

EU-CORD // Theory of Change

Guiding Statement

*At EU-CORD we want to live out and advocate for global justice. We have a shared vision for a peaceful world where basic needs and human rights are met for all, including vulnerable and marginalised people; where the economy works for all and where development **doesn't** harm our planet.*

*We do so because we believe that every human being is created in the image of God: all people have inherent dignity, equal rights and responsibilities. We also believe in a God who is restoring broken relationships, and therefore we strive for a world that is just, peaceful and reconciled. Everyone has talents and capabilities as well as diverse needs. We believe that humankind has an opportunity to **reflect God's continuing creativity by being co-workers with Christ**. All people deserve a favourable space for economic activity, in an economic system that serves the people, and not the other way round. Underpinning this, we believe in the inherent good of the created world which is interconnected with the social world of people. Right relationships include recognising our place and responsibilities in the midst of a richly varied, abundant and balanced creation, allowing humanity and the rest of creation to live and to flourish.*

*We take inspiration from Ecclesiastes 4:12: **'A cord of three strands is not quickly broken'**.*

*As faith-based agencies we believe that partnering is ultimately about God, which is why our faith calls us to partnership. We believe that partnership is essential to the very nature of God – Trinitarian, the eternal continuity of three-in-one, **unity and diversity**. **Partnership also describes God's relationship with humanity – incarnational – with God the Son taking on human flesh sharing in our weakness**. Lastly, partnership points to the true relationship between human beings – we are the image of God not solely as individuals but in our relationships with others.*

We believe then that partnership comes to us as a mandate from God for mutual flourishing, reflecting who he is and his purposes for human beings. Human beings will be diverse and dynamic. They will be most effective through multiple networks. They should have a measurable impact upon the needs of the world. We embrace the understanding that partnerships, while being relational, will also come with varying degrees of messiness and are undertaken with a mutual acceptance of the resultant costs. There is no greater work of partnership than the building of relationships in love by which all people will experience the transforming power of the love of Christ.

Core Values

*The network is defined by the quality of its relationships and the degree to which Members co-operate, helping each other to establish good practice and quality in all areas of work. This goal will be achieved in a spirit of servant-hood, **strengthening and supporting each other while respecting each agency's specific identity**. The network is committed to working according to Christian ethics as well as promoting integrity; accountability and a professional standard of work that remains rooted in compassion. The network is inclusive in its approach and we stand alongside those who campaign for social, economic and environment justice.*

Final Objective

Christian organisations collaborating for a transformed, just and equal world

Long-term Goal

Through mutual cooperation to make a more significant and recognisable contribution towards humanitarian action, sustainable development, peaceful communities and global justice

Outcomes

1. Practice and capacity is improved through knowledge sharing, mutual learning and joint innovation
2. Through partnership we have mobilised human, financial and network resources for joint initiatives
3. We live out and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice

Outcome 1 / Practice and capacity is improved through knowledge sharing, mutual learning and joint innovation

The pace of change (political, environmental, technological, social) and how it shapes our work and our functioning as organisations is unrelenting. People and organisations are continually challenged by the need to innovate and to work according to best practice.

This is also true for EU-CORD, and we therefore need a space for on-going collective reflection on the trends that have an impact on our sector and on how we respond to them. Frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development require thoughtful response and action – especially in response to the ‘leave no-one behind’ principle.

We want to be known as a learning network that: identifies knowledge, needs and expertise; facilitates the sharing of best practice; enables members to share experiences and lessons learned. For this to happen we organise different (network) meetings and produce a Member Update with a focus on sharing and learning.

Joint innovation is another way to improve our practice and capacity. It is key to developing the new ways of working that are needed to make the most of new opportunities. For this we require the ability to innovate. If we are able to identify and share our innovative approaches with others we can open the way both to educate and to inspire. For this reason, innovation and creativity is interwoven into all we do.

