



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

World Service


Member of **actalliance**



# For Hope and a Future

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*The Lutheran World Federation  
World Service Global Strategy 2019-2024*

A photograph of a man in a red and black striped shirt walking on a dirt road in a refugee camp. The background shows rows of blue tents and a fence on the left. The sky is overcast.

*“The focus of our strategy remains clear: it is always on the people we serve. At the center of everything we do are the people involved in and affected by our work: refugees, internally displaced people, returnees, host communities, and communities at risk.”*

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Published by: Office for Communication Services,  
Department for Planning and Operations

Route de Ferney 150  
P. O. Box 2100 1211  
Geneva 2, Switzerland

Design: Weaver Creative  
[www.weavercreative.co.nz](http://www.weavercreative.co.nz)

ISBN: 978-2-940459-90-2



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*Iraqis walk around the Khanke camp, near the Iraqi Kurdistan city of Duhok, where the LWF operates.*

Photo: LWF/S. Cox.

Cover image: A young boy drinks from a well installed by the LWF in the Viengphoukha District, Laos. Photo: LWF/Thomas Lohnes.

# CONTENTS

---

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>04</b>
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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>07</b>
---------------------	-----------

---

## 1 Who We Are **08**

1.1 Vision and Mission	09
1.2 Values and Principles	10
1.2.1 Dignity, Human Rights, and Justice	10
1.2.2 Compassion and Commitment	10
1.2.3 Inclusion and Diversity	10
1.2.4 Meaningful Participation	10
1.2.5 Transparency and Accountability	11
1.2.6 Humanitarian Principles	11
1.2.7 Gender Justice	11
1.2.8 Climate Justice	11

---

## 2 The World We Are Part Of **13**

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## 3 Where and How We Work **17**

3.1 Country Operations, Global Access	17
3.2 A Focus on the Most Vulnerable	17
3.3 Flexible Ways of Operating	18
3.4 Gender Analysis and Action at the Center	18
3.5 Rights-Based and “Local to Global” in All We Do	18
3.6 Committed to Sustainability and a Low Carbon Footprint	19
3.7 High Expectations of Staff Conduct	19

---

## 4 Networking and Collaboration **20**

4.1 Local Communities	20
4.2 Civil Society	20
4.3 LWF Member Churches	21
4.4 Governments and Other Duty-Bearers	21
4.5 Ecumenical and Interfaith Communities	22
4.6 Related Organizations	22
4.7 United Nations Agencies	23
4.8 Global Networks	23

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<b>5</b>	<b>Programmatic Framework</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1	Programmatic Area: Livelihoods	31
5.1.1	Individual and Household Livelihood Support	31
5.1.2	Community-Level Livelihoods	32
5.1.3	Stimulating Livelihoods at Institutional and Policy Levels	33
5.2	Programmatic Area: Quality Services	35
5.2.1	Meeting Individuals' Basic Needs in Times of Crisis	36
5.2.2	Strengthening Services at the Community Level	36
5.2.3	Strengthening Policies and Institutions Governing Service Provision	37
5.3	Programmatic Area: Protection and Social Cohesion	39
5.3.1	Supporting Fulfillment of Basic Human Rights for Individuals and Families	39
5.3.2	Promoting Community-Based Protection and Social Cohesion	40
5.3.3	Strengthening Institutional, Legal and Policy Protection Frameworks	41

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<b>6</b>	<b>Systems and Practices for Quality Programming</b>	<b>42</b>
6.1	Aligned Support Structures and Systems	42
6.2	Resource Mobilization and Sustainable Funding	43
6.3	Robust Financial Management	43
6.4	Intentional Relations Management	43
6.5	Quality and Accountability	44
6.6	Safety and Security	44
6.7	Knowledge Management and Learning	45
6.8	Investing in People	45
6.9	Green Infrastructure	45

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## FOREWORD

*This 2019–2024 World Service Global Strategy presents a new approach to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service’s work worldwide. It sets a clear direction for an effective, integrated, and relevant response to increasingly complex and ever-changing operational contexts.*

But the focus of our strategy remains clear: it is always on the people we serve. At the center of everything we do are the people involved in and affected by our work: refugees, internally displaced people, returnees, host communities, and communities at risk. Our work aims to build their capacities and empower them to act as citizens and human beings in fragile, frequently violent, environments affected by rapid and often calamitous change. The inherent dignity and human rights of every individual are central to our approaches and inform our decision-making at every level.

**Our work builds on three interrelated programmatic areas:**



**Livelihoods**



**Quality services**



**Protection and social cohesion**

LWF World Service has decades of experience in these areas and will use this strategic period to enhance our capacity to innovate and develop new ways of working within them, particularly by addressing the overlapping and connected challenges that they present.

Notably, each of the three programmatic areas spans the humanitarian assistance, recovery, and long-term development phases. This is because we acknowledge that each of these phases can exist simultaneously in specific country contexts or regions, or indeed can change quickly from one to the other and back again.

*A unique strength of World Service is our ability to move between these phases and flexibly adapt our approaches to changing contexts due to our rootedness at the community level.*

World Service's ways of working are also flexible: ranging from direct Implementation to working through partners. As an international non-governmental organization (NGO), we have a role to play that can strengthen civil society at many levels: building local networks; bringing them together with other organizations at the national level; and enabling access to international human rights processes. This is our "local to global" approach to advocacy.

As a faith-based organization, we intentionally relate and work not only with our own LWF member churches and other ecumenical partners, but also interfaith organizations, secular, governmental, regional, and international bodies. We bring the insights from our work that place people at the center, in order to build effective, joint approaches that can bring additional

hope, address root causes, and increase the positive impact on lives worldwide.

This strategy highlights our increased emphasis on addressing climate change, both with regard to humanitarian and development work on the ground, and through engagement in relevant policy debates at national, regional, and international levels. It also reflects the increasingly insecure environments in which we operate and the challenges these bring to our operations. Growing focus on the opportunities and challenges of digitalization in our sector also allows space for exciting new ways of working with communities and staff for positive change.

