

DANMISSION

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Mission and Vision

Danmission is a Danish faith-based organisation that promotes peace, justice and sustainable development in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Denmark. Our organisation's view of and engagement in the world are rooted in our Christian faith and guided by our belief that there is hope, forgiveness, and life. This belief is unfolded through our commitment to the dignity of all people and the interconnectedness of all creation and is expressed in our vision, which is to promote **a peaceful, just, and sustainable world where people can freely practice their faith and beliefs.**

Faith and Dialogue are Our Foundation

Danmission's organisational core and our way of pursuing change are rooted in faith and dialogue: **Faith** as a source of hope and **dialogue** as a way of being in the world and as a powerful source of transformation. Faith gives hope, which is essential in people's motivation to act, and dialogue builds bridges and creates space for peaceful coexistence across divides. These two elements comprise our foundation.

Through our faith and dialogical mindset and approaches, we seek to nurture hope, trust, and cooperation between people and groups of different beliefs and affiliations. We believe that dialogue between actors of different faiths and beliefs is a vital foundation for peaceful, just, and sustainable coexistence and for increased freedom of religion or belief.

We believe that faith-based actors are key players in achieving this: The church, religious leaders and religious communities can promote values such as peace, equality, freedom of assembly, belief, and expression, and the protection of minorities. With large and attentive audiences, churches and religious institutions can amplify important messages, and are able to speak and explain these messages in ways that are more relatable and meaningful to community members. Therefore, faith-based actors can play a vital role in fostering hope in situations and contexts where hope can be hard to find. Furthermore, churches and religious communities are enduring institutions that both have long histories and remain within communities when other organisations move on or cease to exist, increasing the sustainability of their engagements. This also places faith-based actors in a unique position to act and provide assistance, especially in contexts or situations of conflict or crisis, for example, to meet psychosocial needs.

The Change We Want to See

Danmission and our partners share the belief that each human being is valuable and deserves to live with dignity. This is rooted in Christianity and in a Human Rights-based approach. This theory of change (ToC) seeks to provide a frame for Danmission and our faith-based and other partners to engage in impactful and sustainable responses to complex and deeply consequential conflicts and crises. This is of utmost necessity as we live in a world increasingly torn by escalating conflict and polarisation. This increases discrimination, marginalisation, and violence across (and sometimes within) groups of different faiths, ethnicities, and genders. At the same time, we see an accelerating climate and biodiversity crisis, pushed by overexploitation of natural resources. This increases the loss of livelihoods, displacement, and resource and climate-related competition. In many contexts, these dynamics often deepen existing vulnerabilities and social and religious divisions, and the consequences hit hardest on individuals and groups, congregations, and faith-based groups already living in vulnerable or marginalised conditions.

Motivated by our commitment to the dignity of all people and the interconnectedness of all creation, as well as the urgency of existing injustice, Danmission seeks to support those most affected by conflict and discrimination, and by climate and biodiversity crises, through two global impact goals:



Peace and Democracy: Communities and groups affected by conflict and discrimination address harmful divisions. The groups most affected by conflict and discrimination, especially women, youth, and religious minorities, are protected, build their resilience, and participate in just, inclusive, and democratic decision-making.



Nature and Climate: Harm to local ecosystems vital for local communities and Indigenous Peoples is prevented or mitigated. Those most affected recover, build resilience, and participate in governance of natural resources that reflects their priorities, ensures sustainability, and address resource related conflicts.

Across the two impact goals, we work to **prevent** conflicts and crises, where the trust and leadership put in churches and religious leaders within their communities are vital. Furthermore, we work to strengthen the **resilience** of the most affected individuals and groups in vulnerable situations; here, churches and other religious institutions have an endurance and a presence in their communities that is often invaluable. Lastly, we work to increase the **participation** of excluded groups in relevant decision-making processes and systems. The organisational structures of churches and religious institutions enable them to have influence across local, regional, and national levels. This allows them to represent community interests in forums where the communities themselves may lack access, bridging the gap between community needs and aspirations and higher-level institutions or processes.

