RIGHT TO FOOD

AVAILABILITY, ACCESS AND ADEQUACY
This programme policy is the strategic framework for DanChurchAid’s (DCA) support to achieving the right to food through a sustainable livelihoods approach. DCA programme staff are to use the policy when developing country specific strategies and assessing projects, partners can use it for inspiration and the policy serves as documentation of DCA’s focus and approach to the public and back donors. The policy is valid from 2013 and will be revised no later than 2018.

The policy contains:
- Background information
- DCA right to food policy goals
- Overview of our strategic and thematic focus
- DCA commitment to partnerships and a list of partners and networks
- A case story illustrating the results of our work in practice

The one billion hungry people in the world are a strong reminder of the urgency of working for more just and equitable food systems, fairer distribution of global resources and increased access to political influence to eliminate hunger. The most marginalized and impoverished are disproportionally exposed to the negative effects of climate change and disasters and to the impact of poorly regulated private sector interests such as land grabbing and forced displacements. Their issues and concerns are often given low priority by their national governments. In challenging and working with national governments to give higher priority to hunger and poverty issues, civil society organisations often struggle with low capacity and restrictive NGO legislation. The rural poor are key players in the struggle to fight hunger. They are the ones going hungry due to inappropriate policy frameworks. They are the ones who should be empowered to hold governments accountable. This will help motivate governments to live up to their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food by ensuring proper legislative frameworks and facilitate productivity increase and development.

Global production, trade, governance and power structures have not been able to eliminate hunger. On the contrary, these structures seem to be upholding and reinforcing inequalities. There are strong forces among some transnational corporations to expand their control of all aspects of food production (water, land, research and inputs), mineral extraction and energy supply. In states with weak democratic structures and low accountability, the alliance between transnational corporations and power-holders is problematic. The alliance often leads to agricultural investments not leading to genuine development, or leaves room for direct violations of human rights.

On the other hand, progressive private sector actors focus increasingly on social responsibility. They are thus providing new opportunities for constructive cooperation with civil society actors and governments in a joint effort to fight hunger through more equitable food systems.

Achievements in improving livelihoods at community level often suffer serious set-backs in times of crisis, and rights holders spend resources, effort and time to recover from these. As a consequence, the impoverished have reduced access to and influence on livelihood activities and political decisions and some are forced to migrate. In addition, climate change erodes the livelihood systems for those that remain in the rural areas. This results in the breakup of local social structures and networks, and people in both categories become even more vulnerable.

DCA, our partners and networks are committed to working together with impoverished, marginalized and vulnerable women and men, referring to them in this policy as the rights holders. With them we work to progressively achieve the right to food improving availability, access and adequacy of food. We work in a sustainable livelihoods framework, supporting strategic context specific components to reduce hunger and achieve the right to food. The livelihood activities are supported by other DCA programme activities in Humanitarian Action, Humanitarian Mine Action, Active Citizenship and HIV/AIDS through thematic and geographical linkages in-country to maximize synergy.

We support partners and communities to achieve sustainable livelihoods through the following: improving, diversifying and increasing production and income generation; reducing vulnerability to climate change and disaster risks; and strengthening local democratic structures and knowledge systems in cooperation with progressive stakeholders. In the Right to Food programmes, we will especially work to strengthen local capacities for appropriate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in disaster prone areas. This is to reduce the negative impact of hazards and disasters on the long-term livelihood activities and to build capacity to respond early and facilitate quick recovery.

DCA and partners advocate for good governance and accountability at all levels including duty-bearers at local and national levels, and in the EU. The DCA advocacy strategy on the Right to Food supports these advocacy activities. Partnership is a founding principle for DCA not only as a way of working but as a foundation for DCA’s values and identity. Partnership is our most important comparative advantage for achieving our goals and greater sustainability, local ownership and cultural sensitivity. DCA has a strong comparative advantage through our long-term presence in a number of countries. We have close relations with our partners and provide technical advice and methodology, initiate links with progressive advocacy and private sector actors, and connect with strategic networks to support these processes.