We have chosen a new motto for this strategy `For hope and a future` (Jeremiah 29:11). The LWF has, at its beginning and through its constitution, committed to "the alleviation of human need, promotion of peace and human rights, social and economic justice, care for God's creation, and sharing of resources." The work of World Service is its expression and tool for solidarity and service to those most in need – with a vision of hope and a future.

Maria Immonen  
Director, World Service

*LWF staff in the Mbera refugee camp, Mauritania, which is home to over 50,000 refugees from Mali.*

Photo: LWF/C. Kästner.





# INTRODUCTION

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*This document will guide the work of the LWF World Service from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2024. It is closely connected to the LWF's Global Strategy, covering the same period.*

*The LWF World Service Strategy is the highest-level document within the department and is the framework to which all country-level strategies align. This strategy therefore applies to all World Service staff and introduces their work to World Service partners. It explains who we are, what we want to achieve, and how we hope to achieve it.*

# 1.

## WHO WE ARE

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*LWF World Service is the humanitarian and development arm of the LWF. LWF is a global communion of churches shaped by the insights of the Lutheran Reformation as they are interpreted in our diverse contexts today.*

God's liberating grace empowers and calls us to active and constructive engagement with the world. We relate to people in need as our neighbors whom we love and serve and whose dignity we strongly affirm. Our faith affirms the dignity of every human being, and this forms the basis of human rights. A commitment to the human rights of every individual, regardless of their status, guides our work, actions, and operations.

From LWF's beginning in 1947, its member churches have mandated World Service as their key actor in international diakonia (service to others) to assist all those in need without discrimination of any kind. Today, World Service is a widely

recognized, international, faith-based organization working in 28 countries. We seek to bring people of all backgrounds together in the common quest for justice, peace, and reconciliation in an increasingly complex and fragmented world.

We are particularly known for our timely, compassionate, and professional humanitarian work, and for our field presence in hard-to-reach areas. Our work is people centered and community-based. Above all, we work with the most vulnerable, and in order to claim and uphold their rights, we engage proactively with local government and community structures.



A defining feature of World Service is its local rootedness and global connectivity, linking local community voices with international dialogue, advocacy, and peace work.

Our emphasis on linking relief with recovery and development enables a flexible approach to meeting human needs and upholding human rights in multiple, demanding environments, as tasked by the member churches of LWF. We are committed to longer term solutions, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that address root causes of poverty so that all can enjoy their rights and a life with dignity.

World Service actively engages with churches, related organizations, interfaith partners, and secular actors, including the United Nations (UN). As part of LWF, we have relationships with our member churches and their development and humanitarian organizations. We are the largest implementing member of the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, an international network of Protestant and Orthodox churches and organizations engaged in development, humanitarian response, and advocacy.

Working together with others enables us to prepare for and respond to emerging challenges in a variety of fragile contexts all over the world.

## **1.1 Vision and Mission**

*World Service's work is guided by LWF's vision of a just, peaceful, and reconciled world, liberated by God's grace.*

### **Vision**

People of the world, living in just societies in peace and dignity, united in diversity, are able to meet their basic needs, achieve their full potential, and claim their universal rights in order to improve their quality of life individually and collectively.

### **Mission**

Inspired by God's love for all of humanity, World Service is dedicated to challenging and addressing the causes and effects of human suffering and poverty, linking local responses to national and international advocacy.

## 1.2 Values and Principles

### **Dignity, Human Rights, and Justice**

We believe that every person has the right to a dignified life, free of abuse, discrimination, and oppression. We believe that upholding human rights is fundamental to people being able to move out of poverty, to bring about justice and peace, and for development to be sustainable. Each person's God-given dignity has formed the basis of international human rights principles and conventions<sup>1</sup>, which guide our work, actions, and operations.

### **Compassion and Commitment**

We are dedicated to working with those who are suffering, those who are unable to speak up for

themselves, and those who live in areas where others do not go. We go that extra mile to reach out to those who may have been forgotten or are considered out of reach.

### **Inclusion and Diversity**

We believe in the value and power of diversity and inclusion within the communities where we work as well as within our own workforce.

### **Meaningful Participation**

We believe that sustainable development is based on the meaningful participation of all people in our programs, regardless of gender, age, and ability. Participation means people are part of decision-making and can hold local duty-bearers to account.

<sup>1</sup> Key international human rights frameworks: Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Convention on the Rights of the Child; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and Geneva Conventions relative to humanitarian law (that is, Treatment of Prisoners of War and Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War).

### **Transparency and Accountability**

We are strongly committed to transparency and accountability to the people we work with and communities, partners, and donors. We set high quality standards and regularly monitor our efforts for continuous improvement. We are aligned with international standards<sup>2</sup> and have developed our own complaints-handling mechanism.

### **Humanitarian Principles**

We provide support to people irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or political conviction, without discrimination or favoritism. We subscribe to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

### **Gender Justice**

We believe that women and men, both created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation. Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations between women and men. We are committed to eliminating institutional, cultural, and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination against women.

### **Climate Justice**

We recognize that the impact of climate change is often felt first and most acutely by those who suffer from extreme poverty. We are committed to ensuring that our programs minimize the immediate and long-term risks of climate change to those communities we serve.

<sup>2</sup> Such as the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and the Sphere Project (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response).

*An agricultural technician inspects a corn field in El Salvador where harvests have been destroyed by drought, an effect of climate change.*

Photo: Sean Hawkey



# 2.

## THE WORLD WE ARE PART OF

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*The past two decades have seen enormous strides in many fields of human development. The number of people living in poverty has declined greatly on all continents; undernourishment has been halved globally; maternal and child mortality rates have fallen in all regions; and the number of children going to school and accessing quality education has risen steadily. Access to basic services has improved and basic human, economic, social, and cultural rights have been achieved for larger numbers than ever before.*

International cooperation has resulted in a global agreement on how to combat climate change. The Human Rights Council has been established and global collaboration to address the common challenges of climate change has taken significant steps forward. Many countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have seen sustained periods of

steady growth, progress in many social sectors and political liberties and increased well-being for all citizens. Development in digitalization, technological innovations, access to information, and connectivity provide unprecedented opportunities for positive change in the lives of the poor and marginalized at a global level.

