquist were members of the committee (1982 §104).

Anders Kompass²⁶⁴ described⁴⁴ (16/6-05):

The committee on humanitarian assistance was incredibly important for us. There were committed people with experience from South Africa on the committee. That helped us a great deal. It wasn't hard for them to take risks, to stand up against military dictators and repressive governments, against violence. It was probably necessary that there had been such a deep involvement in South Africa previously. So South Africa has probably helped us a great deal. There was both a broad political commitment and a commitment amongst ordinary people in Sweden.

In 1978 the Committee decided on the following direction for the work in Latin America:

Support for groups working for human rights,
Support for refugee committees and refugee projects,
Support for aid and development projects. (1978/79 §21)

Employment creation projects were to be offered to those who, for political reasons, were unemployed and persecuted. For those forced to leave their home country, assistance was to be offered on the Latin American continent in the first place and in the second place assistance would be provided to flee to Sweden (1978/79 §21). For those who chose to flee to Sweden, there was a receiving organisation as SFCC had at this time set up a committee for immigrant and refugee projects.

Central America

During his visit in 1976, Per-Arne Aglert travelled to Guatemala. The purpose of his visit was most probably to meet church representatives to discuss how support could be given following the terrible earthquake that had hit the region that year. 40 cities, including Guatemala City, had been destroyed totally or in part. 25,000 dead, 300,000 homeless and 30,000 orphans were figures

estimated. A regional protestant organisation received the major disaster relief support from SFCA (1976 §36).

In 1976 the first contacts with El Salvador were made. The Baptist Union of Sweden's Mission Secretary Erik Rudén had met the Salvadorian pastor Roger Velasques Valle. A slum sanitation and reconstruction project had been started in the area neighbouring his church (*First Baptist Church* in San Salvador) after the earthquake had forced people to evacuate (1977/78 §59). Support was given for three years and the final report states that 62 houses were built (1977/78 §142), creating totally new living conditions for the slum residents. "The support we received then was charity", said Baptist pastor Carlos Sanchez, "the people themselves had no influence."²⁶⁵

There is an interesting section in the minutes in which Per-Arne Aglert gave information from his visit to South America. He described the huge need for help in for example Nicaragua due to the increasingly severe political situation there. When Aglert suggested an extra fundraising effort for Nicaragua, the Committee decided that priority should be given to the ongoing work in India, but that secondary priority would be given to grants for Nicaragua. If this was the case SFCA should endeavour to get matching funds required

for the Sida grant from some other organisation. In the same passage it stated "Per-Arne Aglert may raise awareness about the emergency situation in Nicaragua through public speaking and in writing" (1978/79 §28).

The Churches role

As a Christian development agency it was natural for SFCA/Diakonia to support the churches and ecumenical groups that were struggling against the prevailing oppression. The following text is taken from the application sent to Sida in 1969:

For large groups within the Catholic Church, work for human rights is a major part of the gospel message of justice. This insight has strengthened over recent years in connection with the severe and general repression in Latin America. Serving God for these Christians means working for justice, which means that they are often persecuted. SFCA wishes to support these and similar groups, through its Latin America programme.²⁶⁶

In the prevailing political climate, the message from the Second Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellin, Colombia in 1968 (see page 22) had had a powerful effect in groups fighting against the abuse of power and poverty. The mes-



As a Christian development agency it was natural for SFCA/Diakonia to support the churches and ecumenical groups that were struggling against the prevailing oppression. Here a group of people celebrating worship together is seen.

sage from Medellin was that God does not want people to live in poverty²⁶⁷ "The time for talking is over, the hour for action has come."²⁶⁸ This message from Medellin reached out to the people, and from this a popular religious movement grew, which came to be known as *Liberation Theology*. Existing farmer's and other workers' organisations were supported in their struggle for justice by this message.

Locally, so called 'base groups', *comunidades eclesiásticas de base*, consisting of women and men

who studied the bible from the context of their own reality were organised. "Base groups were the yeast in their communities", said John Cortina. "When the Christians were strengthened, the whole community was strengthened." Lay people often led base groups: simple women and men from society. The awareness of the situation in their own country developed at grassroots level in these groups. Together people started to work for change. The words of the bible gave hope: "It was like rain from the heavens, that would give a harvest".²⁶⁹

As the base groups revealed crimes against human rights, they became a threat to those in power. Both political and conservative church leaders began to accuse these Christians of being communists and did everything they could to frighten the population about the consequences of communism. The horrific time of persecution, disappearances and death had begun. Political violence and repression increased. After a terrible massacre in which many students were murdered on 30 July 1975 in the cathedral in San Salvador, the Catholic Church began work to support relatives and work for human rights²⁷⁰. For this group it was important to use legal means to defend the poor and stand against the violence. The focus was on the victims.

It was to this people's church and its work for human rights, that SFCA gave its support. Quote from a Sida application 1980:

Over the last decades in Latin America a people's church has grown which functions as an instrument for critique of social injustices and crimes against human rights. It is a church which identifies itself with the masses and which has become a gathering point for relatives and friends of prisoners, disappeared and murdered. A church which has become an expression of the people's needs. This church is very real presence in El Salvador and Guatemala.²⁷¹

For SFCA it became important to participate in dialogue with the Latin American churches. In 1978, Per-Arne Aglert therefore participated in the conference in Mexico, at which the Latin American Council of Churches, (*Conferencia Latinoamérica Iglesias, CLAI*) was formed (1978/79 §8).

Archbishop Oscar Romero

On 22 February 1977 a new Archbishop was installed in El Salvador. His name was Oscar Romero. The reason he was chosen was that the Vatican considered him to be traditional and not provocative and that he was not active within Liberation Theology. But when his close friend, the priest Rutilio Grande, was murdered on 12 March 1977 due to his struggle against injustice, Romero's life changed completely. He tried to find a lawyer willing to prosecute the murder case, but when he couldn't find a lawyer with the courage to do it he gave the task to a Jesuit priest²⁶⁹.

Romero took the side of the poor and showed it concretely by moving from the Archbishop's beautiful house to a very simple home close to the cancer hospital *La Divina Provedencia*. His preaching at both mass and on radio broadcasts became a driving force in the struggle of the people.

Oscar Romero quickly realised that the church could play a very important role in the struggle against abuse of power and against poverty. In 1978, he called together an ecumenical group, comprised of Catholics and Protestants and presented his proposal for an organisation for humanitarian work. In September 1979 an ecumenical aid Committee, *Comité Ecuménica de Ayuda Humanitaria, CEAH*, was formed to support the victims of violence. Its most important task was to plan a programme for an expected rise in the number refugees, as the political violence was growing. Many churches became places of shelter for persecuted and homeless people.²⁷² In 1980 SFCA supported this organisation through grants from Sida's humanitarian assistance fund (1979/80 §306). The organisation later changed its name to Diaconia El Salvador.

In their travel report, Per-Arne Aglert and Anders Kompass wrote:

The church functions as an instrument for critique, it identifies itself with the masses and has become a gathering point for relatives and friends of the prisoners, disappeared and murdered. Archbishop Oscar Romero was an important person in this work. Timid and softly spoken privately, his prophetic denunciation of the dictatorship and the terror became the people's only defence. His



Oscar Romero became a symbol of the church as an instrument of critique. The church that identified itself with the masses.



In March 1980 Per-Arne Aglert and Anders Kompass visited Oscar Romero.

Sunday sermons drew thousands of people. Overall the church in El Salvador has become an expression of the people's needs! It is a sign that gives hope!²⁷³

Peace Prize

SFCA had come into contact with Archbishop Oscar Romero through the organisation CEAH. His fearless and tireless work for human rights led the Committee, in December 1979, to decide to award him the Peace Prize (1979 §223). He expressed his appreciation of the prize, which he was sadly prevented from receiving in Sweden, in a letter.²⁷³

Per-Arne Aglert and Anders Kompass from Sweden were in attendance when Romero received the prize during High Mass on 9 March 1980, in the cathedral in San Salvador. Anders Kompass described how nine coffins of murdered and mutilated students stood at the altar.

It was an ordinary Sunday mass. The cathedral was full of poor people, farm workers, and catechists who had come from right across the country. The students' families were there too. There was no one from the middle class - it really was the a peoples mass. The Archbishop spoke against the violence. It was awesome. [...] We were able to spend a whole day with Oscar Romero in his home there by the cancer clinic. We saw then this humble, simple priest,

whom we understood lived so close to his congregation. He was so honest. He was of course chosen because he was so conservative. But the Holy Spirit moved and that meant that he grew. But I think that he understood even then that he would be forced to sacrifice his own life. That was what we felt.⁴⁴

On 20 March 1980 Romero wrote the following in a thank you letter to Per-Arne Aglert:

Dear Arne Aglert, Swedish Free Church Aid,

Receive my very deepest and warmest thanks for the award [Swedish Free Church Aid's Peace Prize] and for your presence at the ceremony on 9 March (1980). I pray that you would receive this greeting of thankfulness as an expression of the Christian hope of the Salvadorian people, which spreads its light over the road to justice and peace. The award strengthens a shepherd who strives to identify himself with the people's longing for justice. I will always remember this and have it in my prayers.

Once again, receive my sincerest greetings and my reverence and admiration.

Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero²⁷³

On 24 March 1980 Oscar Romero was murdered. A single shot from a sniper hit him straight in the heart as he began the communion at the hospital church next to his home. "His fearless and

courageous defence of the persecuted and oppressed made him an uncomfortable critic of the cruelty of the regime", wrote *Dela med* magazine in 1980²⁷⁴. Even if Romero was killed, his message lives on and his picture can be seen in so many places in the country.

New Regional Office

The growing violence created an increased need for a presence in the region. The Committee therefore decided, in the spring of 1980, to open a regional office in Central America. Due to the harsh political climate it was decided to place the office in Costa Rica (1980 §22). Anders Kompass and Per and Anki Sundelin were the first to be sent out to work in the region. It was not until 1994 that the office could move to San Salvador in El Salvador, where it remains today (year 2005).

SFCA's largest support to El Salvador went to the ecumenical organisation CEAH. Its work was highly politically sensitive as it related to support for victims of political violence. The money went to the purchase of basic medical equipment, medicines, food and clothes in 140 villages and to transport and medical care for refugees (1979/80 §306). After the peace treaty, the Catholic Church pulled out and the organisation was shut down,



In October 1986 San Salvador was hit by an earthquake that destroyed parts of the city centre. With financial support from Diakonia, Diaconia (El Salvador) was immediately able to start emergency relief work for those affected. This picture is from Immanuel Baptist church, where family aid parcels were packed for homeless in the area.

"the ecumenical petrol ran out", said pastor Miguel Tomas Castro.²⁵⁸

A story is told about Henrik Ramel, Swedish ambassador in Guatemala, being given the task of looking into CEAH as an organisation, in preparation for a funding decision by Sida. He travelled to El Salvador and visited both the defence and foreign ministers and presented SFCA's application. When news about these visits came out it hit

CEAH hard. They strongly questioned the Swedish agency's judgement, as information about their work was so sensitive. Several of the organisation's leaders therefore decided to leave their posts.²⁷⁵

Over time a trusting relationship developed between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida and SFCA. In 1981, director Karl-Axel Elmquist was invited to attend discussions at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. They said that they were prepared to increase their support to El Salvador and channel it via Sida to SFCA (1981 §87).

It became also important to create closer contacts with the churches in the war torn countries of Central America. SFCA therefore decided to arrange official visits for groups of church leaders. The first visit took place in 1982 and was arranged jointly with the Church of Sweden (1982 §28). An in-depth report was written following the visit, and a number of measures were agreed upon. In addition to increased financial support generally, support was to be given to theological work, as well as to giving Swedish theologians the opportunity to study the work on location. It was also decided to try and influence the USA's general military and economic policies towards Latin America, and to influence the Swedish government to increase development assistance to Central America (1983 §157).