Together with our partners, we are committed to the principles of Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Linking to Rights, as well as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership.
POLICY GOALS

DCA’s overall policy goal is that vulnerable and marginalized women and men in rural communities enjoy their right to food. DCA with our partners work towards the following changes:

1. Rights holders in rural communities can access knowledge, services and inputs necessary to secure livelihoods, and can access social protection schemes in situations where governments do not fulfill their obligations. At household, community and national levels, equitable access to food is achieved by also addressing social and cultural barriers.

2. Rights holders are empowered to fight for their rights and understand how to counter the dynamics of exclusion. They can use this knowledge to become engaged in and influence decision making processes and budget allocations to gain control of productive resources (including land, water, livestock, inputs and knowledge) to secure income generation for sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

3. Governments take on their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food by creating an inclusive framework, establishing adequate institutions and monitoring mechanisms. In times of disaster, governments should ensure timely assistance as stipulated in the Voluntary Guidelines endorsed by the UN Committee on World Food Security.

4. DCA, partner organizations and Action of Churches Together Alliance (ACTalliance) are transparent and accountable, document violations of the right to food and actively advocate for governments to fulfill their obligations regarding the right to food.

The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS
DCA is committed to promoting rights and gender equality in our international work of promoting civil society dialogue and influence. This work is supported by the two sets of Voluntary Guidelines by FAO, the UN Special Rapporteur’s strong commitment to promoting the Right to Food and the Global Strategic Framework on Food Security and Nutrition. In addition, DCA adheres to the principles listed below:

**PARTICIPATION:** DCA and partners are committed to supporting and strengthening meaningful participation by men and women in decision-making processes and fora to secure their right to food. We will function as catalysts for promoting and acknowledging ideas and innovation based on traditional knowledge and adapting formal research to benefit the local contexts. We are committed to ensuring genuine participation in project planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We promote influence on identifying advocacy themes and documenting violations of the right to food. DCA and partners will support participation, mobilise and organise groups with transparent and democratic structures to secure access to individual or collective resources and livelihood opportunities.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** The state bears the primary role and responsibility to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food. DCA will work with relevant state actors and local government authorities in order to promote accountability for meeting their obligations, particularly the obligation to regulate private actors so they do not violate the right to food. DCA will support partners in moving away from a service delivery approach towards improved accountability and promotion of the right to food through addressing structural barriers. Accountability also applies to the dialogue between DCA, partners and rights holders on project issues, information flow and feedback mechanisms to ensure progress towards the right to food, including complaint and response mechanisms in projects. DCA and partners support establishment of transparent, inclusive and accountable community structures. DCA is committed to identifying and documenting possible international advocacy themes from rights holders’ and partners’ experiences on the ground using innovative methods.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:** DCA will support strategies that benefit the most vulnerable based on non-discriminatory, clear, locally adapted criteria. DCA will help to uncover and document open and veiled discrimination in resource allocation, access to markets, safety nets and other social protection initiatives. We support action to ensure equal access to services, including affirmative action for addressing the special needs of discriminated and vulnerable individuals or groups. One major factor in low rural productivity is discrimination of women in which they are denied access to knowledge and technology in male biased agricultural advisory systems, are subjected to discriminatory inheritance laws and practices, and face limitations to accessing and owning productive resources. Relevant gender disaggregated data and information must form part of the analysis, implementation, monitoring and reporting of projects and programmes to reduce discriminatory practices.

**EMPOWERMENT:** DCA will support activities that help build the necessary self-esteem, skills, and knowledge among rights holders to facilitate access to their right to food. Through support to organizing in groups and participating in decision-making fora on livelihoods and resource allocation, rights holders achieve skills in claiming their individual and collective rights from duty bearers at different levels. The improved outcomes from diverse livelihood activities contribute both to improved nutrition – often a prerequisite for participation and empowerment – and to a stronger voice through increased economic and bargaining power. DCA will support formation or strengthening of organisations, alliances and access to networks to strengthen agenda-setting and influence.