At the same time, however, the world is currently witnessing the steady rise of internally displaced people and refugees to unprecedented numbers, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting more than 65 million people forced to leave their homes in 2017, more than half of these children.

*Violence, war, insecurity, and complex, protracted disasters are made worse by the negative effects of climate change.*

The rise in religious extremism and the politicization of religion adds to the complexity of many humanitarian contexts. A global growth in populist and nationalist politics has led to increased discrimination against migrants and refugees, contempt for international human rights law, principles, and values, and the politicization of development assistance.

Humanitarian frameworks are overstretched and unable to provide an adequate response to critical situations in many parts of the world. International political processes intended to end conflict and limit its impact are proving impotent.

Since the Paris Declaration was signed in 2016, scientific reports from many academic and research institutions confirm the rapid acceleration of climate change, reporting more rapid warming than expected in the Polar Regions and in global average temperatures. The effect of these changes is disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable populations, including women and girls, and serves as one root cause of many protracted conflicts.

Significant evidence of the shrinking space of civil society affects the capacity of humanitarian and development organizations to work in many countries. The security of our staff is increasingly a concern in environments where the legitimacy and relevance of the work is questioned, and the accountability of governments remains weak toward their citizens.



Deep-rooted instability, increasing inequality between the rich and the poor, weakening support for human rights, and the limited capacity of states to provide all their citizens with basic services have significant bearing on the working environment of World Service. Social cohesion and conducive environments for human development, collaboration, and prosperity are threatened in many places in the world.

*Important international processes intended to bring humanitarian action closer will shape the humanitarian and development environment for decades to come.*

Such action must work on resilience, disaster preparedness, and development focusing on livelihoods, using all possible resources to address the root causes of conflict and displacement.

Central to this action are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Grand Bargain, the Istanbul Principles, and the processes to develop Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration. In these debates, the important issues related to funding, transparency, accountability, collaboration with the private sector and safeguarding are where sustained engagement and dialogue will be needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of work in this field.

All of these elements shape the working environment of World Service, which continues to be well-placed to address the challenges of conflict and instability in the world today and tomorrow.



*Rawand is a Palestinian oncologist at the Augusta Victoria Hospital. The facility is run by the LWF in Jerusalem.*

Photo: LWF/M. Renaux.

# 3

## WHERE AND HOW WE WORK

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### 3.1 Country Operations, Global Access

LWF World Service works primarily in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. This provides us with a diverse global presence, in some of the most insecure parts of the world and in quite different and often rapidly changing contexts.

Our representation in Geneva offers us direct access to other international humanitarian actors and networks, and we have accredited NGO consultative status at the UN. This opens up avenues for us to leverage LWF's added value as an international organization, to share our practical experiences, and to influence policies and practice at regional and international levels.

*Our operations are managed at country or regional levels. They vary in focus and areas of intervention according to needs, situation, context, local capacity, geography, and the availability of resources.*

### 3.2 A Focus on the Most Vulnerable

World Service supports refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) who, for a shorter or longer period, are unable to return to their homes.

We work with returnees, helping them to settle back into their original contexts, and also with host communities and local governments who are receiving displaced people or returnees.

*We work with communities at risk, specifically those vulnerable to natural disasters or who lose large numbers of community members due to migration. We seek to prevent the effects of poverty and injustice by building long-term resilience.*

### **3.3 Flexible Ways of Operating**

Depending on the context, we adopt different ways of operating, ranging from direct implementation to local partnerships, to joint programming with other national or international partners, always focusing on working in a way that will best address the needs and rights of the people with whom we work.

In humanitarian situations, we bring expertise as a direct implementer, well-known for our impartiality and commitment to ensuring meaningful participation. We reinforce community-based organizations and empower local leadership structures, both governmental and traditional, to fulfill their duties. This gives us credibility in the long-term when it comes to advocacy and connecting the grassroots to the international level.

In contexts with a vibrant civil society and strong community-based structures, we work through credible local partners, including churches and NGOs. These partners bring additional expertise relevant to the context we are working in to ensure that solutions are durable. As LWF, we take a keen interest in working with churches, related organizations, other faith communities, and faith-based organizations, in ecumenical and interfaith collaboration.

### **3.4 Gender Analysis and Action at the Center**

Across all our programs, we mobilize men, women, boys, and girls, communities, and local and national governments to jointly address inequities in power relations between men and women. We seek to eliminate systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination, and change attitudes and practices in families, communities, and institutions. We follow the LWF Gender Justice Policy in building gender awareness and competencies, and using data and tools to assess local understandings and practices related to gender.

### **3.5 Rights-Based and “Local to Global” in All We Do**

In everything we do, we seek to apply a rights-based approach, combining fundamental rights with practical ways of addressing vulnerabilities in partnership with local populations and duty-bearers. We support the people we work with to claim their rights, and find that the denial of rights and freedom is often at the center of vulnerability and poverty. As part of the rights-based approach, LWF regularly engages in advocacy work to bring attention to important issues wherever we work.

*We base our rights-based and advocacy work at the local level, in the communities where we work, enabling local populations to claim their rights and engage with local duty-bearers to look together for solutions and interventions.*

Based on that local engagement, LWF works with partners through advocacy at national and international levels to secure changes in policy and practice. Such higher-level transformations reinforce positive outcomes for local people while securing change more widely on specific rights issues. We call this our “local to global” approach, using our years of local experiences and unique contact with small communities to create international awareness and collective action. Country programs are also able to leverage our global weight intentionally to secure local and national effect. We aim to use this approach in all of our programmatic areas, with interventions at local, national, and global levels.