Swedish assistance to El Salvador grew over the 1980s at pace with the war, and SFCA/Diakonia was one of the major actors. Many felt that the work had become far too politicised but SFCA/Diakonia argued that the difficult situation of the people forced a continual reassessment of the positions taken. In an application to the Peace Lottery [Fredsslotteriet] in 1985 Diakonia wrote:

In the practical work for human rights, Diakonia's work has principally developed into support for the church and other groups that have acted to oppose the lack of respect for human rights shown by the military and the regime. At the same time Diakonia has consciously chosen to cooperate with organisations that have argued for conflict resolution through negotiation instead of military means.²⁷⁶

From applications to Sida and from Sida's own evaluation, it is clear that no proper audits of the allocated funds could be made. Gabriella Lindholm, who at the time worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, said that the entire cooperation was built upon complete trust.²⁷⁷

I had the privilege of visiting El Salvador in September 2005 and met previous and current partners to listen to their stories.²⁷⁸ They all spoke of 1980 as a horrific year. 17,000 people are thought to have been murdered that year. The vio-



Foreign support can never replace the efforts and struggle of oppressed people themselves. We must therefore show respect for their independence and support but not steer their work.

lence created fear and many people chose to flee their villages. *The Social Department of the office of the Archbishop* and the ecumenical organisation *Diakonia* opened a refugee camp for internal refugees and operated humanitarian aid work such as health care, employment creation projects and education.

The highly uncertain situation in El Salvador forced SFCA to write the following in its application to Sida in 1980:

In Central America the civil war in El Salvador is reaching a critical point. This has meant, amongst other things, that 100,000 people have been forced to flee their homes and are now directed to a highly precarious environment in camps both in El Salvador and neighbouring countries. This year's application does not include any projects for El Salvador. In our assessment the situation there is so fluid that it is today impossible to predict the development of events and needs for more than a year in advance.²⁷⁹

It also states:

The situation in Latin America

Over the years that SFCA has had humanitarian programmes in Latin America, the political and social situation on the continent has changed and consequently, so has the direction of our programme. In the beginning the programme was purely a refugee programme. Gradually it expanded to include the defence of human rights, in a limited sense. From 1980 onwards our support for human rights work has widened to include human rights in a broader sense. SFCA has during this period come to be known as a serious and dependable donor agency for human rights work. Furthermore, SFCA is in practice the only institution supporting human rights in the broader sense in Latin America and Sweden.

The projects included in the programme are intended to support various popular movements and the organisations' work to change the reality in which they live. Foreign support can never replace oppressed people's own efforts and struggle. We must therefore show respect for their independence and support but not steer their work. Consequently, we strive to avoid the creation of paternalistic or existentialist forms of support.

Oscar Pérez emphasised this when he described cooperation with SFCA/Diakonia. The shape of the needs shifted over time. He felt that there were three key words running through the partnership; ecumenism, solidarity and institution

building. "We felt like we shared our struggle with Diakonia, who were our voice in Sweden. The Swedish people heard about our situation."²⁸⁰

The strive for peace

"There were no signs of peace from when the office opened in 1980 until the summer of 1983 when I left (to work at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs). The war just got worse and worse. We focused upon supporting internal refugees, persecuted people and work for human rights", tells Anders Kompass.²⁸¹ When Lars Franklin took over from Kompass they often discussed how they couldn't just sit and wait for the military and political leaders to come to negotiations. They got the support of Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas. The Archbishop was in contact both with the military and FMLN (Fronten Farabundo Martí for national liberation) and on his initiative these groups agreed to the suggestion to meet.

"The Archbishop played a major role in the struggle for peace. In 1984 we took the initiative to break the myth that the fighting parties couldn't meet", says Maria Julia Hernandez, who at the time worked at *the Social Department of the Archbishops Office*. On 15 October a group of people met. The close relations with Sweden meant that both



Diakonia supported the reconstruction of the village and its infrastructure.

Anders Kompass and the Swedish Ambassador in Mexico were included in the discussion group.

It was during these peace talks that the Tenancingo initiative developed. The suggestion was to create a practical means for people to be able to return to their small hometowns and to help them with the work of reconstruction. In this way the various actors would demonstrate that they accepted people's right to come back and live in peace.

Edin Martinez, from the organisation *Fundasal*, confirmed that it was an important initiative. In 1986, top military officials and the guerrillas jointly decided to offer around 50 refugee fami-

lies the opportunity to return to their town, Tenancingo. No military presence would be there. Diakonia, in partnership with the Olof Palme International Center and Church of Sweden Aid, supported the reconstruction of the village and its infrastructure. The military however broke their agreement and sent armed troops into the area. The project is described in the following terms in the text of the Committee's decision:

In addition to the aid elements of the project, it can be seen as a test of the potential for international development assistance work to contribute to joint agreements to

improve the situation of internal refugees and others affected by civil war (1985 §84).

When Swedish Radio Aid carried out the *Refugee 86* fundraising campaign Diakonia applied for funds for El Salvador, amongst other places, with the words:

It is necessary for national and international organisations working in El Salvador to develop a broad and long-term perspective for work with returning refugees. A long term perspective not least because the issue of security for refugees will require an international presence and monitoring for a long time to come (1987 §101).

After one year, the returnees could celebrate the reconstruction and rejoice over all that they had achieved during the year. But the project could not be implemented in full. "It was hard to create a free zone in the middle of a country at war", reflected Manuel Sevilla, director of *Fundasal* at the time.²⁸¹

In May 1986 the five Central American presidents met for discussions on peace and cooperation. The meeting was held in the village of Esquipúlas in Guatemala. They met again in August 1987 and signed the agreement which has come to be called *Esquipúlas II - an action plan for a stable and lasting*

peace in Central America.²⁸² The Arias Plan (named after President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica) created the opportunity for refugees across the whole of Central America to return to their respective home countries. In 1991 Diakonia's Board reaffirmed its support for keeping the peace initiatives alive, for example through focusing international attention on the issue (1991 §129).

Time and again reports and applications have asserted that the focus of Diakonia's work in Central America was support for churches' and other humanitarian organisations' work among people afflicted by war or repression. The choice of organisations to support was important. In the polarised situation that prevailed Diakonia aimed to support organisations that strove to carry out independent work and to be a counterforce to the USA's strong support of the regimes and thus the oppression.

Over the years churches and other humanitarian organisations had taken an increasingly long-term perspective to their work. From pure emergency relief they had moved on to enabling people to organise in order to find solutions to their problems themselves. Public education projects, the training of promoters and leaders and experience exchange were key concepts. This development received strong support from Diakonia.

One example of the shared perspective and close link that existed between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida and SFCA was the fund that Sida allocated to SFCA. The fund, managed by SFCA personnel in Central America, enabled rapid decisions to be taken on support for strategic interventions for peace and human rights. Important initiatives concerning the whole region could also receive grants from this fund. In Sida's own evaluation this fund was described as something that neither Sida, nor the Ministry for Foreign Affairs nor the UN could direct the use of.²⁸³

The Salvadorian Baptist Church took the initiative to start small scale but important work to provide protection for young people who were at risk of being conscripted into the army and to support those who had fled conscription. Diakonia supported the project from 1988 (1989 §20.1).

Each year the Salvadorian army has to recruit 1 000–15 000 new soldiers in order to retain its force of 56,000 men. The number of deserters, dead and injured as a consequence of the war is very high. As the number of volunteers registering for military service is negligible, the army has to conscript people in order to fill the gaps in its ranks.²⁸⁴

Peace Treaty

On 16 January 1992 the fighting parties signed a cease-fire agreement. The signing took place in Chapultepec, Mexico in the presence of UN and many international observers, including Swedish. The agreement was to come into force on 1 February and thus end twelve years of civil war. The war had caused untold suffering. It had divided families and orphaned tens of thousands of children. Thousands of people bore injuries, 75,000 people lost their lives and at least one million were forced into exile or to become internal refugees.

The terms of the peace treaty were to be fulfilled by both parties. The agreement prescribed that the guerrillas would disarm by 31 October 1992. Other important points were:

A new civil police force was to be established; the military was to reduce its forces by half to around 31,000 soldiers and all special commandos were to be disbanded. The guerrilla soldiers, estimated to be about 8,000, were to be integrated into society. Grave crimes against human rights and massacres were to be investigated and those responsible punished. It was also decided to modernise the judicial system. One point also said that socio-economic measures were to be taken.²⁸⁵

"The time following the peace treaty was a time of



In conflict zones such as Colombia, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guatemala, mapping and documenting incidents of abuse are important tasks. The photo is taken in the local authority offices in Solola, Guatemala.

hope", said Maria Julia Hernandez. "Over a period of six months, crimes against human rights were to be investigated and a truth commission was to present the results. But the material was far too extensive, time stretched out and it was decided only to publicise the names of 40 members of the military who were guilty of grave crimes against human rights. After this, parliament was to legislate on the basis of the commissions proposals."²⁸⁶

"On 15 March 1993 the final proposals of the truth commission were presented. The President then asked for amnesty for all crimes. On 20 March Parliament voted in an amnesty law that meant freedom from punishment for all. With this the entire content of the peace negotiations was reduced to nothing", continued Hernandez.

John Sobrino felt that the difficulty was that the parties never reconciled. "Reconciliation can't take place if amnesty prevents justice from being done. If judgement is not passed, no reconciliation can take place. And to have a culture of peace reconciliation must take place." Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro said that the military considered themselves to have done the right thing, and continued "If I've done everything right, I have nothing to regret". "The victims that demand justice are still our hope", said Maria Silva Guillén of FESPAD.²⁷⁸

The situation in El Salvador can in many ways be compared to South Africa. But in terms of the peace treaty and the ability of those affected to testify before a truth commission the situations are completely different. In El Salvador the truth com-



Tens of thousands of families returned to their places of origin or to nearby areas. Divided families and villages was to be reconciled.

mission has still had no public hearings, whilst in South Africa this has taken place (see page 193).

Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro felt that the difficulty with peace was that people in El Salvador didn't know what a culture of peace was. They had never lived in peace. On top of this the social and economic problems that caused the war remained. Democracy was to be built and no one knew how long that would take.²⁷⁸

The decision on amnesty created great anxiety about the future. Violence and crime were still widespread and were a constant threat to the fragile peace process. One fear that Diakonia's personnel often heard their partners express was that the world would forget El Salvador.

Peace meant an increase in needs. Soldiers needed to be integrated into society and people disabled by the war needed rehabilitation. Infrastructure needed to be built up. Tens of thousands of families returned to their places of origin or to nearby areas. Divided families and villages needed to be reconciled. A new political leadership needed to be trained. Great demands were placed on the government to fulfil its social responsibilities. It was therefore important that churches, NGOs and people's movements participated in the peace and democratisation process that was to last until the elections in 1994.²⁸⁷

One aspect of the peace treaty concerned land. It was decided that no one could own more than 245 hectares of land. Everything above that was to be bought by the state in order to be allocated to the poor.

"When peace was agreed in 1992, globalisation was a fact and the international market had also entered into our arena", said Oscar Perez.²⁸⁸ The neo-liberal government made land available to foreign industries and large areas were declared "free-trade zones".

The war completely changed the role of the churches in El Salvador and with it Diakonia's ability to work in partnership with churches and ecumenical organisations. Many churches took party political stances. Divisions between and within various churches were part of the process of change that the Salvadorian society was going through. In the new situation it became important for Diakonia to renew its guidelines for future partner relations.

In the HUM application 93/94 important criteria were given for organisations to receive future support. In the turbulent and sensitive situation prevailing in the country it was important to take the people as the starting point and to inspire them to active participation. Furthermore all of the work should strive to concretely express the fundamen-

tal Christian values of restoration, justice and reconciliation in actions. Opportunities to build relationships should be sought, so that people would gain the opportunity to show respect for those with different ways of thinking, as well as authorities and for political and economic groups in society.