**LINKING TO RIGHTS:** The Right to Food is enshrined in the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) ratified by the vast majority of nations. The right to food is also included in the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Labour Organisation convention 169 for indigenous groups. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is increasingly framing their work in a rights con-
text and providing tools for implementation of the right to food, notably the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Additionally, several national constitutions and poverty reduction plans specifically commit to eradicating hunger and achieving the right to food. The new complaints mechanism, established by the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, will allow individuals or groups to file a complaint with the UN if their right to food is violated by a member state that is party to the Protocol. DCA will help to inform partners and rights holders of international, national and local policies and legislative commitments made on right to food. We will also help to advocate for stronger justiciability structures and interaction between local communities and these structures. We will support access to justice for violations of the right to food and the protection of rights holders who are involved in these processes.

THEMATIC PRIORITIES

DCA and partners support a broad range of livelihood activities under six interlinked themes to strengthen the three pillars of the right to food: availability, access and adequacy. We support availability through increase and diversification of production and through safety net systems. We strengthen access through addressing discrimination and inequitable distribution of resources, providing training in business and income generation as well as improving physical access to local and national markets to purchase and trade food. We promote adequacy through culturally sensitive diversification of crops and livestock and basic nutrition and hygiene training. We conduct local, national and international advocacy campaigns on all of the three pillars by documenting various violations and proposing sustainable alternatives.

With our partners, we build upon and enhance existing capabilities in communities and support their access to entitlements – examples of the activities associated with strengthening livelihood capabilities and entitlements are given below:

- **STRENGTHEN HUMAN CAPABILITIES** (e.g. knowledge, skills, labour): DCA and partners contribute to enhancing human capabilities to enable rights holders to take charge of their own development. We work to enable rights holders to access information, knowledge, skills and technologies linked to both indigenous knowledge and academic research. In so doing, we facilitate diversified food production, increased purchasing power and sustainable climate friendly livelihoods to enhance access, availability and adequacy of food.

Examples of activities:

- Training on understanding the concepts of right to food in the international, national and local context for rights holders and duty bearers – with a focus on how to improve access for vulnerable groups

- Facilitating exchange and increase of knowledge and experiences regarding principles and practice of sustainable livelihoods, such as agro-ecological agriculture, livestock, water, fishery and forest management.

- Income generating agricultural and non-agricultural production – basic storage, processing and packaging of produce and training in basic trades such as blacksmithing and basket weaving to improve food availability and adequacy

- Promoting understanding of the importance and realisation of diversified production and food consumption – this is a prerequisite for a dignified life and for providing the necessary energy and health status to participate in democratic development processes

- Training in making business plans, marketing and linking to value chains

- Capacity building of right to food partners on humanitarian interventions and disaster risk reduction as a means to enhance resilience and sustain long-term development efforts

- Establishing links and facilitating interaction between partners, rights holders, research institutions and relevant thematic networks for mutual exchange of information and experiences

- **STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CAPABILITIES** (e.g. trust, inclusive organized groups, networks): DCA and partners help to build self-confidence, trust and courage among rights holders to take action to access food. We strengthen existing relationships, social structures and networks and support establishment of new ones founded on principles of inclusion, equality and accountability. Enhanced social capital means a positive change in mutual respect, non-discrimination and interaction. This builds up the social resources that can be drawn upon in the pursuit of individual and collective human rights relating to food. Increased rights holders’ focus on common goals in organisations and networks can help raise awareness, strengthen conflict resolution, facilitate political participation and inspire action on right to food violations. This is also a prerequisite for effective local action in case of disasters.