### **3.6 Committed to Sustainability and a Low Carbon Footprint**

We strive to implement, step by step, the resolution that was adopted during the 2017 LWF Assembly to respond to the climate crisis. Accordingly, we aim to strengthen our efforts to achieve climate justice and to work toward carbon neutrality, including through enhanced energy efficiency and the replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energies in our operations, through saving water, and by raising awareness for environmental care and protection, wherever possible.

### **3.7 High Expectations of Staff Conduct**

Moral and ethical behavior is expected at all levels within World Service. No matter where our operations are, we hold our staff accountable to treating all people with the utmost dignity. We recognize that especially in humanitarian crises and in fast-growing operations with many new recruits, we need to work harder and more intensively to ensure that all staff are aware of and adhere to the LWF Staff Code of Conduct. We are committed to ensuring that our complaints and feedback mechanisms are robust and are set up from the onset of project planning and implementation to prevent and address misconduct appropriately.

# 4.

## NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

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*Recognizing that we are more effective when we work with others, World Service operates through strategic partnerships and networks. Managing these relationships in a spirit of cooperation and mutual accountability is key to the future viability and effectiveness of our programs. These partnerships range from local communities to global networks.*

### 4.1 Local Communities

Collaboration with local communities and populations is critical to ensure that programs involve the most appropriate people in the most suitable way. The nature and extent of these relationships varies depending on the context. Communities can range from grassroots or village community-based organizations to local churches or other faith-based groups. The voice of local communities is included in all aspects of the project cycle, and it is to them that we are ultimately accountable.

### 4.2 Civil Society

We connect community members and community-based initiatives and organizations with other civil society actors in order to amplify their voices, effect positive policy change and ensure that implementation at the local level is extended to all rather than to a few. Civil society actors include local, national and international NGOs and faith-based actors such as our own member churches.



As much as possible, we join and contribute to local, national and international civil society platforms and coalitions in order to influence policy frameworks and call for accountability and implementation of human rights commitments. Our approach is to contribute to and strengthen civil society networks (where they exist) and to only create new initiatives where necessary and mutually agreed upon. As such, with a headquarters in Geneva and NGO accreditation with the UN, we are able to offer valuable international connections to local and national platforms to strengthen and pursue joint action.

#### **4.3 LWF Member Churches**

LWF is a global communion of 148 member churches. Where possible, World Service works with local churches in the field of diakonia – service to others. We continue to seek closer collaboration with member churches to ensure our approach is most relevant and durable to affected communities.

#### **4.4 Governments and Other Duty-Bearers**

World Service recognizes that the sustainability of any program relies on engaged and committed governments. Close working relationships with local, regional, and national governments enable us to work constructively with primary duty-bearers but also ensure humanitarian access. When responding to acute crises or working in restrictive environments, gaining access to the people and places where the humanitarian needs are the greatest forms the basis of our working relationship with governments and other stakeholders.

In parallel and depending on the context, we build capacity, improve coordination mechanisms between stakeholders on the ground, and hold duty-bearers accountable for the fulfillment of rights. While we seek to create synergies between state responsibilities and our own, we also work with communities and civil society to advocate to duty-bearers for change.

Indeed, in some places where we work, we recognize that people continue to live in vulnerable situations due to the inability or unwillingness of duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibilities. Governance authorities may also be contested in some contexts which further hampers their ability to meet their responsibilities. Even in these situations, LWF World Service, in keeping with its rights-based vision, seeks to ensure access to rights and services for all.

#### **4.5 Ecumenical and Interfaith Communities**

As a founding member of the ACT Alliance, World Service continues to play an active role with other members on the ground, in country forums, with regional offices, and within the Geneva Secretariat. We strive to respond to emergencies through ACT mechanisms in a coordinated, timely, and effective manner.

Following the Joint Declaration of Intent signed by World Service and Caritas Internationalis in 2016, we aim to strengthen our relationship with the Roman Catholic Church to collectively create sustainable change in the lives of those who suffer from poverty, disaster, and marginalization.

*We seek partnerships with organizations of other faiths in order to promote faith-sensitive humanitarian and development work at policy and operational levels. In particular, we continue to explore opportunities with Islamic Relief Worldwide, based on a global Memorandum of Understanding renewed between the two organizations in 2017.*

#### **4.6 Related Organizations**

World Service has long-standing, vital relationships with agencies of LWF member churches involved in humanitarian assistance and development. Related organizations provide a major share of program funding, and collaborate closely in areas such as program planning and operations, policy development, joint advocacy, and staff secondment. The landscape continues to change as some related organizations seek to expand their own operations through country offices, including in countries where we have a presence. Strategic discussions with all related organizations will continue, with a view to further develop a mutually beneficial cooperation.