Work to improve quality was carried out, based primarily on internal processes in partner organisations through which they showed themselves willing to evaluate and improve their work.

Two years after the peace treaty the first election was announced. By then a civil police force had been created in the country. Despite the absence of war people still lived in a culture of violence. Diakonia gave major support to a basic voter education programme. One major problem was that 300,000 voters did not receive their voting cards in time for the election.²⁸⁸ The ARENA party won the parliamentary election with almost 50 percent of the seats. The guerrilla movement FMLN had been turned into a political party and won 25 percent. FMLN on the other hand won in many of the local elections.

The Sida applications for 94/95 and 95/96 present the priorities that Diakonia had for work in El Salvador after the peace treaty. The basis of the programme was work for reconciliation in the

form of interventions to build democracy through training and organising primarily amongst returnees and internal refugees. Training focused on issues such as human rights, in which the documentation of abuses was important. Income generating projects and projects for health and environmental care were also important as they influenced peoples' living conditions (1994 §108). For this aim Diakonia could begin cooperating with the local organisations already in place, many of which had been active in the refugee camps.

When El Salvador was struck by a severe earthquake in 2001, it was apparent that the leaders of the country could not manage the necessary relief effort. The aid that came to the country was politicised. The importance of Diakonia's close co-operation with local organisations - organisations that enabled qualitative participation of the people themselves - then became clear. The organisations have also worked a great deal on leadership development at local, district and regional level.

In this way Diakonia has continued to support work to build peace, with support for the development of democracy and human rights at local level. Previously marginalized groups were encouraged to participate so that they could advocate their concerns and issues themselves. The newly formed organisations, which were often

comprised of former guerrilla soldiers, started a network for local development. This network, *La Red*, became a driving force in both the theoretical debate and in the implementation of development initiatives. The work was so successful that in 2000 the President invited the network to participate in the formulation of a national strategy for local development.

The following description of Central America can be found in Diakonia's strategic plan:

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the poorest to have their voices heard as today they find themselves even further from those that have power. It is also more difficult for them to keep themselves informed. Only a small part of the population of Central America have access to daily media in order to keep themselves informed and even fewer have access to the internet. The national governments have increasing difficulty in steering national economic policy as the state of the economy depends upon decisions that are often taken far away, but which have a direct impact on individual citizens in the countries. Governments bind themselves to trade agreements that often allow the exploitation of cheap labour or national resources. It is apparent that an increasingly liberalised global market economy is not without its problems.²⁸⁹

The village of Santa Marta

We can follow the story of events in El Salvador more concretely through the people of the village of Santa Marta. Their story is the story of the whole of El Salvador. SFCA/Diakonia has supported the people of the village since the end of the 1970s. I had the privilege of visiting the village for two days in September 2005. I talked with leaders and members of the organisation *Asociación Desarrollo de Santa Marta*, ADES, (Development Association of Santa Marta).

Christian Base Communities formed

The village of Santa Marta lies in the beautiful, hilly northern part of the country near the Rio Lempa River, which forms the border with Honduras. The village has always been populated by poor farm workers who are exploited and oppressed by land-owners, those in power and the military. Despite the village being situated in a fertile farming area it has been hard for people there to live with dignity. The message from Medellín in 1968 reached this village and people started to organise themselves in Christian base communities. People listened to Oscar Romero's sermons on the radio. "We started to protest against the injustices and because of this our leaders were persecuted by the army", told village

leader Carlos Bonilla. "The army said that we were subversive and did not act according to the gospel."

The violence escalated and the situation in the village worsened dramatically in 1978. The church leaders were imprisoned. "The military picked us up at our work places and in our homes. They burned land and killed the animals", continued Bonilla. "When we heard that Oscar Romero had been murdered panic broke out in the village. A pastor and children, women and the elderly were murdered here too."

It was at this time that the guerrilla was formed, as people joined together to fight against abuse by the military. In total 250 people from Santa Maria participated, divided into 10 platoons. I met one of them, Joan Antonio Rivas, an older man who described how everything had started in the Christian base community. They felt that the words of the bible gave them support in the struggle for justice. He felt that in the desperate situation that prevailed there was no alternative to armed struggle. But they only had simple weapons, like machetes. They were trained. The platoons were based on the hilltops around the village and sometimes they dared to go down to see what was happening at home. He described how they composed and sang their own songs, describing their struggle and their hope.

In 1980 five guerrilla groups united in the umbrella organisation FMLN. They considered the reform programme of the Duarte government a failure and in 1981 began an offensive to bring down the government. With that the civil war began. One part of the military's strategy was "the scorched earth policy", which left nothing behind when they moved on.

The flight

In March 1981, Santa Marta was surrounded by 7,000 soldiers who started to burn, rape and kill. On 15 March 1981 the villagers decided to flee. They placed their hope in Honduras, on the other side of the river. It took them three nights to get down to the river. The guerrillas heard that the people were fleeing and gave them protection day and night.

When the villagers got to the river, the Salvadorean army was already there and shot at them from helicopters. Many people also drowned. In total 36 people died. Many were also shot on the other side of the river by the Honduran army.

Those who managed to cross the river were rounded up and taken to a transit camp. They were shut in the camp for three weeks. "Thanks to international solidarity from Caritas and other organisations we were treated well by the

Hondurans. They gave us fruit to share between the children and the elderly."

When three weeks had passed everyone was moved to a new area, La Virtud. "It felt like being in a hot hole. We were given tents, but there was no water and no firewood," told Bonilla. "The result was serious health problems. We could bury seven people at a time; they died of infections in the terrible heat. We lived in that place for a year."

The camp was under the protection of the UN and they were visited by its Human Rights Commissioner, who offered them another place to move to – Mesa Grande. Some people were allowed to visit the place and the proposal was accepted. "But our dream was of course to go back home", said Bonilla with a big smile.

The application to Sida in 81/82 focused on these and other refugees:

The civil war in the country continues with no lessening of brutality. According to the latest figures from the Catholic Bishops' Conference 30,000 people have been murdered since January. These victims are civilians, killed by the military in so called clean-up campaigns against areas controlled by the armed opposition, or murdered by paramilitary terror groups controlled by the government.

It is estimated that around 200,000 people have fled their homes as a result of the civil war. Half of these are so



The civil war in the country continued with no lessening of brutality.

called internal refugees and have remained in El Salvador whilst the others have fled to neighbouring countries such as Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Mexico. In Honduras, there are around 30,000 Salvadorian refugees.

The refugee camp in Mesa Grande



Mesa Grande

Mesa Grande was no better than the other places – an empty grass covered area where they were now to live. The challenge was to make the best of a bad situation. Carlos Bonilla continues the story: "We organised the whole refugee camp into seven complexes of small family houses. Two families lived in each house. A coordinating committee led all of the work. We were given building materials (with support from SFCA amongst others). None of us knew how to build so we taught ourselves. Foreign volunteers came and helped us."

"Our aim was to create a well functioning

community in which all the adults would work and the children go to school. We built a school for pupils up to grade 4, a clinic, workshops, a cobblers and a garage for mechanics. We built a church, and a priest and a doctor came to us. We taught ourselves to make compost and started to grow vegetables and maize. It was important for the children to get nourishing food."

"There were no teachers in the group of refugees, so for the school to function some of the adults had to stand in." Bonilla was one of those that offered to help. He started teaching children but went on to teach adults to read and write.

Rosa Lainez, who was also active within ADES, describes how she was a 17-year-old single mother of one when she fled. When they arrived at Mesa Grande she plucked up the courage to stand in as a teacher too, despite the fact that she had only three years of schooling herself. "My time as a teacher was the best in my life. The teaching created such strong relationships", she said.

"Life in the refugee camp was hard. Freedom of movement was so limited. Anyone who went outside the camp risked being murdered by the Honduran army."

"In autumn 1986 the UN Commissioner came to visit the refugee camp again. During the 15 minutes that he stayed he asked about our worries. We told him about our vulnerability, about cuts in grants and about all those who wanted to return home. He came from San Salvador and had been in negotiations with President Duarte. He gave us three choices: gain the legal right to stay in Honduras, flee to another country or return home under the observation of the military. He gave us until after Christmas and New Year to think about it. What would we decide? We wanted to go home of course."

"We formed a committee together with the church to plan the return. The church participated because it had been given the role of mediating

between the refugees and the authorities. I was elected as chair", told Carlos Bonilla. "It was no easy task, as the war was still going on. We talked secretly with FMLN, which gave us strength. They had negotiated with the government too."

"So on 9 October 1987 one of the government ministers came. We were to meet at 6am on the football pitch. 10,000 people came. When she asked who wanted to return home everyone put up their hands. We broke camp the next day. Foreign accompaniers joined us. The priest Father Gerard was with us. On 11 October at 14.00 the first people arrived at what had once been the village of Santa Marta. Everything was burnt down and the weeds had taken over. Nothing was left. The water sources were overgrown. There was no food."

Home again

"We cleared and dug to get to the water. It took us eight days. We shared out plastic and built toilets. Then 14 trucks arrived with all the building materials from Mesa Grande and the work of rebuilding could begin. The army watched us the whole time."

"After a week or two, me and some others were taken prisoner by the army in a nearby village. They wanted to know where the food came from and about our contact with the guerrillas.

They questioned us long into the evening. We told them – kill us, but you should know that everyone in the village knows that we're here. The darkness swept in over us and there we sat and the military were afraid. The fireflies in the darkness scared them and we were allowed to go. It was a difficult time. The helicopters continued to bomb, they killed pets and people were injured.

"In order to be able to move about outside the village people were forced to carry ID documents." The authorities were slow to produce these. After a year only 30 percent of the villagers had received their ID documents (1988 §84).

"We want to thank Diakonia and other organisations that, despite everything, we succeeded in getting the reconstruction underway", said Bonilla. "The international attention meant that we never felt alone. You gave us strength in our hope."

Reconstruction

The Social Department of the Archbishops office also provided support to Santa Marta, giving grants for the purchase of land. Each family received a 25 by 30 metre plot of land. Thanks to an agreement with a church from the USA, 544 hectares of land could be bought as a collective allotment for the village. This land can't be sold – it belongs to everyone.

Micael Lindholm²⁹⁰ describes how the village of Santa Marta participated in the peace negotiations. The American ambassador and a top US military chief visited the village together with a high-ranking FMLN representative. Their meeting with the villagers was very tense to begin with, but in the evening when it turned to song and dance the atmosphere felt more relaxed. The visitors talked with Carlos Bonilla and listened to his and the villagers' hopes for a peaceful existence.²⁹¹

The development organisation ADES was formed and the residents of the village were divided into working groups. Once again Bonilla became chair for the leadership group. He describes with great pride how the village has changed over the years since their return.

In this way the village got on its feet again, first with simple housing to give the returnees a roof over their heads. Negotiations took place that led to the people being guaranteed safety. The village got electricity and the road was improved. A school was built where the children were to be educated. A church was also built and the village got a priest. And the village got a clinic, a pharmacy and a doctor visited regularly.

Lars Franklin visited the village of Santa Marta in 1987. The following was included in his report:



After the home coming the village of Santa Marta could slowly recover. First with simple homes that gave roof over the heads for the returning people.

The refugees are extremely well organised and have got reconstruction work underway. After having cleared and repaired the roads and built provisional housing they have now started building more permanent homes. They have even started small scale farming in order to meet their own need for food and have organised the children's schooling, healthcare and so on. I had the opportunity to visit Santa Marta, to which a total of 1600 people returned, and was incredibly impressed by how they have organised themselves and by their enthusiasm.

The government has turned a blind eye to the refugees' return. The military exercises strict control over the

settlements and subjects the repatriates to constant harassment. Church deliveries of necessary goods, building materials and tools are often stopped at military roadblocks and have had difficulty getting through. Even high-ranking visitors such as Archbishop Y Damas, Sida's General Secretary Carl Tham and the country's deputy minister for social welfare have been stopped.²⁹²

Following the peace treaty in 1992 it was important for Diakonia to support peaceful development and strong democracy. The words of the HUM application of 91/92 were put into practice

in the village of Santa Marta and through the organisation ADES:

It is not just about support for public education, agricultural development, and the creation of people's movements and so on. It is to a large extent also about supporting processes that can strengthen the position of smaller groups in relation to wider society.

