



Policy summary

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's
roles as international humanitarian actor

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Policy purpose

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders, both internal and external, have a clear and unified understanding of the organisation's roles and areas in need of further development. This policy clarifies Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's strategic functions and responsibilities serving as a foundation for defining, prioritizing, and

executing roles within the relevant context, office structure, and current and future portfolios and partnerships. Ultimately, it will enhance collaboration, set clear expectations with partner organisations, align Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's competencies with its objectives and sharpen Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's organisational profile.

Policy key definitions

For all roles related to local/national actors (including communities), Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe aims to be the critical friend and become the sidekick for local and national actors. Therefore, the identified roles are not treated as separate roles as they represent a fundamental attitude. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe understands them as follows:

Critical friend:

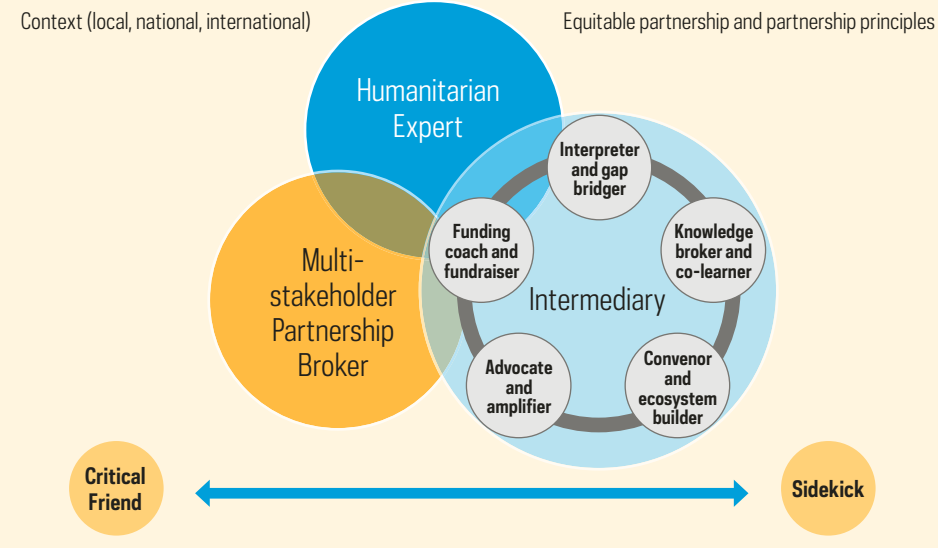
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe fulfils the role of a critical friend by nurturing long-term partnerships with local/national actors based on mutual respect and trust, serving as a sounding board for ideas, challenges and opportunities, by offering support, guidance, and in solidarity without dictating terms or exploiting power dynamics.

Sidekick:

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe supports the partners in all matters, but not exceeding the support role.

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's vision of its role of a sidekick is to support local/national partners by adopting only a supportive position that balances the power relations in a way that the local/national partner organisations are recognised as the primary drivers in the partnership dynamic and its activities. In this way, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe would not overstep boundaries but foster a collaborative environment that prioritises the needs of local/national organisations.

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's seven roles as humanitarian actor roles



The main seven roles are defined as follows:

1. Humanitarian expert:

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe provides partners, staff, peers, and internal/external stakeholders with expertise in principled humanitarian action, in terms of codes, standards, procedures, approaches, technical aspects, etc.

As a humanitarian voice with a vast experience in and a strong commitment to principled humanitarian action and localisation, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe utilises its standing in the public and political realms to pursue humanitarian advocacy efforts, namely focused on humanitarian system change, safeguarding principled humanitarian action, and

crisis-specific protection, access and programming concerns. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's role as a humanitarian expert can be fulfilled both within and outside a project/programmatic relation.

2. Intermediary function with five sub roles:

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe follows the definition of an intermediary as formulated by the GB Intermediary Caucus.

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe relates its role as an intermediary to its programmatic/project relations involving local and national actors, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and donors.

The five sub roles are defined as follows:

a. Funding coach and fundraiser

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe acquires donations/third-party funds and accompanies (preferably local and national) project partner organisations and other stakeholders in the implementation of the agreed humanitarian programs and projects.

b. Interpreter and gap-bridger

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe facilitates communication and understanding between different levels of the system by translating global and political (from donor countries, the humanitarian system and donors) strategies as well as donor guidelines/regulations into a language that is comprehensible to local/national actors, and conversely translating community needs, the conditions/opinions of local actors and “advocacy” concerns into a language that is comprehensible to international actors, donors and the humanitarian system in general.

c. Knowledge Broker and Co-learner

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe facilitates collaborative learning initiatives between local and national actors by leveraging diverse capacities through various partnerships, providing the necessary training and coaching, promoting inclusive co-learning among stakeholders, incorporating past project learnings into future efforts, and utilizing digital solutions to enhance cross-organisational learning opportunities according to partnership agreements.

d. Convenor and Ecosystem Builder

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe fosters collaboration by offering a secure environment for local and national actors to engage jointly in reflection, planning, and learning both in-person and online, empowering them to drive the agenda; they facilitate horizontal and vertical connections among all actors and support exchanges and visits through convening, facilitation, and funding.

e. Advocate and amplifier

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe advocates for and/or on behalf of local and national actors by using its power to influence policy makers and creates opportunities for direct advocacy by local/national actors, while using networks to strengthen and amplify the expertise of them. The advocate/amplifier ensures that local and national actors receive recognition, platforms and visibility for their work and achievements both domestically and internationally; and closely monitors political and humanitarian trends to support civic and humanitarian space for local/national actors.