These three different outcome areas, prevention, resilience, and participation, are defined through six long-term outcomes on global level, stated in the ToC figure

on page seven and in our global Results Framework. At country programme level, the three outcome areas are prioritised and weighted according to specific local needs and are contextualised based on detailed context analyses. Some country programmes will contribute to all three, and others might contribute to one or two, depending on relevance. Within the chosen outcome areas, all programmes will strive for change at both community level and systemic level. This will ensure meaningful and direct change for targeted communities and groups, as well as change which sustains long-term progress.

Peace and Democracy

Unfolding the impact goal of Peace and Democracy, our programmes work to **prevent** violence, hate speech, oppression, discrimination, and exclusion in societies characterised by polarisation, division, and negative stereotyping. This means that we work to increase reconciliation, trust, and understanding between groups and encourage commitment across divides to address the causes and consequences of the conflict, oppression, or discrimination in question.

We furthermore strive to ensure safe spaces and protection for those most affected by violence, abuse, and discrimination and that opportunities for spiritual and other forms of care, psychosocial support, recovery and healing of trauma are available. We work to strengthen their **resilience** and support them in organising and addressing negative patterns of exploitation. Often, our engagements to strengthen resilience go hand in hand with our nexus and humanitarian initiatives, which are all based on our belief in human dignity for all, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, or other identities.

Exclusion and polarisation are often at the centre of the inability to resolve conflicts peacefully. Furthermore, exclusion of groups from public participation often exacerbates discrimination and alienation, while simultaneously cutting off democratic opportunities for those affected to seek remedy. This is why we work to ensure that those excluded or alienated strengthen their voice and **participation** and contribute to more inclusive and representative public and institutional decision-making processes across divides.

Central to our efforts across our Peace and Democracy impact goal is the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). We recognise that ensuring FoRB is essential for fostering inclusive societies where individuals can freely express their beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination. As FoRB is closely linked to other human rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly, and non-discrimination, by advocating for FoRB, we work to ensure that individuals can express themselves and their beliefs freely, gather freely for worship and community activities, and be treated without discrimination.

Nature and Climate

Unfolding the impact goal for Nature and Climate, our programmes work to **prevent** overexploitation and overconsumption, which are driving the climate and biodiversity crisis and accelerating the degradation of local ecosystems. This is essential for us, as Local Communities and Indigenous People are deeply dependent on often fragile natural resources.

These and other harmful practices are disproportionately affecting local communities and Indigenous Peoples and are often deepening existing vulnerabilities. We, therefore, work to support and strengthen the **resilience**, including opportunities to recover and to adapt, for those most affected. This is targeted the individuals and groups most affected and often includes nexus and humanitarian engagements in fragile contexts or situations.

Inclusive dialogue and decision-making are essential for sustainable, equitable, and just natural resource management and for preventing resource-related conflicts. We, therefore, work to strengthen the **participation** of local communities and Indigenous Peoples by fostering inclusive dialogue and collaborative action to resolve or prevent local conflicts stemming from scarcity and increased pressure on local natural resources. We furthermore work to ensure that governance systems are participatory and equitable, and we aim to establish democratic mechanisms that promote sustainable resource use and effectively address resource-related challenges.

Cross-Cutting Programmatic Principles

Across all Danmission's programmes and projects, six cross-cutting principles apply. First, we emphasise **local leadership**, recognising that sustainable and long-term change can only be achieved when programmes are driven by local needs and owned and led locally. Across our work, we integrate a **Do No Harm** and a **Human Rights-Based Approach** to empower those most affected by conflict, crisis, and discrimination. This is furthermore complemented by our commitment to **Gender Equality** through a special focus on transforming unequal power relations and inequalities, with specific attention to gendered inequalities. Based on our belief in the interconnectedness of all creation and our commitment to preserve nature and natural resources, we mainstream **Greening** through all relevant engagements. Lastly, we apply a **Nexus** approach addressing the intersections of protracted conflicts and humanitarian crises, as our work in development merges temporary response with sustainable peace infrastructure.

How We Pursue Change

All engagements carried out by Danmission are in close collaboration with our partners, who are rooted in their communities and able to motivate and mobilise others to join their journeys for change. Our partnerships are key for us in pursuing change that is anchored in local needs and pushing for locally driven solutions. We meet our partners with respect and dialogue, which gives us the close and trusting relations needed to work successfully in complex and pressured contexts. We see our commitment to long-term partnerships as an **added value**, and we believe in sustaining long-term partnership relations even when individual projects or specific funding ends.