Examples of activities:

- Promoting and strengthening Farmers Field Schools, Farmer Family Learning Groups, Pastoralist Field Schools and other learning alliances that operate on clear and transparent criteria and statutes

- Establishing savings and loans associations for access to community-driven financial services and insurance schemes

- Forming cooperatives on agricultural and non-agricultural production, seed banks, irrigation schemes, biogas production, and access to markets and value chains

- Supporting documentation by community action groups and movements and their strategies for advocacy and campaigns on the right to food

- Supporting community based disaster risk reduction committees and early warning systems to reduce negative impact on long-term livelihood activities and facilitate early recovery following a disaster

- Facilitating linkages to new or existing networks
ENHANCE NATURAL ENTITLEMENTS (E.G. TO LAND, WATER, BIODIVERSITY): DCA and partners support sustaining and improving the various components of the natural resource base and promote non-discriminatory access to individual and collective resources. The natural resource base is particularly closely linked to vulnerability to disasters because many of the shocks that devastate livelihoods are natural processes (floods, forest fires, earthquakes) that destroy the natural resource base. We support community-based resilience to climate change, seasonal variability in production and natural disasters by sustainable enhancement of the natural resource base and access to entitlements. Healthy soils, sustainable watershed protection, crop diversification, including indigenous varieties and trees, and integrated livestock management systems are essential for maintaining and expanding the natural resource base and enhancing resilience. It may be necessary to take protective measures against unlawful grabbing of land and other resources, or use of herbicides, pesticides and other potentially harmful chemicals. These are all necessary for more secure access to and availability and adequacy of food.

Examples of activities:

- Promoting knowledge of and inputs to agro-ecological methods for sustainable production of food and cash items – this also contributes to climate change adaptation and reduced risks from natural hazards
- Providing help to secure access to and control over natural assets and the capability to maintain and improve their quality
- Supporting communities to be custodians of agricultural, water, livestock, fishery and forest resources and the commons, with a focus on collective, indigenous and labour rights
- Promoting crop and livestock diversification in multi-purpose systems using traditional and/or indigenous species and introducing new options to improve nutrition, marketability and resilience
- Collecting documentation on violation of access to natural resources and using this strategically to work for increased formalization of ownership and user rights
- Using the courts for rights to land and other resources
- Working to ensure that rights holders benefit from and influence any external investments made to improve the natural resource base
- Promoting activities that enhance resilience to the impact of climate change and disasters - as a minimum these activities must be climate neutral

SUPPORT PHYSICAL ENTITLEMENTS (E.G. TO STORAGE, ENERGY, TRANSPORT FACILITIES): DCA and partners include provision of physical inputs if these are necessary as a strategic tool to improve other livelihood activities and is not otherwise available. For example, we support initial supply of agricultural tools and inputs, storage facilities, means of communication, locally generated energy and transport for enhanced availability of and access to food. If necessary, we support basic sanitation facilities to ensure adequacy of food through efficient nutrition utilization. We provide follow-up guidance on how to establish community-based revolving supplies and linkages to markets and networks for long-term sustainable access to physical inputs and facilities. We promote interaction with duty bearers to push for fulfilling their obligations to deliver physical inputs according to local and national development plans and in accordance with their international commitments. In cases of acute humanitarian crisis, delivery of food and non-food items will follow the SPHERE standards. This minimises the need for emergency selling of physical assets which prolongs and complicates the recovery.

Examples of activities:

- Facilitating access to inputs for sustainable production, storage (to enable sales at times of high prices), processing (for value addition) and delivery to markets (joint transport and bulk supply)
- Promoting mobile telephony for communication, data collection, money transfer and project monitoring
- Supporting the use and production of energy-saving stoves and energy provision through solar panels, small-scale hydropower and biogas systems
- Facilitating community participation in local and national government structures to monitor budget allocations and ensure delivery of physical resources
- Providing basic measures for minimising risks in areas susceptible to recurrent flooding (raised latrines, dykes, shelters) and promoting rainwater collection and water reservoirs in drought-prone areas
- Assessing and fulfilling the needs for physical inputs in times of humanitarian crisis to minimize the detrimental impact of an emergency on the long-term development efforts

PROMOTE FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS (E.G. TO SAVINGS AND CREDIT, INCOME, REMITTANCES): DCA and partners promote access to finances necessary to contribute to consumption, production and adoption of different livelihood strategies that enhance access to food. We support activities to increase income through production and market access for agricultural and non-agricultural items. As a supplement to this, we promote community-based savings and loans associations for financial services and insurance schemes. We promote community awareness of accountable handling of finances – this awareness also benefits emergency and other situations where cash-for-work and cash transfers are used.