3. (Multi-stakeholder) Partnership broker

Partnership brokering is the intentional, proactive and effective management of the partnering process.

A Partnership broker creates and promotes a favourable environment for the development of successful and effective partnerships between different stakeholders. A partnership broker brings

(potential) partners together and guides, facilitates, negotiates, supports and challenges them to develop solutions that are necessary for the common goal they promote. A partnership broker promotes creative, innovative, adaptive and trans-

Approach

Since not all roles are always requested to the same extent, it is not a question of deciding which roles Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe should perform, but what Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe should take into consideration in order to strengthen or sharpen these roles.

Above all it is important to pursue them more intentionally and systematically, to put them into practice jointly and based on consultations and prioritisation with partners and other stakeholders, and to embed them in the respective local, national, regional and/or global context.

The three roles of humanitarian expert, intermediary and partnership broker may overlap when working with local and national partners and other local/national stakeholders. Therefore, the staff of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe must be careful not to take on roles or tasks that partner organisations and other local/national actors can take on themselves but carry them out in a complementary and institutionally strengthening manner.

formative approaches and provides instruments and tools for co-led, co-created and collaborative arrangements between partners along the “partnering cycle”.

Humanitarian expert:

The role is performed towards partner organisations, within EWDE (mainly towards Brot für die Welt), with peers and context specific stakeholders, in technical, lobby & advocacy working groups and networks (ACT, VENRO, VOICE, etc.) as well as towards societal, political and religious stakeholders in key contexts. This role is performed within, and outside project or programming relationships and the target audience is broad and diverse.

Within the Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, humanitarian expertise is provided by the Technical Unit, including specialised staff (in Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe Offices), the Finance & Procedures Department and externally conducted by Country and Regional Representatives, specialised staff in offices, Senior Leadership, Communication and Fundraising staff, Advocacy & Lobby staff, Regional Liaison Managers, Country Representatives, and Technical Unit.

Intermediary function:

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's role as intermediary is mainly directed towards local and national partners and other stakeholders/communities/affected population as well as donors in the context of its programming and is carried out as a facilitator of processes.

In general, it is important that the activities (and results) related to Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe's intermediary role are more systematically included in the projects (and the corresponding costs budgeted) so that the local and national partner organisations have the certainty and perspective that these activities will be carried out.

Funding Coach and Fundraiser

This is the classic role of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and includes tasks of Communication and Fundraising and all the Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe offices (Berlin and abroad).

Although the survey of partners showed that they often (high variance among partners) perceive Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe in this role as a coach/mentor and co-decision-maker, it can be observed that Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe – depending on the partner organisation and office involved – also tends to perform this role in a controlling and leading/deciding manner (e.g. in the formulation of third-party funded project applications, donor discussions) – especially in the case of smaller/weaker

partners and complex third-party funded projects/consortia.

Interpreter and Gap-bridger

As for the funding coach this is a traditional role of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and requires Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe to be constantly aware of (continuously changing/transforming) donor requirements and the specifics of respective funding sources. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe must pay attention to political and religious sensitivity.

Knowledge Broker and Co-learner

The sharing of capacities is a core concept of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe to strengthen partners. Currently, efforts are focused on organising trainings, learning and exchange events, courses and visits of local/national partners from one country to another; joint piloting and learning of new approaches with partners (like supporting community-led response and anticipatory action); deploying of experts from the offices to other offices; promoting studies and research.

Convenor and Ecosystem Builder

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe currently fulfils this role in some individual programmes/projects or through some individual offices. For example, it supports/promotes access to and leadership of local and national actors (including communities) in working groups, clusters, humanitarian local and humanitarian country teams, the UN Flagship Initiative; the creation of a network of local/national organisations in Democratic

Republic of Congo, facilitating institutional exchange between partner organisations and providing workshops/meetings on localisation, etc.

Advocate and Amplifier

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has tended to work in the background (e.g. by facilitating bilateral discussions) to amplify the voices of partner organisations in advocacy matters. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has tended to speak publicly on specific issues such as localisation and humanitarian principles; and capitalises on positive experiences.

Some good experiences have been generated in working in coalitions (such as I/NGO Fora, working groups, C4C; ACT, VENRO, VOICE); co-branding and visibility of its partners (logos, photos, local/national players in publications, website, communication plans in third party funded projects); and organising events and/or enabling partners to engage and interact in the global (humanitarian) system.

(Multi-stakeholder) Partnership broker

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe acts as a partnership broker both internally (when Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe is involved in the partnering process) or externally (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe is not involved as partner of the partnering process). Therefore, the role aims both at managing partnerships between the Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and local, national and international partners in the respective humanitarian context,

and the collaboration of a broader range of actors in a specific context (like communities, private sector, authorities, authorities, donors, UN agencies, international organisations, local and national interest groups, etc.).

It is important that Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe staff fulfilling the partnership broker role act as a multi-partial third party in the best interests of all parties to the process. This implies that (mainly in an internal partnership brokering process) the respective brokering person should not be line-managed by the Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe person(s) who take decisions regarding the partnership and respective funding of the involved office.

So far, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has focused on project partnerships and related PCM/MEAL activities (financing role), less on other partnership models and little systematically in its partnership approach and dialogue.

Some examples of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe fulfilling partnership brokering role include participating in and leading multi-stakeholder consortia and partnerships; coaching and mentoring partners in their organisational development; mediating between local community, project partners, government agencies and donors, supporting local/national partners' access to direct donor funding (while retaining an expert supporting role) and participating in or leading working groups.