## 4.7 United Nations Agencies

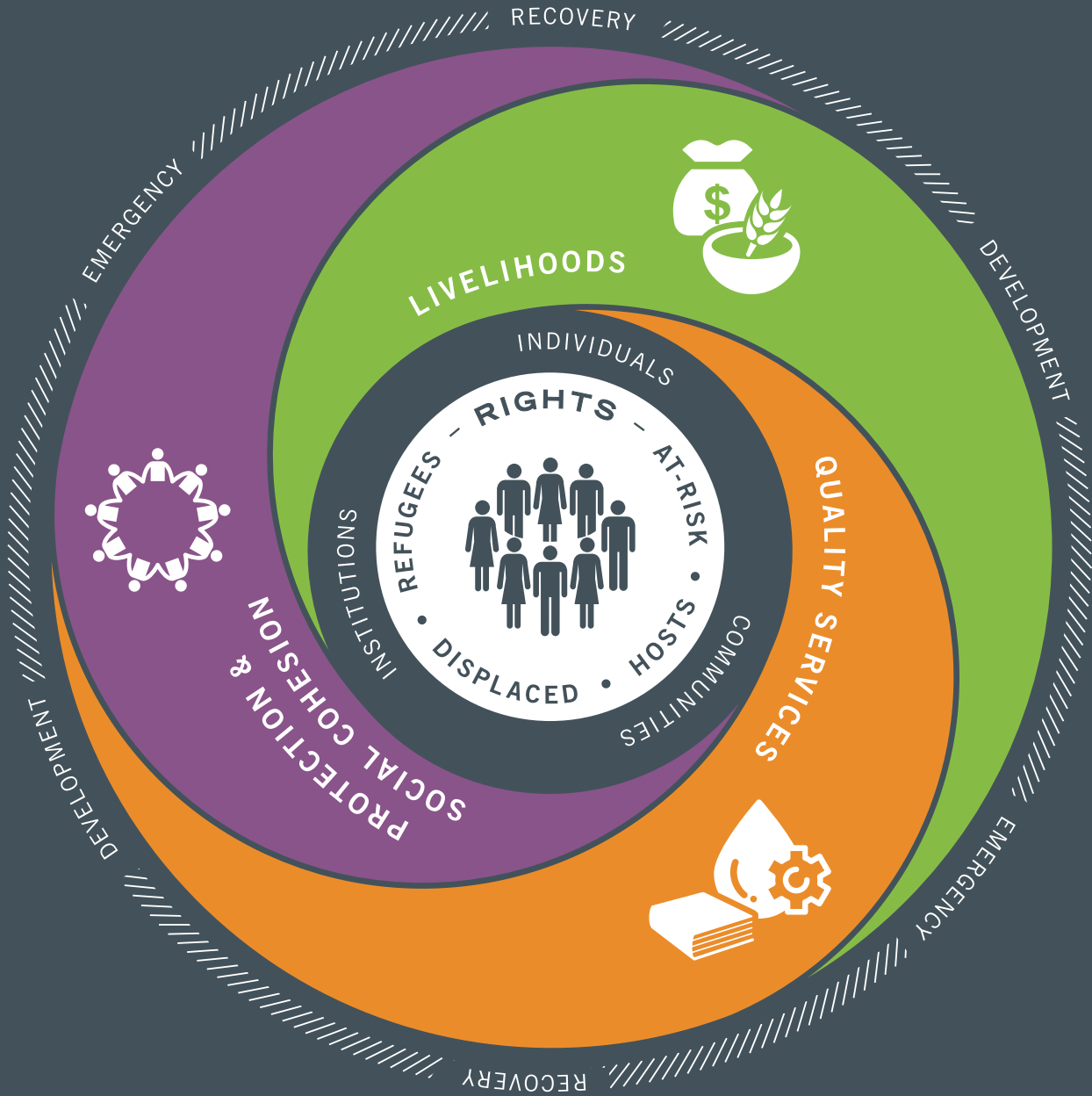
World Service's long history and successful track record in humanitarian response makes us a major trusted implementing partner of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the World Food Programme (WFP) with the strategic goal to strengthen and improve these partnerships globally. We also participate in the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) coordinating structures and in UN networks dealing with specific thematic and operational issues, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

## 4.8 Global Networks

World Service participates in and contributes to other international humanitarian networks and organizations, including the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR); the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance; the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA); Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), and the Sphere standards network.

*We support and actively participate in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and seek to integrate the Istanbul Principles into our plans and practices as part of a collective effort to increase development effectiveness.*

Close dialogue and engagement with UNHCR are further strengthened at global levels by our presence in Geneva. We are active contributors to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the UN Human Rights Council and to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which enables our global advocacy efforts to reinforce the effect we are aiming for at local and national levels.



# 5.

## PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK

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*Our programmatic framework lifts up three areas of expertise in which LWF World Service already has a wealth of experience and a proven track record.*

**Namely, it focuses on protecting and fulfilling the rights of refugees, IDPs, and returnees, as well as host and at-risk communities, to**

- **Livelihoods**
- **Quality services**
- **Protection and social cohesion.**

In previous strategic periods, humanitarian, development, and advocacy approaches guided the framing of our work. In this strategy we bring our thematic expertise to the forefront.

Hence, the three areas cut across the humanitarian, recovery, and development phases of our work and embed advocacy and a rights-based approach into each one.

*This will profile and hone our ability to meet high international standards and requirements, strengthening our position as a valuable and unique actor in the international response to displacement, poverty, and injustice.*

## **Our programmatic framework:**

### **Places the rights of refugees, IDPs, returnees, host and at-risk communities at the heart**

The three programmatic areas are all framed in human rights language and are implicit rights underpinned by international human rights standards<sup>3</sup>. We believe that every individual has a right to a dignified life, has a right to receive and access quality services, and has a right to live in a protective and cohesive social environment.

### **Is intentionally integrated and complementary**

Our programmatic areas are all interconnected, emphasizing their complementarity and synergy, which means that one area may require the support of another area in order to reach the full effect.

The right to quality services may be a precondition for resilient livelihoods interventions, for example, and there may need to be integrated with safety and protection-related measures for specific groups.

This may include creating a general feeling of safety and trust among different groupings for employment and trade and by promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence, as well as unrestricted mobility of goods and people. Thus, wherever we work, we look to integrate our responses across the three thematic areas, either directly or indirectly by entering into partnerships with other actors in order to complement each other's response. This means that our projects often address a combination of programmatic areas, rather than falling solely within one.

### **Is implemented at three levels: individual, community, institutional**

As well as integrating the three programmatic areas whenever feasible, each one also strives to work simultaneously at three intervention levels: individual, community, and institutional. At the institutional level, there are also three dimensions: We work with duty-bearers locally, nationally, and internationally. In this way, we leverage our added value not only as an effective community-based actor, but as a global organization.

<sup>3</sup> Right to livelihoods: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Right to quality services: Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Right to protection and social cohesion: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other key conventions like the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

*The **individual level** works with households or individuals, who require targeted support, services, or capacity-building to protect them from discrimination or due to special needs.*

The **community-level** work involves preparing and empowering communities to collectively claim and defend their rights, denounce violations, and participate in finding longer term solutions. When working with communities, we actively seek to support the development of local networks and structures as a means of strengthening local civil society and to support and promote engaged and just local leadership so that our responses are sustainable. As such, we work alongside LWF member churches and other faith communities, as well as other Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

The **institutional level**, locally, is about working with and influencing local government and other duty-bearers in order to achieve improvements related to livelihoods, quality services, protection and social cohesion. Nationally, it involves playing an active role in coalitions of civil society or partnering with other private or NGO actors to influence policy and to ensure that governments and other actors implement the commitments they have made. Internationally, it involves LWF in lobbying and advocacy along with partners, including LWF member churches and broader civil society, to secure those commitments by duty-bearers on the international stage.