In addition to this, Danmission has many years of experience and recognition in working dialogically to bring diverse actors together, creating cooperation and dialogue across differences and divides. Our **added value** lies especially in our dialogical worldview, our rootedness in the Church, and our connectedness to Christian and other religious actors. This enables us to successfully bring actors

together, both across religions and ethnicities, but also bringing religious and secular actors together, in forums and networks across faiths and ethnicities. These experiences and our added value fuel the logic behind our theory of change, as it places **coalitions** as a central programmatic element in creating action. This is supported by the argument that greater and more sustainable change can happen when more faith-based actors and secular actors cooperate and strive towards the same overall goal.

How we understand coalitions

A coalition is an informal *community of interest* between different change agents who all wish for and share the same interest in changing status quo. Coalitions are defined or mapped on country programme level and can be very dynamic in size and scope, allowing agents to join or leave over time as contexts change. In some country programmes, coalitions can be explicitly used to bridge different partners and sub-partners working within the same impact area, and in other programmes, coalitions can be implicit and take the form of a way of thinking when doing programming.

Coalitions are central to the design and implementation of our country programmes. They increase the likelihood of creating change within the defined impact goals and ensure the sustainability and long-term effects of this change.

This means that our country programmes map and describe one coalition for each of its country impact goals, identifying change agents (groups of people, churches, organisations, etc.) who are already in support of the change, we wish to push for, and who will be willing to join our journey in working towards it. Depending on the context and culture of the countries, the coalitions can be differently addressed and publicised, in some countries, like Myanmar, where the context of war creates fear of exposure to the military regime, which hinders open coalition building, the coalitions can to a higher degree be seen as a programmatic tool or way of thinking than an actual and articulated exchange between change agents. Whereas in other countries, like Tanzania, where the civic space is more open, coalitions can be addressed to the involved change agents, and synergies can be openly developed. Considering these differences, coalitions are intended to increase synergies across projects, including learning and innovation, expand networks or relations among change agents, and increase motivation to keep working for change.

From a project point of view, all projects designed within the same country impact goal will analyse and define which change agents from the programme's coalition are relevant and possible to mobilise. This means that a project will only engage one or more of the change agents relevant to the partner and project in question.

Danmission and our partners play an important role in supporting possible synergies and relations across the change agents and projects within the same coalition and in strengthening the capacities and skills of the agents involved, if needed. We fully recognise that different needs can exist in terms of strengthening capacities, skills, and knowledge. Agency can be strengthened in many ways and should be tailored to the needs of the agents involved.

Danmission has the distinctive strength of being a faith-based organisation, which means we have a natural connection with other faith-based actors and, through the global Church, with other Christian actors. When working with Christian and faith-based actors as change agents, an important element in strengthening agency can be through contextually relevant theological thinking and practice, as it is a motivator for faith actors to better respond to current and changing needs in their context. This could, for example, be by developing eco-theology to support Church leaders in contextualising issues or crises related to nature and climate. Other ways of supporting agency can be by enhancing leadership, facilitation, or other skills or by strengthening the ability to broaden the coalition by creating new alliances with other relevant change agents. The purpose of strengthening agency is for the change agents to engage in different **types of interventions** to push for change.



Viewed from a country programmatic point of view, the change agents in the coalition engage through different interventions, which target different societal actors as a way of pushing for both **community change** and **systemic change**, the latter focusing on changing institutions, structures, norms, policies, and the like. We see these two **dimensions of change** as equally important to affect, as we believe that the changes created are better sustained through the combination of working for both broader societal and institutional shifts.

For example: In a community, two different ethnic groups are in conflict. The conflict between them is supported by the actions of the governorate, as public institutions in one ethnic area are always prioritised for funds. This systemically worsens the living conditions in the other ethnic area. To push for change, Danmission and our partner have designed a project, and based on the identified coalition in the Country Programme, it involves two different change agents. The first agent is a group of volunteers specialised in dialogue approaches, and the other agent is a smaller CBO with experience in doing community advocacy campaigns. They decide to intervene through an advocacy campaign targeting the governor and her office (the 'societal actor'), advocating for the application of fair and unbiased selection criteria (thereby working for change at systemic level). At the same time, another project involves other change agents from the same coalition and focuses on the depolarisation of the community.