Examples of activities:

- Promoting secure and resilient production systems that are relevant to household consumption and local markets to enable savings in assets or cash
- Nurturing a culture of trust, planning, saving and taking collective action that makes it worthwhile to strengthen financial capital and reduce risks of financial losses
Enhancing and establishing savings and loans associations, preferably including insurance schemes to reduce individual vulnerability to hazards, emergencies and unexpected events.

Linking savings and loan associations to markets to ensure that increased production leads to increased income. This involves basic business training, risk assessments, exploring new or existing networks for economy of scale and exchange of learning.

Facilitating links to formal micro finance institutions and advocating on improved access to formal loans.

**STRENGTHEN POLITICAL CAPABILITIES (e.g. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING, POLICY):** DCA and partners strive to strengthen political capabilities as these are a prerequisite for claiming the right to food and managing the dynamics of power relations. We work to clarify the connection between lack of achievement of the right to food and the lack of political influence. Broadly shared awareness of this connection is a prerequisite for participating in policy formulation and in monitoring implementation of policies directly or indirectly relevant to the right to food.

Examples of activities:

- Supporting rights holders’ active participation in existing decision-making structures such as Village and District Development Committees and community-driven structures
- Producing documentation of violations of the right to food at community level to be used in national advocacy activities
- Facilitating linkages to promote inclusion of the experiences and visions of rights holders in local and national policy formulation
- Assisting partners in capacity building to strengthen their participation in national pro-poor policy formulation on issues relevant to the right to food
- Helping establish structures for monitoring enforcement of existing laws and implementation of safety nets and other schemes relevant to the right to food
- Strengthening partners’ participation in and contributions to international processes such as the country and global reports by the special rapporteur on the right to food, relevant global conferences, post 2015-processes and the Global Strategic Framework on Food Security and Nutrition
- Collecting information and data to support DCAs advocacy activities in Denmark, the EU and internationally

**LIMITATIONS**

- DCA focus and mandate is on promoting meaningful livelihood opportunities for the poorest in rural areas. Global urban poverty and food insecurity are increasing and are intrinsically linked to migration from rural areas. However, DCA does not work with right to food in cities and slum areas.

- Health, water and sanitation and/or educational services are important factors in achieving the right to food, especially regarding adequacy. However, DCA supports these ONLY if they are strategically necessary to achieve right to food objectives, if no other providers are available and if they do not take up more than 10% of the programme budget.

- DCA does not support agricultural initiatives, which are large scale, commercial, high-input activities, such as highly intensive farming with fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, GMOs, patented high yielding varieties, dairies at industrial scale, large-scale food processing, etc.

- DCA does not support first generation bio-fuel production in areas suitable for food production.
PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

PARTNERS
DCA will work with our partners to establish mutually agreed frameworks and benchmarks for reliable assessment of performance, and for increased transparency and accountability. DCA will support partners’ capacity development with respect to the right to food and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership principles. This will include effective inclusion and participation of rights holders in partner work, adequate distribution of information, and the establishment of grievance mechanisms through which complaints and suggestions from target groups and other stakeholders can be handled.

DCA is committed to establishing a strategic partnership with at least one organization with gender equality and rights-based expertise in every right to food programme and will promote links to national and international research institutions.

Furthermore, DCA will support strategic advocacy capacity-building among partners to strengthen constructive and strategic engagement with the state and international decision-makers.

NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES
DCA will help establish, support and facilitate broad and multi-stakeholder networks at local, national, regional and international level on governance, participation and right to food issues.

