

Diakonia Complaints and Incident reports 2013



Text: March for peace in Colombia 2013

Diakonia's complaints and response mechanism

Diakonia is committed to work in an open and responsible way that builds the trust and development and humanitarian programming and seeks to work with affected communities and populations in the best way possible.

To ensure continuous improvement of our work we are open to all complaints regarding our work in the countries where we operate, including Sweden. We do, however, encourage that comments and complaints regarding our work are raised and discussed with responsible Diakonia staff members and managers as close to the activity as possible.

Annual report on complaints

Diakonia set up a web based complaints and response mechanism (CRM) during 2013, when the CRM roll-out plan for the entire organization started. This is the first annual report made, and although there are few cases reported in the system during 2013, we know already that it works.

Diakonia will summarize the organizational learning from complaints handling in annual reports without revealing any information about the details of complaints, and of course leaving out any information about the complainant. The annual reports are focusing on learning points and how Diakonia aims at improving our way of working. The report is available at Diakonia's website.

From January 1 to December 31, 2013 Diakonia received 3 complaints/incidents. Of these 2 cases concerns complaints against Diakonia and 1 case concerns a staff member in a partner organization.

9 incidents have been reported through Diakonia's internal report system for staff. We like to mention this because they help the organization to improve staff security and working conditions. Incidents are high-lighted this way and made know to Senior Management at HO. Lessons learned are incorporated in Human Resource procedures.

Complaints and incident reported during 2013 through CRM complaint site

File no:	2013.CC1	Year:	2013
Content of the complaint:			
The complaint was about the cover photo on Diakonia's 2011 Annual Report, which depicted a female teacher. According to her, the picture depicted her in bad light and had been published without her consent. An initial verbal complaint had been made in November 2012 and a written complaint made on 2nd July 2013, with a threat to sue Diakonia and the Ministry of Education in the country in question.			
What we did:			
A discussion was held between the complainant and the Diakonia Country Representative in July 2013 to allay the misunderstandings. After the discussions, the teacher indicated that she wanted to get her written complaint back but still threatened a lawsuit. Advice was sought from Head Office regarding how to proceed, since the photographer who took the picture was contracted through Head Office.			
Lessons learned:			
The following steps have to be taken before using photos;			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow up by contracting staff that contracted photographers understand and follow Diakonia's Photo policy. 2. Consent from the persons in the photos is sought before the photos are taken and/or used in any publication, social media or website. 3. Diakonia publications that have used photos from right holders in Somalia are shared with the right holders at the earliest possible time after publication, for their comment. 			
File no:	2013.CC2	Year:	2013

Content of the complaint:
One member of staff in a partner organization paid a higher salary to herself than the organizations policy allowed during 2012 and half of 2013. This was done openly, but control systems within the organization were weak so this was not discovered directly. The staff member was fired and the police are investigating this matter. The partner has hope of recovering all the funds during 2014.
What we did:
Diakonia coordinated closely with the other donors. The efforts where aimed at both strengthening the partners administrative and economic systems, and bring clarity of the actual incident. During 2013 the partners managed to strengthen their systems substantially. Also the incident opened up for closer dialogue among donors to the partner.
Lessons learned:
It is difficult to discover these types of embezzlements through a regular audit. Closer control of partner's system and their implementation is needed. By coordinating with other donors, we reduced the work for partners, and are also able to motivate partners to make systematic changes.

File no:	2013.CC3	Year:	2013
Content of the complaint:			
A complaint was filed by a partner organization regarding the Diakonia country management. The partner complained that the country office had unjust broken the contractual agreement, and the partner felt discriminated against.			
What we did:			
An internal investigation was made. All involved parties where interviewed. During the investigation the partner organization decided to terminate the partnership with Diakonia. Violation of code of conduct has not been substantiated.			
Lessons learned:			
The monitoring and follow up methods of Diakonia have to be followed. The importance of a continuous and good dialogue partner organization on all levels in the organization has been highlighted.			