Creating space for broad public participation at grassroots level is one possible way to strengthen popular movements and thus increase the likelihood of them succeeding in their struggle for fundamental change in society. In countries that can be described as 'new democracies' there is an imminent risk of renewed military intervention. In this situation, popular participation and support for the "limited democracy" achieved so far can contribute to a more stable and rooted democracy.²⁹³

The people who had taught in the refugee camp continued to teach in the village school. The only problem was that the school couldn't get support from the education department as the village lacked qualified teachers. The villagers decided to encourage some young people to train to be teachers. In autumn 2003 a celebratory ceremony was held in the church at which 15 young men and women received their diplomas from senior officials of the ministry.²⁹⁴ From that day on the edu-

cation provided by the school was approved by the government. The aim is now to have a senior high school in the village, so that young people can gain university entry-level qualifications. In addition to the theoretical side of their junior high school education, the students also have practical training in one of the trades practiced in the village. When I visited the village baker, a group of 10 girls were learning the craft from experienced bakers. In the same way a group of 10 boys were participating in building a house.

Young people wanting to continue their studies at senior high school and university continue to be able to apply for scholarships. Today (year 2005) five young people from the village are training to become doctors at the invitation of the Cuban state.

The village also has a well functioning preschool. This gives both parents the opportunity to work outside the home.

A high tech green house has been built, in which vegetables are grown for village consumption and also for sale. Another source of pride in the area is the regional radio station, which educates and informs residents about important social issues. Junior high students also do work experience there.

In their province of Cabañas, Santa Marta seeks

to be a model community and tries to spread its way of organising and achieving change to nearby communities. The challenge is to work for human rights and democracy and to integrate everyone living in the area, reconciling people of different political standpoints and thus creating a functioning society.

Remembering the history

ADES has chosen a group of people to document the community's history. They have started gathering pieces of weapons and other materials from the war that have been found in the village in a sack. The aim is to build a museum in which the objects will be displayed. Stories are also going to be written down so that those who did not experience the war can read about it. The songs written during the war are to be recorded.

I met the group responsible, which includes five young people. They each described one of their own experiences. They were all born in the refugee camp. "Our parents met there," said one. "I know that some of my family lost their lives in the war," said another. Someone said that he had never realised that weapons were anything more than toys and that they were used to play war. One boy told how, after the return to Santa Marta, he went out

with his father into the fields to keep watch in case the military came. One of the girls said that they have written the village's history "so that the children can get to know their forefathers, those who sacrificed their lives so that we can develop."

The village council met

I listened to the village council and their comments on the challenges they are living with today (year 2005). Many felt that they must integrate democracy in a whole new way. When new issues arise, the internal functioning of the organisation should be characterised by the active participation of both young and old.

The chairperson of ADES, Antonio Pacheco, had also participated in the guerrillas during the war. When the villagers came back from Honduras, he started to get involved in political reconstruction work. "The support we received from Diakonia was important for us in this" he said. "Diakonia's way of working was so close to our own theological and political vision, of building a just and democratic society in Santa Marta. We met in work for reconciliation."

The young people said that they have two alternatives for their futures – one is to continue their studies to university level and the other is

to emigrate to the USA to work there. They don't have the money they need to study at university so the only alternative is to leave Santa Marta and move to the USA. What will become of Santa Marta and El Salvador as a whole if so many flee the country?

El Salvador in Sweden

The many close contacts between SFCA/Diakonia and El Salvador over the years have led to a great awareness of the country in Sweden. Many remember with great joy the 80's and 90's when so many youth and other choirs sang the Salvadorian Farmers Mass and gained an insight into how people there lived through its lyrics. Hans Magnusson²⁹⁵ stated with regret that the many visits by church delegations had ceased after peace came.

When Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America in 1999 and when an earthquake hit in 2001 it was very apparent that there was a great willingness to give amongst the congregations of the denominations behind Diakonia.

Many visitors from El Salvador and the rest of Central America have toured congregations in Sweden to talk about the challenges they are living with and to maintain the level of interest in that part of the world. In 1986 Diakonia ar-

ranged a study visit to Central America for representatives of the denominations, together with SFCA. One of Diakonia's study visits for congregational representatives went to El Salvador in 1999. Participants in both of these visits gave a large number of talks after they returned to Sweden.

Conclusion

The partnership with organisations and people in El Salvador has been characterised by a lack of compromise and by a strong conviction that justice and peace will one day replace the violence and the civil war. Monseñor Romero's testimony gave people hope and inspired people to struggle for change. SFCA/Diakonia dared to walk alongside people (acompañamiento) even during the years when the violence and oppression was at its worst. During these difficult years unity was strong between the civil society organisations, particularly within the ecumenical movement. SFCA/Diakonia participated in a period of El Salvador's history in which humanitarian interventions were highly important to support the large numbers who were forced to become refugees in their own country or forced to flee the country. For many people this work made the difference between life and death. This close 'accompaniment' led Diakonia

to gradually focus its support on organising and participation in the peace processes. Since the peace treaty was signed in 1992, Diakonia's work has increasingly developed into support for long-term democratic development at local level.

As early as the late 1970's, SFCA/Diakonia channelled large amounts of funding to humanitarian interventions in civil war struck El Salvador. One of the largest recipients during the 1980s was the ecumenical organisation Diaconia El Salvador.

Following the war in El Salvador many problems have been experienced. Many of the structural factors that led to the violent civil war in the 1980s remain largely in tact. Amongst these is the enormous economic divide between the small number of rich citizens and the large proportion of citizens living in poverty and extreme poverty. The dream of money and work leads many young people to choose to leave the country and go to the USA, legally or illegally. Today around 25% of the country's population live in the USA. This situation makes it even more difficult, particularly for rural local authorities, to create lasting development. Diakonia's programme in El Salvador focuses a great deal on creating integrated economic development in the whole country, not just around the big cities.

Many of the structural factors that led to the violent civil war in the 1980s remain largely in tact.



CHAPTER 7

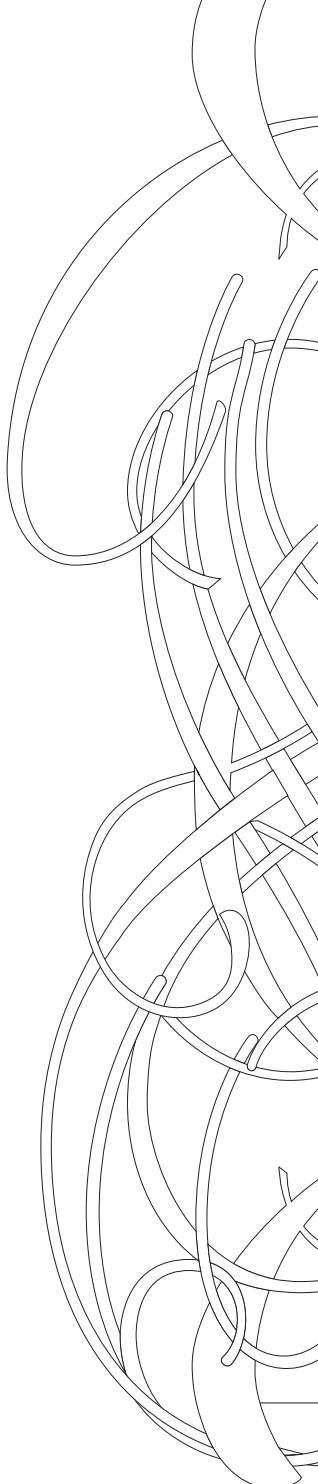
The last five years

2000 – 2005

WHEN THE WORLD MET the new millennium it did so with a promise. The international community jointly decided to halve poverty by the year 2015. An eight-point programme was to form the basis for politics and development work and poverty reduction was to be on everyone's agenda. The UN encouraged both governments and organisations to actively work to fulfil the promise.

Poverty was also Diakonia's challenge for the new millennium. In its *Strategic plan* Diakonia wrote:

The definition of poverty has developed significantly over the years. Today there is a broadly shared understanding that poverty is not only a lack of income and economic resources but must be seen as multifaceted concept. The new definition includes exclusion from fundamental opportunities and non-monetary factors such as lack of access to education, healthcare, natural resources, work, land, credit, political participation, services and infrastructure. Poverty is quite simply a combination of violations of human rights. Fighting poverty is, in other words, about tackling the economic, political, social, environmental and institutional dimensions of the problem.²⁹⁶



Once again we see that Diakonia wants to support societal change and development and that this includes work with value-based and structural issues. But above all Diakonia wants to support people's commitment and desire to participate in building communities and societies.

Diakonia's vision is rooted in an awareness of all people's equal worth, of a necessary just sharing of the world's resources and in the belief that all people can and want to influence their own situation, whilst at the same time being prepared to take a collective responsibility.

Famine in Africa is not just caused by drought and HIV & Aids. It is quite possible to argue that famine is not caused by drought or HIV & Aids at all. There is no natural law saying that people starve when it doesn't rain. There is no natural law that says that people starve when they become ill. People starve because they are poor. People starve because they lack influence over the political and economic structures and decisions that influence them – for life and death.

Someone once said, "you can't eat democracy". The statement is of course true in its literal sense. On the other hand the link between democracy, or rather the lack of democracy, and the poverty in Africa is highly apparent in many different ways.²⁹⁷

Globkom

At the end of 1999, the Swedish government formed "a committee with the task of looking into how Swedish policy for economically, socially and ecologically sustainable global development should be developed, based on a sense of solidarity at a time of growing global mutual dependence".²⁹⁸ The investigation, known as *Globkom*, lasted for several years and put its final proposals *Shared responsibility – Sweden's policy for global development* to Parliament on 16 December 2003.

Diakonia participated actively in every stage of the Globkom consultative process, both independently and in collaboration with other organisations. Diakonia's submission focused on the necessity of including civil society participation and influence in a policy for global development, and on the importance of having one coherent position in relation to all aspects of Swedish foreign policy. When the government presented the new development policy (trade, development assistance, arms exports) it was said that in future the aim of all areas of politics would be "a just and sustainable global development" (2003 §19).

Diakonia criticised the Swedish government's way of marketing and selling JAS aeroplanes to South Africa as one example of insufficient coherence between development assistance policy



Arms exports have taken place without any analysis of how they will affect development and poverty reduction in the country concerned.

and trade policy. Despite Sweden endeavouring to work for poverty reduction and human rights, amongst other things through development assistance, arms exports have taken place without any analysis of how they will affect development and poverty reduction in the country concerned.

In its responses to the Globkom inquiry, Diakonia expressed the belief that a coherent Swedish policy for a more just world can be put in place. But if this is to happen, the government and parliament must make clear that the goals of

development and poverty reduction must be prioritised over national goals such as global security policy and economic growth. If this is not done, there will be a grave risk that "coherence" will mean that the aims and needs of development assistance will be given lower priority than other, more limited national interests²⁹⁹

New challenges

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the spread of HIV & Aids, the drought in many parts of Africa and the dramatic events of 11 September 2001 have all had a major effect on the global political climate. They have also changed the parameters in which the structures of power that dominate and to a large extent steer global development operate.

Despite all these new challenges Diakonia states that:

"[...] the goal is to give poor and oppressed people the opportunity to create a dignified life for themselves. This is not a goal that Diakonia as an organisation can work directly with and thus influence. We can achieve our goals only through establishing partnerships with organisations and churches that share these same visions and goals"³⁰⁰.

How well known is Diakonia?