Within both dimensions, to increase the effect and sustainability of our engagements to create change, we always focus our interventions on influencing actors with power, influence and mandate to create the needed change. These actors, whom we seek to influence (to change behaviour), we categorise as **societal actors**.

This is because we, Danmission and our partners, primarily work with small or medium-sized, community-based change agents, who do not have the resources to reach larger numbers of individuals or multiple communities directly by themselves. Therefore, when aiming to create the desired change at community level, our projects will target their interventions to influence societal actors. On community level we target societal actors who hold influence and power to change conditions benefiting **community members directly**. At systemic level, we target societal actors who possess the power, scope or mandate to directly affect public institutions, societal norms, or laws necessary for **systemic change**.

How to understand different categories of 'actors'

We use different programmatic categories to identify relevant actors and clarify their role.

'Change agents': Actors who are part of or could be part of identified coalitions and who support and want to join our quest for change. These actors can be mobilised by us and our partners and are often working at a community or regional level.

'Societal actors': Actors who hold power, mandate, or influence to affect societal change. These actors are often passive or negative in their behaviour towards the desired change, and therefore we work to influence and change their behaviour and actions.

A peaceful, just, and sustainable world where people can freely practice their faith and beliefs

PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

Communities and groups affected by conflict and discrimination address harmful divisions. The groups most affected by conflict and discrimination, especially women, youth, and religious minorities, are protected, build their resilience, and participate in just, inclusive, and democratic decision-making



Harm to local ecosystems vital for local communities and Indigenous Peoples is prevented or mitigated. Those most affected recover, build resilience, and participate in governance of natural resources that reflect their priorities, ensure sustainability, and address resource-related conflicts

PREVENTION

Communities and groups divided by conflict, violence, and discrimination are able to address or prevent harmful divisions and are supported by institutions, norms, policies, and laws conducive for conflict prevention, peace and reconciliation

RESILIENCE

Individuals and groups most affected by conflict and discrimination are safeguarded, able to recover, build collective resilience and are supported by institutions, norms, policies, and laws conducive for inclusion and social protection

PARTICIPATION

Previously excluded groups, especially religious minorities, women, and youth participate in public decision-making processes fostering trust and social cohesion across divides and are supported by institutions, norms, policies, and laws conducive for just, inclusive, and democratic participation

PREVENTION

Ecosystems vital for local communities and Indigenous Peoples are safeguarded, environmental degradation caused by crisis, extraction, unsustainable exploitation, or other harmful practices is prevented or mitigated, and institutions, norms, policies, and laws are conducive for environmental protection

RESILIENCE

Individuals and groups most affected by environmental degradation, crisis, or natural resource-related conflict are able to recover and build resilience and are supported by institutions, norms, policies, and laws conducive for social protection and sustainable livelihood adaptation

PARTICIPATION

Local communities and Indigenous Peoples participate in governance of natural resources and are supported by institutions, norms, policies, and laws conducive for sustainability, just resolution of natural resource-related conflicts and democratic inclusion



EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS



COALITIONS OF CHANGE AGENTS

BUILDING NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES



COMMUNITY LEADERS

CONTEXTUALISING THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS



FBOs AND CBOs



CHURCHES AND FAITH BASED INSTITUTIONS

MOBILISE COMMUNITIES AND CONSTITUENCIES



NGOs

STRENGTHENING SKILLS AND CAPACITIES



EXPERTS AND ACADEMICS

DANMISSION AND PARTNERS

DANMISSION's PROGRAMMATIC PRINCIPLES

- Local leadership
- Nexus
- Do No Harm
- Human Rights and Gender Equality
- Greening

DANMISSION's ADDED VALUE

- Long-term partnerships
- Christian and faith-based foundation in development
- Frontrunner for inter and intra-religious dialogue
- Alliance and coalition building across differences
- Presence and experience within fragile contexts