**Spans the emergency – recovery – development spectrum**

Across all three programmatic areas, World Service will place an emphasis on linking relief interventions with recovery and development work. In our humanitarian work, we are committed to emergency preparedness and to ensuring that our assessments and responses are relevant and appropriate. We also see how work within the context of fragile and failing states, disasters, and conflict requires complementary and concurrent action by humanitarian and development actors. Thus when states may be excluding or ignoring portions of their population, principled humanitarian action is required.

*Development actors must engage early on and in a sustained way with humanitarian interventions.*

World Service is well placed to bridge the humanitarian and development nexus, responding to crises quickly and building resilience from the onset of our efforts. Such an approach brings a particular added value in response to complex and protracted crises, where we can apply more development-oriented, long-term solutions alongside both local and international humanitarian partners.

**Allows us to adapt our responses when contexts change**

One of our unique strengths is to adapt to changing contexts as and when required, and to transform our responses so as to optimize the outcome of our efforts. The places where we work vary significantly, and even within individual countries local settings may fluctuate regularly. While one setting may be dominated by an emergency response environment, another setting may require recovery or development work. And a country may slide back from a situation of recovery into an emergency phase, or an emergency may become a protracted crisis if it is not resolved.

Responding to changing contexts requires conscious support for the long-term resilience of the communities we work with. Resilience benefits not only people already in crises but also people vulnerable to crises, who may be forced to co-exist with other vulnerable groups in the same affected areas.

*Our initial interventions in a specific crisis situation often involve addressing immediate needs of local communities and populations in order to stabilize their situation, which helps build trust for longer term recovery and development.*

*A local farmer carries stones for building irrigation channels and terraces for water conservation, as part of an LWF “Cash for Work” project in Ethiopia.*

Photo: LWF/Magnus Aronson.







## 5.1 Programmatic Area: Livelihoods

*World Service aims to empower and make people and communities more resilient and economically self-reliant through increasing and protecting assets, building capacities, and promoting productive activities to sustain their basic needs and diversify their income. We also work with both rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure that the institutional environment enables resilient and sustainable livelihoods.*

Protection, safety and social cohesion are preconditions for building resilient livelihoods; and quality services are needed to create an environment in which to develop successful livelihoods. Gender inequalities because of culture, religious practices, unequal power relations, and unequal access to assets like land, education, and services, mean we begin by analyzing gender power relations and vulnerabilities as part of any livelihoods programming initiative.

### **5.1.1 Individual and Household Livelihood Support**

We focus on people who face constraints of food insecurity, irregular income, and insecure or inaccessible assets. We aim to help them develop coping mechanisms by acquiring skills, tools, and networks to sustain their own lives and recover from shocks and stresses. We target the most vulnerable households for skills development and income generation, with a specific focus on women and youth.

We stimulate individual entrepreneurship among those eager to adopt specific skills and with access to assets or credit. This often results in spill-over effects to others. Due to contextual and changing needs, we regularly diversify livelihoods initiatives based on local market assessments and analysis.

### **5.1.2 Community-Level Livelihoods**

A community is more than the sum of its individual households. We will focus on community-based, small-scale initiatives and entrepreneurship geared to employing others, improving access to markets, and financial services.

*Our aim is to increase capacity to sustain livelihoods and thus, resilience and self-reliance, including in the face of climate and environmental threats.*

Increased connectivity, digitalization, and access to a stable, preferably sustainable, power supply based on renewable energies stimulates and promotes economic development in both rural and urban settings, and in turn builds more resilient and environmentally sustainable livelihoods. Wherever possible, renewable energy resources and solutions at community levels are promoted to help reduce any potential negative environmental effects of economic development activities, as well as of climate change itself.

Recognizing the power and impact of supporting joint livelihoods initiatives between displaced and host communities will be an integral feature of our efforts. Such an approach results in increased social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between these communities, with an important element being a clear focus on local leadership and youth.

To build up resilience, we support increased access for the people with whom we work to information about core services from key institutions and markets. This includes building capacity through investments in training institutions, the establishment of productive infrastructure, access to financial services, and stronger community-based organizations and local business associations.

### **5.1.3 Stimulating Livelihoods at Institutional and Policy Levels**

World Service aims to build the capacity of local government and other local actors to take responsibility and ownership for community-based livelihoods initiatives. We will also increase rights-based programming in order to influence favorable policies through advocacy and lobbying on issues of land rights, food sovereignty, labor regulations, and legal protection. At the local level, we will support communities to defend their right to livelihoods, land, the environment, agricultural extension services, disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, and protection from natural hazards and climate-induced loss and damage.

*We address gender and other inequalities in access to livelihoods by analyzing the context, raising awareness, and jointly developing approaches to challenge patterns upholding inequalities at the individual, family, and community levels.*

Specifically, we support gender-sensitive agricultural policies and targeted interventions, such as promoting women's access to land and inheritance, eliminating discrimination under the law, and widening access to technology, markets, and credits.

Taking this institutional engagement to the national and international spheres, we are active in national coalitions of civil society that aim to ensure transparency and justice in the allocation of key resources to local people. In international forums, LWF works with partners to secure commitments in areas such as climate, land, and gender, which strengthen the economic, cultural, and social rights of people and communities.

*A displaced girl studying in a Temporary Learning Space run by LWF in Sitwe, Myanmar shows the exercise books she just received.*

Photo: LWF/C. Kästner.