DCA will work with ACTalliance and other progressive faith-based organisations and networks as well as with key secular organisations and networks at local, national and international levels. DCA supports organizations and networks working on right to food that are accountable to rural marginalised and excluded groups (e.g. landless farm workers, share croppers, small-scale farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk, tribal and indigenous peoples, migrants, rural women). DCA will support organizations that are committed to uphold and mobilize these groups’ genuine participation and empowerment to claim their right to food from relevant duty bearers.
LIST OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

DCA is committed to supporting and actively participating in a range of strategic networks around right to food, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and accountable governance at national, regional and international levels.

**ACT ALLIANCE** (Action by Churches Together) is composed of more than 130 member organisations working in long-term development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy with members in 140 countries. DCA is a member of the ACT Alliance.

**APRODEV** is the Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe. The main objective of APRODEV is to influence decision-making processes in the European Union institutions as these affect developing countries, in order to promote justice and peace, and the eradication of poverty. APRODEV pursues rights-based development from a faith-based perspective.

**CONCORD** is a network of 27 European networks representing about 1600 European development and humanitarian organisations. Its primary objective is to influence policies within the EU in order to promote development, social justice, gender equality and human rights.

**FACULTY OF LIFE SCIENCES AT UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DANISH NATIONAL ORGANIC ASSOCIATION** (Økologisk Landsforening) and other Danish and international research institutions in order to provide relevant research results and best implementation practices to partners and rights holders.

**FAO GLOBAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION (GSF) AND THE REFORMED COMMITTEE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION (CFS):** The purpose of the GSF is to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders in support of global, regional and country-led actions to prevent future food crises, eliminate hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all.

**FIAN INTERNATIONAL** is an international human rights organization that has advocated for the realization of the right to food for more than 25 years. FIAN consists of national sections and individual members in over 50 countries around the world, is without religious or political affiliation and has consultative status to the UN.

**INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN ORGANIC FOOD SYSTEMS** (ICROFS): coordinates and participates in international research activities, e.g. Productivity and Growth in Organic Value Chains, focusing on productivity and growth in organic value chains. ICROFS also collaborates with various international research institutions on joint seminars, conferences etc.

**DANSK FORUM FOR MIKROFINANS** (Danish Forum for Microfinance): Danish Forum for Microfinance is an umbrella organisation that works with capacity building of Danish actors within microfinance, as well as advocacy and information to the general public.
IN NORTH WOLLO, ETHIOPIA, A PRODUCTION INCREASE OF MORE THAN 100% IS THE MAIN RESULT OF A DCA PROJECT. The cooperatives established by DCA and partners have succeeded in increasing access, availability and adequacy of food for 8,552 rights holders in this project. This has been achieved through establishing seed banks, irrigation systems and crop diversification. Because of good project implementation, a number of additional changes have taken place in the communities, of which the four most important are:

A CHANGE IN GENDER RELATIONS. Women were specifically included in the more technically challenging training and this earned them greater respect from men. Work in the now very productive fields has become so profitable that men now share the field work to an unprecedented extent. Increased trust between women and men has allowed women to move about more freely now to markets, and they are now able to represent their family at meetings – something that was earlier exclusively done by men.

RIGHTS HOLDERS CLAIM RIGHTS FROM AUTHORITIES FOR THE FIRST TIME. In all project areas, rights holders engaged in frequent and systematic interaction with Village Development Committees (VDC). Using the profits from the irrigation activities, the community had built a school structure and went together to the VDC to make the government provide a teacher. The teacher was granted and the children in the village no longer have to walk long distances to a school. On a similar note, the community made a claim for the agricultural services to provide a different and disease resistant wheat variety – this was also granted.

A REVERSE OF THE RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION. Communities reported that the youth are now returning to their communities due to the improved livelihood opportunities at home.

SUSTAINABILITY AND MULTIPLICATION EFFECTS. Rights holders were confident of their ability to continue the activities of their cooperatives on their own and they have encouraged DCA and partners to move on to new geographical areas. They did, however, express interest in continuing to be included in future training and other capacity development exercises and to remain in the established networks.