Diakonia also met the new millennium with a piece of market research. For two weeks in April 2000, a statistically significant number of people were asked about the relative value they place on the various characteristics of development assistance organisations and about their own willingness to give (2000 §32). Those questioned were

divided into three groups. Amongst the *general public* group awareness of Diakonia was very low. People in this group considered the credibility of organisations and that the money gets to where it is intended to be important characteristics. Christian connections were seen negatively whilst a clear political stance was seen positively.

The *churchgoers* group ranked Diakonia top amongst the voluntary organisations named in the research. Here too credibility, clear identity, strong, effective arguments and a clear political stance were considered important characteristics. The highest level of awareness was amongst the group *givers*. Diakonia had an extremely high level of credibility among Baptists and members of the MCCs, and members of the other denominations also ranked Diakonia highly. Over 58% of the *givers* were over 70 years old. Most belonged to one of Diakonia's denominations and were active in their congregation.³⁰¹

This research challenged Diakonia to reach younger givers and to increase awareness of the organisation amongst the general public. In early 2005, opinion poll agency Temo³⁰² carried out a survey into awareness of Diakonia amongst the Swedish general public. 6 percent of those surveyed knew the organisation quite well and 2 percent very well. 59 percent had heard of and knew

about the organisation whilst 39 percent had never heard of Diakonia. This positive result was most probably due to the recurrent Swedish Radio Aid *Children of the World* campaigns, the Tsunami disaster of Christmas 2004 and Diakonia's focus on media contacts in relation to debt and trade issues. These factors resulted in Diakonia often being named and in representatives of the organisation being invited to put forward the organisation's views in a variety of discussion programmes. Unfortunately awareness of Diakonia was still higher amongst older people.

Diakonia's biblical role model

At the AGM of 2001, Director Bo Forsberg summarised Diakonia's mission using the image of Nehemiah from the Old Testament. God calls people today to participate in his work, just as he called Nehemiah. He calls us to build and create networks between people.

The symbol is Jesus on the cross: The cross reaches upwards showing that everyone can come to God. The arms of the cross reach out calling for unity between all people. The cross reaches downwards witnessing to rootedness in the soil of the earth, in the whole of God's creation (AGM 2001 §7A). It is this challenge and vision that Diakonia has always tried to live up to.

The core values of the work

In the story of Swedish Free Church Aid/Diakonia we have been able to follow the work up to the AGM of 2005. At that point support was being given to 400 partners in 36 countries. According to its statutes, the organisation's task is to support and develop international development assistance work that creates more just living conditions and counteracts economic, political, religious and social oppression.

In order to fulfil this Diakonia strives to be

- a network building organisation;
- clear in its purpose;
- an efficient development assistance organisation;
- financially independent;
- well known, with broad based popular support (AGM 2002 §7A).

The policy adopted in 1997 (1997 §45) became a much-appreciated guiding document for the work both with partners around the world and for the work in Sweden. The policy retained the basic focus adopted when the organisation first began: that the poor are the target group and that they are to be reached via support to cooperating partners (1966 §75). In 2001 this was expressed with the words:



Diakonia's goal is to change the situation of the poor and oppressed through creating the conditions necessary for participation in building society through strengthening democratic structures and culture.

Diakonia's goal is to change the situation of the poor and oppressed through creating the conditions necessary for participation in building society through strengthening democratic structures and culture. This is not a target group that Diakonia as an organisation can work directly with and thus influence. We can achieve our goals only through establishing partnerships with organisations and churches that share these same visions and goals.³⁰³

The policy document, developed in close cooperation with the Board, personnel and partner organi-

sations, gave a clearer focus to the work. It was hoped that it would be a living instrument for the work, even at project level – at the grassroots (1998 §20).

In 2005 the AGM decided that the policy document be revised. The situation in the world is rapidly changing, new problem areas arise and this continually influences the challenge Diakonia is facing. The text therefore needs to be looked at again (AGM 2005 §15).

Diakonia increasingly sees the whole of its work as one integrated programme, from the local level to the global level, in which experience and knowledge move in all directions. Experience exchange has become increasingly important in Diakonia's work both between partners in the South and between the South and the work in Sweden.

Organisational Issues

The whole of Diakonia's work is, and has always been, based upon analyses developed in close dialogue with partners, Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the basis of the organisation's policy. Building on these analyses, guidelines are drawn up for the various regional themes and for the work in Sweden.

In the year 2000 Diakonia restructured. The discussion document that formed the basis for

the restructuring talks about globalisation having affected both the Swedish and the worldwide community in recent years, bringing new values and challenges. The text states:

The areas that Diakonia has prioritised in its policy are well placed in relation to the issues that are current in development work and the debate about the world's development. In short: the local-global structures of power and the connections between them, people's participation in their own development and the question of values in relation to human value, economic development and equality between the sexes.³⁰⁴

The aim was to make the work more effective by creating closer links between the departments at head office (2000 §6). Three regions were created instead of the previous seven: Latin America, Africa and the Middle East-Asia. Each region was to have two programme officers to deal with that particular region's policy work etc. Responsibility for handling projects was to be moved from the head office in Sweden to the regional offices. This would give staff in Sweden more time for thematic and policy based work. The work of the Sweden department was to be integrated into the development assistance work. An administrative unit was also to be created. The process continued and

at the AGM in 2005 it was no longer discussed in terms of a restructuring but in terms of ongoing organisational development with a similar aim (2005 §8).

Methodology development

In the late 1990s, Sida increased its demands for planning and monitoring of the programmes. Programmes had to be planned using a methodology called LFA (Logical Framework Approach) and reporting was to be more focused upon results and effects. For Diakonia, these demands coincided with efforts to sharpen the focus and narrow the scope of the programme with the aim of making the most of Diakonia's comparative strengths. In 1998 Diakonia put together a single joint strategic plan for the first time, describing the entire work of the organisation. It covered three years, beginning in 2000 and built upon three simple basic principles:

- all programme planning shall be based upon and relate to Diakonia's policy;
- planning of the programme at the various levels of implementation is based upon analysis and dialogue with partners; Diakonia's programme is formulated in close cooperation with partners;

- a programme based approach will characterise the work of the entire organisation: individual interventions will relate to the different programmes; programmes will be identified in dialogue with partners on the basis of regional and country analyses and their relation to Diakonia's policy.³⁰⁵

Using experience from this process, work to develop the Strategic Plan for 2004-2006 began in the autumn of 2002. The process involved partners, regional offices, head office, and the Board/denominations. Many days and hours of work were put into workshops, working groups and exploratory discussions at various levels in the organisation, with the aim of formulating a coherent, well made plan for the coming three years.³⁰⁶ Diakonia sought to meet Sida's increased demands for competence and capacity through this thorough work, which was linked to the various application processes (2003 §36). Work on the strategic plan has led to the development of a stronger shared analysis between head office and the regional offices.

In order to have a greater impact on the structures that the organisation seeks to influence and change on the basis of its policy, the entire work of the organisation is now planned in programme format. This also contributes to creating a more coherent picture of what Diakonia works

with. The strategic plan is developed on the basis of Diakonia's overall policy and the context in which our partner organisations and the primary target group work and live.

Results Based Approach

With the help of an external consultant a series of seminars were held at head office and the respective regional offices during the spring of 2000. The LFA (Logical Framework Approach) methodology aims to be a tool to help identify realistic goals for the work. From now on the methodology has to be used for both applications and reporting. This means that Diakonia can measure the impact of projects in a straight forward way.

In 2003 a Project Management System (called PHS) was introduced for project administration and monitoring, for both head office and the various regional offices.

The substance of the work

Efforts to integrate Diakonia's international and national work are clearly reflected in the description of the work of the last five years. The experiences of partners around the world have been translated into lobbying and work to influence

public opinion and in development education work directed towards congregations and other groups. Lobbying has been directed in the first place at politicians and decision makers within Parliament, the government and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with strategic media contacts.

On the basis of the extensive cooperation with partners around the world, the direction for the work in Sweden has, since 2003, been focused upon some prioritised areas. The geographical focal areas are Israel/Palestine and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the themes chosen are: Trade/wto, Debt/prs. The motivation for choosing these particular areas and themes was that they highlight problems that closely relate to Diakonia's core values. Diakonia wants to raise awareness and influence decision makers in relation to these areas and themes.

As a Christian organisation Diakonia is called to assert the intrinsic value of every person. In addition to being prepared to take action to alleviate human suffering, Diakonia strives to question and influence the structures of power that contribute to increasing starvation, illness and oppression. Over the years Diakonia has built up a great deal of competence on important lobby issues. This has meant that Diakonia has become an impor-

tant dialogue partner for the government and is in regular dialogue with the Government Offices and the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications and the National Board of Trade. Regular discussions are also held with all the political parties represented in Parliament. Representatives of Diakonia often participate in media debates and news programmes.

Israel/Palestine

Ever since the Six Day War in June 1967, SFCA/Diakonia has worked actively with the conflict that has afflicted both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples with violence and suffering.

Diakonia believes that if the cycle of violence in Israel and Palestine is to be broken and a lasting and just peace achieved, the focus must be moved from politically negotiated solutions that stem from the existing balance of power between the parties to what could be described as a just and sustainable peace. This must be founded the right of both states to exist within secure borders, and on democracy, respect for human rights and the fight against poverty.

In 2000 Diakonia, together with the Church of Sweden, the Olof Palme International Center, Caritas and others, was involved in the campaign

"Yes to peace and International Humanitarian Law – stop the violence in the Middle East". The campaign aimed to give further support to people on the West Bank whilst simultaneously putting political pressure on the Swedish government to act on the issue (2000 §105).

In July 2004, the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Geneva Convention apply in full in the Palestinian areas occupied by Israel since 1967 and that the construction of the Israel's wall is against International Humanitarian Law.

Since April 2004, Diakonia has worked with a programme focusing on International Humanitarian Law. The aim of the programme is to increase respect for and the implementation of Humanitarian Law in Israel and on the West Bank and Gaza. The programme is divided into four areas: training, information, monitoring and lobby work, and is carried out in cooperation with Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations.

In both 2003 and 2004 Diakonia organised a visit to give a number of Parliamentarians the opportunity to see and experience the conflict from an International Humanitarian Law and human rights point of view. Visits to the West Bank and East Jerusalem left the participants overwhelmed by what they saw and led them to re-

think their analyses of the situation. The participating Parliamentarians wrote a debate article for a newspaper that was signed by representatives of all of the parties (2004 §68).

In spring 2004, Diakonia together with nine other organisations started a campaign for a just peace. The campaign, given the name HOPE – End the occupation of Palestine [HOPP – *Håv Ockupationen av Palestina*], aims amongst other things to support groups within Israeli and Palestinian society that are working for justice, peace and reconciliation through non-violence. The campaign is also working to ensure that the EU's free trade agreement with Israel will not in future contribute to supporting illegal Israeli settlements on occupied territory.

A broad group of civil society organisations held a Middle East seminar in spring 2005 with the theme 'International Humanitarian Law in the shadow of the Israeli occupation' (2004 §63).

Diakonia's position on the conflict was once again brought up at the AGM in 2005. It was stated that Diakonia's position does not find its roots in all the denominations. It was decided to arrange a consultation at which the denominations and Diakonia could engage in dialogue on the theological interpretation of developments in Israel/Palestine (AGM 2005 §15).



Child's drawing from Palestine.

In 2004 a project post for work to influence public opinion regarding the Middle East and Democratic Republic of Congo was created within the Sweden department.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) has been drawn into a long term "world war", as the UN has described it, involving many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The conflict has its roots in the tensions stemming from the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the fall of the Mobuto regime in Zaire. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi have been directly involved as warring parties or

via support to various Congolese groups. In addition Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have supported the regime in the capital Kinshasa with troops. A large number of militia groups, often ethnically recruited, have participated in the war. During the course of the war, there have been shifting loyalties and support between these groups and the countries involved.