## 5.2 Programmatic Area: Quality Services

*We believe that equitable access to quality services, such as education, water, energy, and health care, is a right that must be claimed by women and men, girls and boys to enjoy a better quality of life, to claim and access their human rights and to fulfill their full potential. The provision of such services is fundamentally the duty of local and national authorities. When service provision breaks down or is unavailable, particularly in times of acute crisis, World Service will step in to provide life-saving, humanitarian assistance to people affected by displacement, where we can best add value.*

In all contexts, we are committed to never filling service gaps for any longer than necessary and will prioritize bringing rights-holders and duty-bearers together so that local communities claim and gain improved access to quality services, in accordance with fundamental human rights principles. In this respect, we will particularly target improving communities' access to water

and sanitation, to adequate education, to affordable energy, and to mobile and internet connectivity. Where needed and possible, we work diligently to link communities with other specialized NGOs and private institutions for joint advocacy and for the pooling of our collective technical expertise so as to maximize overall outcomes in the short, medium, and long-term.

### **5.2.1 Meeting Individuals' Basic Needs in Times of Crisis**

When crisis hits or a situation is chronic due to poor, failing or contested governance, World Service meets basic needs through the distribution of food, water, sanitation, shelter, or core relief items, both in-kind and through cash transfer and vouchers. We lobby for and provide welcoming reception services and support a fair registration process to create a safe environment for people fleeing conflict or other disasters.

We uphold the right of education through the direct provision of basic education services in situations of displacement where governments are unable to provide adequate education. We will uphold people's right to health until they are able to access regular quality services by offering health care interventions if appropriate or by linking those in need with specialized health care NGOs and other private health care providers.

### **5.2.2 Strengthening Services at the Community Level**

As national and international humanitarian responses are increasingly reoriented towards the integration of displaced people within host communities, we are moving away from camp management to focus on the strengthening of service provision at the community level.

We support both formal and informal education. Where displaced and host communities are taught jointly, we support local communities and authorities to improve school infrastructure and teaching capacities to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence. We also support vocational training schemes for young people and other vulnerable groups.

We work to improve equitable access to safe and sufficient water and sanitation. This includes improving infrastructure and building community capacity to manage and maintain these installations, in partnership with local authorities. We also work with communities and authorities to reduce the occurrence of waterborne diseases through hygiene promotion, and to strengthen community access to quality health care. Community access to renewable energy sources and internet services will receive more attention. These services are key to helping people out of poverty and isolation, boosting both livelihoods opportunities and social cohesion.

### **5.2.3 Strengthening Policies and Institutions Governing Service Provision**

Access to quality services depends strongly on influencing relevant policy and legal frameworks, and enforcing quality standards. We work constructively with governments and duty-bearers and hold them accountable for their commitments to their populations, including access to education, water, health care, and affordable energy sources.

We work with private actors and lobby for mobile and internet connectivity guided by adequate data protection measures, including the protection of people's right to information.

*Even in humanitarian crises, we are conscious that our role as an NGO is not that of a long-term service provider. Instead, we look to hand this over to appropriate duty-bearers.*

As World Service is held in high regard by communities, governments, and others alike, we are well positioned to work from an advocacy perspective whenever possible, locally, nationally and internationally. We will continue to press for people's access to an adequate standard of living, to education, and to other basic rights. We do this both with and on behalf of the people and communities themselves, using our international status as a respected actor within civil society to advance their rights, and in national and international forums, such as the UN Human Rights Council, influential governments, and the private sector.

*In responding to the vulnerability  
armed conflict creates in communities  
in Colombia, LWF empowers local  
farmers achieve structural resilience  
and food security.*

Photo: Church of Sweden/ Therése Naomi Jonsson.







### 5.3 Programmatic Area: Protection and Social Cohesion

*World Service's protection and social cohesion goal is to enable individuals and communities to live safe, dignified, and empowered lives, free from all forms of discrimination, abuse, and exploitation. In all contexts and programs, the ultimate goal is achieved when people's rights are fulfilled and protected, and when both individuals and communities are able to thrive.*

People will be better protected when they feel more capable and less vulnerable to threats to their well-being and livelihoods, and when local capacities for cohesion are strengthened.

We believe that the people we work with are themselves the principal actors in their own protection. Our role as an external actor should first and foremost be to identify and build upon existing capacities and initiatives for self-help, protection and social cohesion.

#### **5.3.1 Supporting Fulfillment of Basic Human Rights for Individuals and Families**

We carry out protection risk assessments to inform the design of specific protection assistance, together with protection mainstreaming in all of our programs. We partner with rights-holders, civil society, authorities, and UN agencies to protect, respect, and fulfill the fundamental human rights prioritized by the communities we work with. This approach directly links protection activities and initiatives with those related to quality services and livelihoods.

Our work on protection prioritizes the rights of the most vulnerable individuals, families, and communities, supporting them to secure their rights to humanitarian assistance, and freedom from discrimination, minimizing the likelihood of sexual and gender-based violence, other gender injustices, and child exploitation and abuse. We provide psychosocial support to people experiencing trauma, always referring those who need more specialized care to an appropriate service provider.

*Ensuring compliance with the Core Humanitarian Standard in all programs is a requirement for enhanced accountability toward the people with whom we work.*

### **5.3.2 Promoting Community-Based Protection and Social Cohesion**

World Service intentionally identifies and builds upon people's and communities' own capacities and initiatives for self-protection, cohesion and development based on the conviction that they are best placed to protect themselves. We anchor our programs on increasing community participation, strengthening community management structures and building community protection and cohesion systems. Special protection measures target the most vulnerable groups and communities, as needed. We recognize and promote the proactive and positive engagement of faith communities in this work, in order to reinforce inclusive social values and actions to protect the most vulnerable.

The bulk of our work in this programmatic area focuses on the community level as this promises more protection benefits for individuals collectively. We engage in building social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in the communities that we work, ensuring that initiatives are linked to appropriate government plans.

