

Waking the Giant training

Module 3



WAKING THE GIANT

Churches and the Sustainable
Development Goals





Why Churches and SDGs? A reminder

- Churches' historical role in providing social services and advocating for global human values.
- *De facto*, churches are already working on various SDGs – but many of them are not aware of it.
- The Agenda 2030 presents an important opportunity for churches.
- The UN will not achieve the SDGs without involving faith-based actors.

The content of the following slides 4-9 has been prepared by Prof. Emeritus Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke

Dr Nordstokke is a Norwegian professor emeritus at Diakonhjemmet University College in Oslo. His different leadership positions included responsibility for diaconal training and for developing Diakonia as an academic discipline. He served as Director of the then Department for Mission and Development at The Lutheran World Federation, 2005-2009, and has published several books and articles on Diakonia. He lived in Brazil for ten years, serving as a pastor with the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (1974-1981) and as professor of theology at EST (1994-1996).



Three main questions

- How to engage churches and Christians in the SDG Agenda?
- How does Christian faith motivate and mobilize for such engagement?
- What biblical motives and narratives may serve as tools for this engagement?

Reading Agenda 2030 as an opportunity for the churches' public witness and diaconal ministry

- Agenda 2030 can be considered as a public recognition of the roles of churches and FBOs in the public space, as agents in civil society promoting human dignity, justice, peace and sustainable life styles.
- Agenda 2030 corresponds to issues that have for long been on the agenda of international diakonia.





The biblical vocation to care for creation

- The task to “till and keep the garden” (Gen 2:15)
- Human beings are to be good stewards of God’s creation
- The liberation from slavery – so that the people could work/serve/worship
- A holistic (comprehensive) concept of service
- Martin Luther: the ethics of work – promoting the common good

The ministry of Jesus

- Holistic ministry of proclaiming, teaching and healing (Matt 4:23)
- Announcing and anticipating the kingdom of God – good news to the poor (Luk 4:18-19), justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14,17)
- A public ministry: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Joh 20,21)
- A commission given to Christians as individuals (baptism) and to the community of Christians (diakonia)





How to read the Bible with reference to the SDGs?

- The Bible – window to see our reality better
- The Bible – a mirror that reflects our attitudes and ways of action
- The Bible – a lamp that show us where to go



Faith actors can take a critical but constructive role to raise questions

Critical: The Agenda 2030

- Does not deal with the issue of power
- Does not question the reigning economic model
- Does not acknowledge the urgency of climate change
- Does not consider the shrinking space for civil society
- Does not deal with the issue of migrants/refugees



Faith actors can take a critical but constructive role to raise questions

Constructive: The Agenda 2030 is a good compromise of so many actors: What can faith actors do to help build bridges?

Group work – 45 minutes

1. Make a short round of introductions – name, organization, position, previous experience with the SDGs (20 min)
2. Get to know together the main information about your SDG from the website <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. You can read the headlines out loud and explore and discuss what kind of information can be found on the UN website. Notice that this is just an introduction: There is no need to e.g. read all the targets and indicators. (20 min)
3. Discuss why this specific goal of your choice is important to your church/organization. Select a recorder who writes down the main points of your discussion. (15 min)



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**LEAVE NO ONE
BEHIND**