The country's rich natural resources are one cause of the war being so prolonged. The countries and militia groups involved in the war have benefited from the war, as the chaos has enabled the uncontrolled plundering of resources. The regime in Kinshasa has handed out rights for mineral exploitation and forestry to countries that have provided support for the war. A vicious circle has developed in which these resources have financed the war, which in turn has given rise to further plundering. Extensive and extreme violations of human rights take place all the time.

In 2005 Diakonia is supporting seven partner organisations. Several of them work with human rights. This can involve investigating crimes against civilians such as torture, assault or rape. Several organisations also work to educate on issues of democracy. For some time Diakonia has been working with the Life and Peace Institute on a project for peace and reconciliation in the eastern DRC.

There is a hope that free elections might be held towards the end of 2005. This could be the beginning of the creation of peace and reconstruction in a country that has been in a state of collapse for so many years.

In addition to work in the country Diakonia is very active in the Swedish Mission Council's Central Africa Group. The work is directed at Parliament and the government as well as the media, but also at the general public and members of the denominations behind Diakonia, amongst others. Young people are a prioritised target group for work to raise awareness. A study material called '*Hope for Congo*' has been developed for schools.

A project officer post for the DRC was created in 2004. The post is based in Sweden for the moment, but it is hoped that a large amount of the work will be carried out in the DRC. In 2005 MCCS/BUS and Diakonia renewed a contract for a joint office for personal engaged in the joint work in the DRC.

Trade/WTO – Debt/TRIPS

Diakonia's development objective states that the foreign debt of poor countries should be handled in a way that promotes just and socially, ecologically, and economically sustainable development

to counteract poverty and promote human rights. Furthermore, the content and formulation of national poverty reduction strategies should promote just, democratically rooted, socially, ecologically and economically sustainable development.³⁰⁷

In early July 2005, the leaders of the world's rich countries gathered. In the run up to the G8 summit Diakonia and many other organisations across the world had been involved in the *Make Poverty History* campaign. "If the world does not do more to solve the problem, the millennium goals will never be reached in time."³⁰⁸ The G8 summit discussed the poor countries debt and decisions on debt cancellation for 2005 were taken at the annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, at which the rich countries of the world have a majority of the votes.

The global rules of trade have enormous significance for billions of poor people. Today parts of the economic regulatory framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and of regional trade agreements function in a way that conflicts with the aims that Diakonia and others are trying to achieve in development work.

Raising awareness about and influencing global trade rules has been very important for SFCA/Diakonia's work in Sweden since the Sackeus project began in 1976, but it became even more



The global rules of trade have enormous significance for billions of poor people. Today parts of the economic regulatory framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or of regional trade agreements function in a way that conflicts with the aims that Diakonia and others are trying to achieve through development cooperation.

important with the arrival of the WTO and the TRIPS agreement³¹⁰. It is vital to try to influence the formulation of agreements and rules so that trade and investment can become part of the solution to poverty, instead of a hinder to poor people's development.³¹¹

In 2000 an international programme focused on and entitled *Social and Economic Justice*, (SEJ) was formed. The aim was to work with partners in various parts of the world to strengthen relationships and experience exchange between organisations in the South and to learn from partners' competence on these issues in order to strengthen Diakonia's own capacity and thinking, and strengthen work with public opinion and lobbying in Sweden.³¹²

In 2001 representatives from South and Central America, Southern Africa and personnel from Sweden gathered for six days of deliberations on the common SEJ issues. From the discussions, participants in the conference were able to define some issues that were particularly important: debt including the programmes being developed by the World Bank, international financial speculation and trade issues, as well as democracy and development.³¹³

As part of SEJ a joint project between Diakonia, the Church of Sweden and Save the Child-

ren Sweden was initiated in 2001, focusing on PRS³¹⁴. The project was called People Participating in Poverty Reduction (PPPR).

In 2001 an information project on WTO issues was set up, focusing particularly on the issue of TRIPS, which is about rights to ideas, knowledge and information. A project officer was appointed. For the first few years this project was carried out in close cooperation with the Christian Council of Sweden and Fes/the educational association Bilda. The ambition of the project was and is to present global trade issues in a way that is easy to understand and that enables people to take action to influence them. As Bo Forsberg once said:

"If, ten years ago, someone had asked me who holds the patent on life I would have answered God. Today I have to answer the same question by saying God and Astra Zeneca."³¹⁵

In 2001 the WTO held its Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar. Diakonia, together with Forum Syd and other popular movements from around the world, demanded that trade agreements negotiated through the WTO should promote poor countries' opportunities to develop. Diakonia wants trade agreements to be evaluated so that the effects on poor people are clear. Global trade agreements con-

cern so much more than just trade, they concern people's health, access to food and their right to a dignified life. Diakonia is not against patents, but is against patents on life. In addition there must be exemption clauses when major humanitarian issues are at stake.

The example of South Africa

At the beginning of 2000 the South African government passed a law approving the "provision of medicines at more reasonable cost in particular situations in order to protect public health". This law enabled doctors to prescribe cheap medicines to thousands of poor people who needed treatment for HIV & Aids. In a court case in 2001, forty-two of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies took the South African government to the constitutional court. The court case concerned South African law, which was considered to conflict with the rules adopted by the WTO on patents. The USA imposed sanctions and the EU put pressure on, as South Africa had gone against the patent rights of pharmaceutical companies.

The South African government received such strong support from Sweden and many other countries that the pharmaceutical companies withdrew their application. In the end a compro-

mise was reached giving South Africa the opportunity to purchase Aids medicines much more cheaply. But the drugs they can purchase are still ten times more expensive than the cheapest available generic copies of the drugs.

JAS 39 Gripen

On 3 December 1999 the contract was signed for South Africa's purchase of 28 fighter aircraft of the JAS 39 Gripen model (henceforth referred to as JAS) from Sweden, at an estimated cost of 13 billion crowns.

In the run up to the signing Diakonia, in very close cooperation with the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Christian Council of Sweden, had strongly opposed Sweden's active marketing for the sale. Diakonia considered that this stood in stark contrast with the government's position that Swedish foreign policy should promote peace, development and respect for human rights in the world.

The concept of *partnership* was even introduced for the Africa policy that Parliament adopted in 1998, a policy that was to be the basis of Sweden's ambitions to fight poverty, strengthen democracy, create employment and stimulate

economic growth in Africa. Relationships was to be built with a particular focus on the situation of the poor people.

For its part, the South African government stated in a report in 1996 (White paper on Defence) that "for the foreseeable future" there were no conventional military threats against South Africa. It was therefore decided to prioritise "poverty reduction and the socio-economic inequalities created by apartheid".³¹⁶

The churches in South Africa also got involved at an early stage and felt that the massive cost of the purchase would have highly negative consequences for the development of the whole of South African society. Extensive activities in Sweden and South Africa resulted in a number of seminars, numerous lobby meetings and many documents being written and handed over to both Swedish and South African decision makers in the years 1998-2003.

The critique of Swedish and South African people's movements was based on an analysis that the weapons purchase would lead to the wrong priorities being made in the South African state budget and that they were not in the interests of the poor.

Networking

In addition to a large number of seminars and lectures, the WTO project has produced educational materials in the form of fact sheets, leaflets, bible study materials and video films. The strong response to WTO issues from the congregations was one of the factors that led the Christian Council of Sweden to decide to encourage congregations to celebrate 'Global Church Sunday' on the last Sunday before Advent from 2003 onwards. The theme for the first year was *Juste Trade*.

Diakonia's participation in the worldwide Jubilee 2000 campaign, which took Old Testament texts on debt cancellation as its inspiration (3 Mos 25:8-22), has also been part of the work with economic justice issues. In the run up to the millennium the international Jubilee 2000 campaign succeeded in collecting over 20 million signatures on a petition for the cancellation of the debts of the poorest countries, which was handed over at the G8 summit in 1999.

Diakonia works in various ways for the cancellation and management of poor country debts in a way that promotes just and sustainable development with a focus on human rights and the fight against poverty in the world. This work takes place together with partners, as national poverty reduction strategies are to be produced



in a democratic way, with broad participation of civil society organisations and with a content that promotes sustainable development, human rights and poverty reduction.

Another important part of the work focuses on the IMF and the World Bank roles in the global challenge to fight poverty. People's movements like Diakonia have an important role to play in monitoring that promised debt cancellations take place and in working to ensure that all those countries that need debt cancellation to fight pov-

When the catastrophic Tsunami hit, preparedness for aid efforts was in place through a well established network of partners in Sri Lanka and Somalia, who could give direct help to those affected whilst at the same time planning a sustainable strategy for the future.

erty and are seriously pursuing policies to reduce poverty, actually receive cancellations.

Diakonia continues to be part owner of the organisation *Rättvisemärkt* (*Fair Trade Label*). Through the international organisation, Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International, basic criteria have been agreed that must be met in order for a product to be considered to be fairly produced. The basic idea of fair trade labelling is to strengthen the position of disadvantaged people in global trade, so that they can become independent and gain more influence.³¹⁷

Cooperation with the Stockholm School of Theology

There has always been close cooperation between SFCA/Diakonia and the Stockholm School of Theology (formerly MCCS's Theological Seminary), which since 1994 has been directed by MCCS and BUS. At present there are discussions on closer cooperation in relation to development education and campaigns work focusing on human rights, Burma, the DRC, Palestine, trade/WTO and PRs/debt. Competence and knowledge exists concerning research projects, field studies for students, accredited courses etc. that can be used to the advantage of both parties. (2005 §12)

International Themes

In connection with the strategic plan for the period beginning 2003 three themes were adopted for the international work. These themes are to run through (be mainstreamed in) all the work supported. The first concerns the development of administrative routines and procedures and is described on page 245.

Gender Equality

Gender is the second theme to be mainstreamed in all the work of Diakonia and of its partners. The focus for work on gender equality is described in Chapter 2 page 63. On the basis of the policy adopted in 2001, Diakonia wants to contribute to changing the situation for both women and men in the world.

HIV & Aids

HIV & Aids was adopted as a prioritised area of work for Diakonia for the programme period 2004-2006. The Board adopted guidelines on how HIV & Aids should be included in all programme work in November 2004. No new objectives or new separate programmes were to be formulated, instead the process of working with HIV & Aids was to



take place within and strengthen previously approved programmes. Each planned area of work has to integrate an analysis of how the HIV & Aids pandemic can affect the achievement of the objectives and how the work can be complemented to reduce negative effects and promote the long-term sustainability of the work.

Within the project financed by Sida, personnel resources could be set aside for planning and carrying out internal training of personnel, building up and participating in networks, form-

The villagers of Santa Marta hope to generate a steady income through the cultivation and sale of tomatoes.

ing strategic partnerships for the work both in Sweden and internationally and work for programme development. The aim was for the HIV & Aids perspective to be completely integrated in the next strategic plan (2007–2009).

Finances

Over the years there has been a significant increase in requirements to prove that public funds are used in a way that provides the expected results on the basis of the objectives identified. This in turn requires clear, concrete and measurable goals and, on the basis of these goals, result based management of the programmes, well-defined methodologies/strategies and proven cost efficiency. In the last year, Diakonia has put a great deal of energy and resources into the development of methodologies for the programmes.³¹⁸

In financial terms the years 2002–2003 were tough. Diakonia lost income, not least due to the negative trend on the stock markets. This meant that Diakonia was forced to reduce its staffing levels. At the same time the total amount of funds raised for Diakonia was too low. The challenge was to create a trusted trademark. Fundraising was also discussed with the denominations in an attempt to find joint strategies (AGM 2003 §7).

One result of the new statutes was that a Preparatory Committee (PC) was formed to review the work. One interesting comment from the PC at the AGM in 2004 was the following statement from the minutes:

In relation to fundraising, Diakonia can be seen as competition to the denominations. At the same time we are glad to have Diakonia, and work on the assumption that Diakonia and the denominations must be able to work together. We suggest that a survey into members' giving is done in the congregations (2004 AGM §7d).

No survey has yet been carried out.