*As a proactive means of protecting vulnerable individuals, families, and communities, we help build protective community-based structures and networks with a particular focus on child protection, the participation of children and young people, women's empowerment and gender justice, land rights, civil society strengthening, and disaster preparedness.*

### **5.3.3 Strengthening Institutional, Legal, and Policy Protection Frameworks**

Building on the trust, legitimacy, and evidence gathered through our close relationship with communities, LWF actively lobbies and advocates for institutional strengthening and enforcement of protection frameworks at local, national, regional, and global levels. We facilitate local efforts to establish inclusive, protective, and non-discriminatory policies,

laws (including family and customary laws and norms), structures, and systems. We also collaborate with others to find and implement durable solutions for individuals, families, and communities. Notably, we will promote the uptake and implementation of guidelines on faith-sensitive psychosocial programming within the humanitarian sector.

Taking institutional engagement from the local to the national and international levels, and working in the area of rights more generally, we position ourselves as an enabling actor in civil society, working with others to promote the rights of the people with whom we work. World Service enables their voices to be heard in national and regional forums, and also at the international level, empowering them to secure commitments for better protection, social cohesion and development from duty-bearers. The implementation of these commitments is monitored through our engagement at the national level.

# 6.

## SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES FOR QUALITY PROGRAMMING

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*To fulfill our vision and mandate in ever-changing and increasingly more competitive and insecure environments, LWF World Service is committed to having systems and practices that meet the highest of standards. We prioritize effective leadership and change management processes.*

We commit sufficient resources to these priorities, creating a shared vision among our staff, developing measurable plans, and achieving some quick results in order to build momentum. We also invest in building technical capacity to implement our operations according to the three programmatic areas outlined in Chapter 5.

The nine areas of work outlined below are equally important and not listed in any particular order of priority.

### **6.1 Aligned Support Structures and Systems**

World Service operates a decentralized model with country programs diverse in scale, size, nature, and context. The global support structures and systems (which include a degree of remote management) need to ensure that the necessary support, control, risk management, and compliance systems are in place across the organization. During this strategic period, more and more systems and processes will be brought online.

*This new digital infrastructure will ensure that the different units and teams have systems that are aligned and will be up-to-date and user-friendly.*

The necessary staff training will be carried out. Cost-effective systems will be ensured through the creation of digital hubs of excellence in specific regions, with the necessary resources, knowledge, and skills to manage and disseminate the relevant information.

## **6.2. Resource Mobilization and Sustainable Funding**

World Service builds on the strategic funding diversification established during its 2013–2018 strategic period. There will be an emphasis on cost effectiveness and value for money. This will include promoting both good stewardship of resources and more effective negotiation with donors to cover core support costs. Donor confidence, donor consolidation, and donor diversification are three key elements of sustainable funding.

## **6.3 Robust Financial Management**

We use modern systems to control and monitor financial risks and use of resources with a clear focus on achieving the best value for money. We regularly evaluate spending decisions in order to ensure resources are put to best use across the organization. We will develop tools and models to guarantee effective cost recovery, accountability, compliance, and audits. We align and standardize procurement processes and invest in technology to simplify business processes, increase virtual working, achieve higher levels of standardization, and faster data processing and financial reporting.

## **6.4 Intentional Relations Management**

Strategically building relations with key actors is vital for our operations. Ensuring that such relations are adequately resourced and that dialogue with partners is serious and credible are keys to success. Accountability, transparency, and visibility are all elements that need to be promoted and well managed with partners at all levels.

*Building and managing these relationships needs time, energy, proactivity and effective networking. Key roles and responsibilities at all levels will be identified, assigned, and resourced.*

### **6.5 Quality and Accountability**

Continuing to set high quality and accountability standards is a top priority for World Service. Accountability to affected populations and transparency at all levels means that we continue to develop and ensure that the necessary systems, infrastructure, and staff skills and knowledge are in place to fulfill this commitment. We prioritize the placement of quality management teams and staffing in our country program operations. We also continue to develop a robust program monitoring and evaluation system with well-defined results and quality indicators that inform programs of their progress. In addition, we ensure that the necessary mechanisms for both internal as well as external accountability are robust and proactively and continually improved, including CHS compliance, effective complaints handling, and investigations.

### **6.6 Safety and Security**

From a duty-of-care perspective, we will build security awareness and management capacity in order to be better equipped to implement programs in insecure environments. The fast-changing security context has had a negative impact on humanitarian and development work, and requires improved security risk management in order to identify threats that could affect personnel, assets, operations, and reputation.

*Through an effective security management system, we are now better able to identify what the risks are, what mitigation strategies and measures are needed, and how risk levels for World Service can reduce the impact and likelihood of an undesirable event.*

## 6.7 Knowledge Management and Learning

We are a learning organization committed to constantly improving the effectiveness and coherence of our work. Knowledge management comprises a range of practices used to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable the adoption of insights and experiences. Building an organizational framework and developing tools that promote the retention of knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned is a top priority. In the context of high staff turnover, World Service will strive for continuous improvement, the retention of knowledge as a strategic asset, and active sharing of knowledge across the organization.

## 6.8 Investing in People

Having the right staff, with the right skills, and the necessary support systems in place, is crucial to fulfilling our objectives, mandate, and vision. We have many highly motivated staff, and we are committed to retaining them and providing them with learning opportunities to flourish and grow. We are committed to seeking gender and age balance and equity at all levels of staffing, particularly in managerial positions. In particular, we seek to develop female and young talent. Investment in people management will shape our future leaders, support staff working under stressful circumstances, and ensure talent management and career development.

## 6.9 Green Infrastructure

World Service will align its work with the new LWF policy developed to implement the LWF Assembly's most recent resolutions on climate change.

*Calling for climate justice, sustainability, and a low carbon footprint requires us to “green” our infrastructure development and building-maintenance.*

Investments into improved energy efficiency, the enhanced use of renewable energies, water saving and protection measures, and improved waste management are not only necessary measures to protect our environment and climate, but also have a huge potential to reduce our mid- and long-term costs, and hence will contribute to economic sustainability of our operations.

Back cover: A South Sudanese refugee returns home after a LWF distribution in Adjumani Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Photo: LWF/M. Renaux



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