Sponsor of Change

In 2004 the concept of *Sponsor of change* was launched in order to create a clearer connection between donations and Diakonia's vision to change the world. In addition to giving a monthly donation to Diakonia via autogiro the sponsors commit themselves to take action for the world to become a more just place for all people, with a focus on improving the situation of the poor.

The Sida Grants

Sida's grants to development projects have always been conditional on the Swedish recipient organisation contributing 20% of the total budget themselves, as a so-called 'own contribution'. This has meant that Diakonia has often sent out information saying "if you give 100 crowns to Diakonia, Sida will give 400 crowns and it will become 500 crowns". In 2003 the Diakonia, together with the other organisations that receive 'framework' grants, called upon the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to initiate dialogue on the level of 'own contribution' required for the so-called 'grants for popular movements'. The hope was that the percentage would be reduced to 10% in line with several neighbouring countries. (2003 §52) The dialogue that then began resulted in the level of own contribution being reduced to 10% in Sweden from the beginning of 2005. This change means that Diakonia will be able to expand its work.

These same organisations also called upon the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in order to discuss the level of administration permitted within the grant. Today 8 percent of the grant can be used for administration and in certain cases only 5 percent. This level is very low given the extent of quality assurance now required. (2003 §52)

Swedish Radio Aid

Since 1967 Swedish Radio Aid has played a major role in SFCA/Diakonia, and this also applies to the last five years. Many of the areas hit by different types of disaster, for which Swedish Radio Aid has collected money, SFCA/Diakonia has been able to apply for and then channel funding to its partners. The *Children of the World* fundraising campaign has been running since 1997 and Diakonia has been part of it together with a number of other development agencies as a very active co-organiser. In addition to the fundraising providing Diakonia with large grants each year it has created lots of local activism in many congregations and thereby increased awareness of Diakonia as an organisation.

The Tsunami disaster

SFCA/Diakonia's history begins with a response to a disaster. On that occasion it was the drought in India and the year was 1966. In 2005 the story of Diakonia concludes with yet another disaster – the terrible Tsunami tidal wave that hit the Indian Ocean/Bay of Bengal on 26 December 2004. Preparedness for aid efforts was in place through a well-established network of partners in Sri Lanka and Somalia, who could give direct help to those

affected whilst at the same time planning a sustainable strategy for the future.

Diakonia's partner organisations in Sri Lanka have since the 1980's worked amongst other things with issues of peace and co-existence as well as giving psychological support to people affected by the conflict in the country. Following the Tsunami support for these existing partners has been increased, so that they can work with reconstruction in a variety of ways. Through this support Diakonia hopes to give the local population the opportunity to participate in and influence the long-term work of reconstruction.

Diakonia works on a long-term basis and plans to remain in the tsunami-affected countries in the future, providing support for sustainable development and democracy. In time relief work will progress into work to establish sustainable livelihoods and more permanent housing, and to create infrastructure and provide opportunities for education and employment.

For Diakonia the disaster was also a moment for major fundraising work during the first part of 2005. Of the 64 million crowns raised, 56 million crowns came from Swedish Radio Aid fundraising and 8 million from Diakonia's own supporters. In addition to this Diakonia channelled 4 million crowns from Sida.

Conclusion

It is not possible to describe the last five years work of Diakonia in total. However, it is easy to conclude that the vision and the Christian calling that once lay behind the decision that the Swedish Free Churches should 'be present' in the world remains, and is continually put into practice through support to partners around the world and through active lobbying and awareness-raising at home. This vision and calling lead Diakonia into the future.

One result of SFCA/Diakonia, throughout its history, having had an approach that involves working alongside and "accompanying" partners, is that the organisation has developed a unique ability to move with the challenges that stem from a world in which the political landscape is constantly changing. SFCA/Diakonia has always had the ability to re-evaluate and reorganise itself in order to better meet the new challenges it faces, in other words it has been a learning organisation.

Footnotes

The footnotes below list the catalogue reference and number under which documents and other paperwork are archived at the National Archives in Arninge, Sweden.

CHAPTER 1

The formation of Swedish Free Church Aid / Diakonia

1. Östberg, Kjell, 1968 *när allting var i rörelse: sextiotalsradikaliseringen* (Stockholm, Prisma, 2002) p 71
2. A Frenchman was probably the first person to use the term 'third world' in an analogy with the situation of the 'third station' (middle class and peasants) in the run up to the French revolution in 1789, when the third station formed 99 percent of the population but had no influence over political decisions made. In the 1950s the first world comprised the West, led by the USA, which created the international institutions of the post war period, including the IMF and World Bank, organisations that came to set the tone for economic development. The communist world, with the hegemony of the Soviet Union, placed itself outside of and rejected this economy and thus became the second world. The rest of the world was grouped together in the concept of the third world. (Ryman 1997), p 65
3. PM from Parliament, Utredningstjänsten, Dnr 2003:526
4. Östberg 2002, p 222
5. Broomé OP, Catharina, *Vatikankoncilet* (Stockholm, Verbum 1969), p 145 ff
6. Palmgren, Lars, 1990: *Viljans gränser* (Stockholm, Proprius), p 36
7. Olle Engström, Rector at the MCCS Theological Seminary 1962–1985, elected to WCC Executive Committee 1968. Conversation 26/8 2003.
8. Svenska Missionsförbundet (MCCS) changed its name in July 2003 to Svenska Missionskyrkan (Mission Covenant Church of Sweden).
9. From 1949–1985 Birger Davidsson was the Holiness Union's representative in SFCC and treasurer for SFC from 1949 to 1985, for SFCA from 1966 to 1980. Conversation 11/6 2003.
10. Torsten Bergsten, Doctor of Theology and docent in church history, author of the book *Frikyrkor in samverkan* (Free Churches in Cooperation). Conversation 3/10 2003
11. Letter 10 May 1968 (Diakonia, Correspondence 1966–1970, E1:1)
12. Diakonia's policy document *Tro är handling* (Faith is action), 1991 (Diakonia, printed documents, B1:1)
13. David Lagergren, President of BUS 1972–1984, during which time he was also a member of SFCC's board and the SFCA Committee. Conversation 15/4–05

14. Conversation with Walter Persson, 6/10 –05, President of MCCS and member of Diakonia's board 1983–1993

15. In 2005 terms this is equivalent to 5 283 956.61 crowns. (Taken from <http://www.scb.se/prislathund>)

16. Swedish Foundation for Fundraising Control website (<http://www.insamlingskontroll.se>)

17. Sida (the Swedish International Development Authority), the Swedish state development agency was given its name by Parliament on the 25 May 1965. The civil service department had previously been called *Nämnden for Internationellt Bistånd* (NIB). In 1995 the organisation's name changed to Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The abbreviation Sida was retained, written in lowercase form.

18. *Veckoposten* 16/6 1966

19. Per-Arne Aglert employed 1/9-67 as General Secretary for SFCC, a post he held until 1985.

20. Conversation 16 December 1969 (Diakonia, Minutes 1967/68, 1969, A2:1)

21. Conversation with Göthe Henriksson 17/10 2005. Göthe Henriksson was ÖM's representative on the Committee years 1979–2000.

22. Appendix to §10, 10 February 1975 (Diakonia, minutes A2:6)

23. Christian Council of Sweden, CCS, founded 1993.

24. Annual report to Sida 2001, (Diakonia's archive) p 3

25. Comment from Eskil Albertsson, 26/10 2005. President in SAM from 1977–1999 and member of SFCA Committee/Diakonia's board.

26. Appendix to the §10, 10 February 1975 (Diakonia, minutes 1975 A2:6)

27. Letter from Leo Liljengren and Lars Franklin, February 1974 (SFCA Correspondence 1975, E1:3)

28. Letter from Baptist Union of Sweden, 10/5 1968 (Diakonia, Correspondence 1966–1970, E1:1)

29. *Annual report 1967* (Diakonia, Minutes SFCA 1967–1970, A2:1)

30. *Sändaren*, nr 2/05

31. *Sändaren*, nr 3/05

32. Campaign reports from Fundraising Department

33. Letter from Krister Andersson, MCCS, (appendix 2003 §6)

34. Annual report 2003, (Diakonia's archive) p 41

35. Diakonia's statutes adopted 2003, §3 and §4

36. From a press release, May 1966 (Diakonia, Correspondence 1966–1970 E1:1)

37. *Annual report 1966* (Diakonia, Minutes SFCC 1966, A1:12)

38. Letter to the denominational press 13/10–66 (Diakonia Correspondence 1966–1970 E1:1)

39. Folder, appendix to the minutes April 1969, (Diakonia Minutes 1967/68, 1969 A2:1)

40. Appendix 1 to the minutes 3/8 1967 §4 (Diakonia Minutes 1967/68, 1969 A2:1)

41. *Annual reports 1975 and 1980*, (Diakonia Annual reports 1974–1979 and 1979–1992, B2:1, B2:3)

42. Elected to the committee: Hagen, MK, Rudén, BUS, Nicklasson and Eeg-Olofsson, MCCS and Secretary Aglert

56. Weapons-free National Service, work placement through Swedish Christian Youth Council (SCYC)

57. PM for the Committee's Conversation on SFCA's future 10/2 –75 (Diakonia, Minutes 1975 A2:6)

58. *Tro är handling* (Älvsjö, 1991), (Diakonia, Other own production, B1B:1) p 31

59. Website for Swedish Fundraising Council, FRII (<http://www.frii.se>)

60. Newspaper *Dagen*, 7 October 2004

61. *Development Mirror* (Diakonia, Other own production, B1B:7)

62. *Dela med* nr 1 –01, (Diakonia's archive), p 16

63. Annual report 1998, (Diakonia, Annual reports 1993–1998, B2:4), p 23

64. Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)

65. *Dela med* nr 4 –00, (Diakonia's archive), p 11

66. Annual report 2000, (Diakonia's archive), p 47

67. *Resan till La Paz* (Diakonia, In house production, B1B:7)

68. Annual report 2001, (Diakonia's archive), p 33

CHAPTER 2

Organisation

43. Text from the folder *Röster om Diakonia* (Documents concerning projects in Sweden, F1:2)

44. Employed as field representative in Central America 1981–1983. Conversation with Anders Kompass 16/6–05

45. Annual report to Sida 1999, (Diakonia's archive) p 2

46. Annual report 2000, p 12 f (Diakonia's archive)

47. Annual report 2000, (Diakonia's archive) p 16 f

48. Annual report 2001 (Diakonia's archive), p 10 ff

49. Interview with Anna-Karin Gauding 31/3 2005

50. Annual report 1975 (Diakonia B2:1)

51. Roland and Ingegerd Einebrant were employed at the office in Bangladesh 1975–1978

52. Conversation with Ida Renman 26/8 2003

53. Annual report 1991, p 119, 1993 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:3, 4), p 69

54. Pierre Schori at Diakonia concert 11 December 1994. (*Dela med* nr 1/95 B1A:2), p 11

55. *Dela med* nr 1/95 (Diakonia, In house production 1990–1999, B1A:2) p 8 ff

CHAPTER 3

Bangladesh

69. 26 September 1867 is considered to be the date when the Norwegian Santal Mission began.

70. Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Countries in pocket format, India (Stockholm 1990)

71. Letter from Jean Malm, öM, 25/5 1967 (Diakonia Correspondence, 1966–1970 E:1:1)

72. Over 1000 dead in Indian disaster, Svenska Dagbladet (6 October 1968) (Diakonia Correspondence, 1966–1970 E:1:1)

73. From a report from World Council of Churches (3/12 1970) (Diakonia Correspondence, 1966–1970 E:1:1)

74. From an appeal from Preclam Press 18/11 1970 (Diakonia Correspondence, 1966–1970, E:1:1)

75. Letter from Evert Eriksson (Diakonia Correspondence, 1971 E:1:2)

76. Appeal for Refugee 71 (Diakonia Correspondence 1971, E:1:2)

77. Application to Swedish Radio Aid (Diakonia Correspondence 1971, E:1:2)

78. Fundraising appeal to the congregations (Diakonia Correspondence 1971, E:1:2)

79. Sida-application 1973 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:2)

80. Conversation with Leo Liljengren 28/1 2003

81. Ernst Michanek NIB/Sida:s General Director years 1964–1979

82. Letter from Leo Liljengren 16/9 1975 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1973–74, F3A:1)

83. Correspondence. (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1973–1974 F3A:1)

84. Letter from Lars Franklin 20/3 1974. (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1973–74, F3A:1)

85. Appendix to the minutes 11/5 1977 (Diakonia, Minutes 1977, A2:8)

86. Letter from Roland Einebrant 5/12 1976. (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:2)

87. Conversation with Roland Einebrant, 8/6 20–04.

88. *Meeting with Bangladesh* – report from FS-seminar 1981 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:14)

89. Letter from Leo Liljengren 28/4 75. (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:2) and SFCA-Committee minutes 1980 §298. (Diakonia, Minutes 1979–1980, A2:12)

90. SFCA annual report 1980. (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:2) p 105–106

91. Annual report 1975 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:1), p 18

92. Letter from Leo Liljengren 15/4 1974 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1973–74, F3A:1)

93. Letter from Sida 7/11 1974 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1973–74, F3A:1)

94. Letter and report (SFCA, Documents concerning projects 1979–1983, Bangladesh, F3A:15)

95. Letter from Roland Einebrant 22/1 1976. (Diakonia, Documents concerning projects, Bangladesh, F3A:2)

96. From a press release from Preclam Press 3/11 1976 (Diakonia, Documents concerning projects, Bangladesh, F3A:2)

97. Annual report 86/87 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:3) p 63

98. Conversation with Sultana Begum 15/6 2004.

99. Sida application 1985/86 (Diakonia Completed projects, F3A:26)

100. Minutes from staff meeting 1987 §54, People's Factory, Rajshahi (Diakonia, Correspondence F3A:25)

101. From article written by Göran Jonsson, 1978 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:14)

102. Tomas Das: *An introduction to Diakonia in Bangladesh* (1989)

103. Göran Jonsson's report from a visit to Bangladesh 1985 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh F3A:25)

104. Letter from Tomas Das 7/4 87 (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh, F3A:25)

105. Diakonia annual report 1984/85 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:3), p 88, 89

106. Sida application 87/88 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, F9:5)

107. Annual report 1989, p 67 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:3)

108. Appendix to 1992 §89, Bo Forsbergs travel report, (Diakonia, Minutes, A2:27)

109. Sida application 1990/91 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, F9:8)

110. From Sida accounts 1998 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, 1998, F9:20)

111. Diakonia annual report 1988 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:3) p 59

112. Sida application 1998 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, 1998, F9:20)

113. Sida accounts 2003 (Diakonia's archive)

114. Report from Sultana Begum 23/8 –05

115. Annual reports 1998 (Diakonia, Annual reports B2:4), p 16

116. Press release. (Diakonia, Correspondence 1977, E:1:6)

117. *Dela med 4/01* (Diakonia's archive), p 9

118. Letter from Roland Einebrant 22/1 –76 (Diakonia, Correspondence 1975–76, E:1:4)

119. From Sida accounts 18/1 –82 ((Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1980–82, F3A:14))

120. Report from study visit (Diakonia, Documents Bangladesh 1980–82, F3A:14)

CHAPTER 4

Palestine and Israel

121. Letter to the congregations June 1967, (Appendix to the minutes 3 Aug 1967, §4, A2:1)

122. Swedish Institute of International Affairs: Israel/Palestine p 18 f

123. Chapman, Colin *Vem utlovade land?* (EFS-förlaget, Stockholm 1984) p 23 ff, Swedish Institute of International Affairs: Israel/Palestine, p 19

124. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugee in the Near East. UNRWA was formed in 1950, with the aim of supporting families

forced to flee following the formation of the state of Israel 1948. The mission was to assist over 2 million registered Palestinian refugees.

125 Chapman, p 23 f

126 *Med vilken rätt?* (Diakonia and Swedish Church, 2005), p 9

127 Appendix 115 §102 21/11 1972 (Diakonia, Minutes 1972, A2:3)

128 Letter 28/8 -67 (Diakonia, correspondence, E1:1)

129 Amnå, Erik: *Det gäller Palestina* (Stockholm: Gummesson 1981) p 9

130 Appendix to § 10, 10 February 1975 (Diakonia, Minutes 1975, A2:6)

131 Appendix to 1996 §51.5 (Diakonia, Minutes 1996, A2:31)

132 Appendix 14 to §32 27/11 1968 (Diakonia, Minutes 1967–1970, A2:1)

133 Letter from Swedish Radio Aid to December 1970 (Diakonia, Minutes 1967–1970, A2:1)

134 Appendix to the minutes 1971 §89 (Diakonia, Minutes 1971, A2:2)

135 Document in Sida application 3/7 1975 (Diakonia, Documents concerning projects, F6A:1)

136 Sida application 1983 (Diakonia, Documents concerning projects, F6A:3)

137 Annual report 1977/78, p 26 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:1)

138 Annual report 81/82 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:3), p 121

139 1980 §53, *Dela med* 3/81 p 1, 3 (Diakonia, In house production, B1A:1)

140 Frame application 81/82 (Diakonia, Minutes 1981–1982, A2:14)

141 Annual report 86/87 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:2), p 43

142 Annual report 1989 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:3), p 80

143 Annual report 1990 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:3), p 44

144 *Dela med* 3/4 1991 (Diakonia, In house production, B1A:2), p 8

145 Annual report 1991 (Diakonia, Annual reports, B2:2), p 96

146 Letter from Ivan Magnusson, appendix to 1990 §125 (Diakonia Minutes 1989–1990, A2:24)

147 Report from study visit for representatives 1996, (Diakonia, Travel diary, B3:3), p 30 ff

148 *Dela med* 2/96 (Diakonia, In house production, B1A:2), p 4

149 Frame application 1989–90 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, F9:7)

150 Report from study visit for representatives 1996 (Diakonia, Travel diary, B3:3) p 62, 63

151 Report from study visit for representatives 1996 (Diakonia, Travel diary, B3:3) p 37 f

152 Annual report 1995 (Diakonia, Annual reports 1995, B2:3) p 83

153 *Dela med* 1/2000 (Diakonia's archive) p 3 konia, Annual reports 1995, B2:4) p 36

155 Annual report 1993, p 36 (Diakonia, Annual reports 1995, B2:4)

156 *Dela med* 2/96, (Diakonia, In house production, B1A:2)

157 Annual report 2000, (Diakonia's archive) p 43

158 *Med vilken rätt?* (Diakonia's archive) p 21 f

159 Gunner, Göran, *I skuggan av ockupationen* (Publishing firm Atlas, Stockholm, 2004) p 63 f

160 *Med vilken rätt?* p 15 f

161 *Med vilken rätt?* (Diakonia's archive) p 13 ff

162 Annual report 2000 to Sida (Diakonia's archive)

163 Annual report 2000 (Diakonia's archive), p 43 f

164 Press release 15 March 2005 (Diakonia's archive)

165 Carl Niehaus at the funeral service

166 In 1948 the National Party won the election and the party introduced apartheid – the separation of races. The thinking was that all Africans should live in separate 'homelands' that were created for each of the African ethnic groups on the land allocated to blacks through the law reform of 1913. (*South Africa, Pocket country guide*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm)

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200 Chikane, p 12

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233 Frank Chikane, today Director General for the Presidency

234 Conversation with Molefe Tsele, director for SACC, 24/9 -04

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258 Conversation with Miguel Tomas Castro, 30/8 -05
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260 Anna-Karin Gauding was employed in South America 1976-1980
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265 Conversation with Carlos Sanchez 30/8 -05
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282 Conversation with Oscar Perez 30/8 -05
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295 Sida application 1991/92 (Diakonia, Documents concerning finances, F9:8)
296 Diakonia's annual report 2003 (Diakonia's archive), p 26ff
297 Conversation with Hans Magnusson 17/8-05, who from 1993-1997 worked at Diakonia's office in El Salvador.

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298 Strategic plan 2001-2002 (Diakonia's archive), p 7
299 Diakonia's regional manager for Southern Africa, Ulf Rickardsson, *Annual report 2002* (Diakonia's archive), p 30
300 Government decision 9 December 1999, Committee Directive Dir. 1999:80
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303 Summary, @Åke Wissing & Co
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308 Annual report to Sida 2003 (Diakonia's archive), p 1

309 Sida application 2004 (Diakonia's archive)

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311 WTO, World Trade Organisation

312 TRIPS, agreement on trade related aspects of intellectual property rights, such as patents, copyright etc

313 Annual report 2002 and 2003 (Diakonia's archive), p 13 f, p 30

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Appendix

People and organisations that have received SFCA/Diakonia's Peace Prize

1978 Christian Institute, Pastor Beyers Naudé, South Africa, and Mouvement Social, Lebanon, and its Director Bishop Grégorie Haddad

1980 Archbishop Oscar Romero, El Salvador

1981 Human Rights Committee of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Nam-Ki Cho

1982 The organisation Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Avi Oz

1984 Servicie Paz y Justicia, Uruguay, Ademar Olivera and Efrain Olivera Lerena

1985 The civil rights organisation KAPATID, Philippines

1987 Institute for Contextual Theology, Pastor Frank Chikane

1989 The organisation Satyodaya, Sri Lanka, Father Paul Caspersz

1993 The Committee for Peace and Reconciliation of the Christian Council of Mozambique, Bishop Sengulane

1994 The Social Secretariat of the Catholic Bishops' Office, Guatemala, Bishop Girardi

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15 Hanna Lagerlöf

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21 Drawer: Folke Ahlstrand (MCCS's archive)
23 Per-Anders Thunqvist, MCCS's archive
26 Göran Jonsson, Diakonia's archive, K2:5
36 Diakonia's archive K2:8
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56 Diakonia's archive, K2:3
59 Ingvar Hansson, Diakonia's archive, K2:1
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65 Diakonia archive, K2:2
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74 Mats Gunnarsson, Diakonia's archive K2:8

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95 Göran Jonsson, Diakonia's archive K2:3
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166 Ulf Södahl
167 Ulf Södahl
169 Robban Andersson
170 Robban Andersson
172 Per-Anders Thunqvist, Diakonia's archive K2:8
174 Ulf Södahl
176 Ulf Södahl
177 Diakonia's archive K2:2
178 Diakonia's archive K2:8
183 Ulf Södahl
185 Robban Andersson
187 Diakonia's archive B1B:1
189 Robban Andersson
191 Annika Lysén
193 Ulf Södahl
194 Robban Andersson

197 Diakonia's archive K2:2

199 Marcus Marcetic

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202 Diakonia's archive K2:6
205 Rickard Kilström
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249 Robban Andersson
253 Marcus Marcetic
255 Pedro Garcia

There was a cry for help.
India was struck by drought.
Could the Christians in Sweden help in any way?

The year was 1966, and what started out as a free church social aid effort didn't end with the drought in India.

People Changing the World is the book about how Diakonia grew to become an i development organisation that has supported positive forces across the world for 40 years. Throughout this time Diakonia has also been a voice in Swedish society, speaking for the poor and vulnerable.

– We have been able to receive support without fear of any hidden agenda. Diakonia simply wanted to support the achievement of the objectives we had set up ourselves, says Frank Chikane. He is a pastor in South Africa and has worked with Diakonia for many years.

Sultana Begum, who works for Diakonia in Bangladesh, says that it was right to start by building schools and investing in health care - but if you are going to build a country, you have to build people.

Whilst the TV screen is filled by disasters, violence and poverty, Diakonia continues its long-term work with organisations and individuals to change the world. *People changing the world* is a book full of encounters with these people.

Rachel Norborg-Jerkeby, the author of *People Changing the World – 40 years of Diakonia*, works as Information Secretary at Diakonia.