As a network made up of diverse organisations, each with its own area of expertise, we can gain from developing EU-CORD as a learning network which shares knowledge and is open to learn from each other. In doing so, we increase our respective capacity, practice and

Intermediate outcomes 1

- a) We are known as a learning network that identifies knowledge needs and expertise; which facilitates the sharing of best practice; member experiences and lessons learned.
- b) Innovation is interwoven into all we do, with specific moments for celebration through an annual Innovation Forum and Innovation Award.
- c) The General Assembly is positioned as the principal venue for hosting conversations on critical topics in our sector.

relevance. For this to happen, the General Assembly is positioned as the principal venue for hosting conversations on critical topics in our sector.

Context / Outcome 2: Through partnership, we have mobilised human, financial and network resources for joint initiatives

Realising our vision requires human and financial resources. Increasingly we need to work in partnership for our resource needs to be met. As individual organisations we see the intrinsic value in working in partnership and developing effective partnership approaches as a strategic activity. We are therefore looking for opportunities to work together in developing strategic, programmatic and thematic partnerships. **This is also true for the 'local' level. In order to extend our partnership approach and to strengthen linkages between us in the countries where we work we also support the development of local networks.**

We also see the need to work together in order mobilise financial resources. In order to mobilise effectively, we have to know each other well. Network meetings are valuable moments for us to meet and to develop deep and sustained relationships. Therefore we join forces in the groups focused on institutional funding and private fundraising. To ensure that these groups are an effective tool for fundraising, we share and strategize around trends, specific funding opportunities and training needs for private and institutional fundraising.

In order to improve the ability and quality of Human Resources (Management) of individual members we share expertise and capacity and work together on issues of international staff recruitment. Furthermore, we have a joint pool of experts on different thematic competencies.

Even when we join internal forces we realise that our capacities to achieve our vision are, to a certain

extent, limited. In order to increase scale and impact we see a need to join forces with other networks that contribute to our vision. To optimise the impact of these engagements we base our network activities on a thorough engagement strategy.

Intermediate outcomes 2

- a) Strengthened partnerships between EU-CORD members
- b) EU-CORD partnership approach supports existing and new partnership brokering
- c) Our partnership approach is extended to local networks that strengthen linkages between us in the countries where we work
- d) Members increase and/or diversify revenue through information-sharing and joint collaboration around institutional fundraising across the humanitarian/development nexus
- e) Members share and collaborate around private fundraising and constituency engagement
- f) Collaboration improves ability and quality of human resource management
- g) EU-CORD is active in other networks that add value to the achievement of our vision

In terms of programmatic benefits we thus gain from mobilising human expertise; increasing programmatic scale; diversifying and increasing funding; and growing our voice through engagement in other networks and alliances and through the representation office in Brussels.

We therefore want to be in an environment where we can build trust, confidence and relationships with other organisations with whom we share a mutual faith. EU-CORD is for us a safe environment where we can find such a space.

Outcome 3: We live out and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice

As individual organisations we increasingly need to focus on the structural causes of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, but the extent to which advocacy is embedded in our organisational approaches varies according to our mandates and capacities. The network provides a framework within which we can develop our advocacy capacities in a meaningful way.

In times of a growing focus on security and national interest, emerging right-wing movements, increasingly polarised societies and shrinking civil society space globally and even within the Europe, joint advocacy is more relevant than ever before. The implications of the UK's exit from the European Union will be fully realised over the next few years. The European Union will remain our principle advocacy target but experiences from countries such as Switzerland and Norway prove that countries outside the European Union still exert influence in a broader European (and global) context.

*We want to live out and advocate for global justice. We have a shared vision for a peaceful world where basic needs and human rights are met for all, specifically vulnerable and marginalised people; where the economy works for all **and where development doesn't** harm to our planet. This shared vision and the associated targeted advocacy actions are worked out via the Advocacy Forum and the working groups that emerge from it.*

Our vision will only be met if we are willing to work with others to advocate for change and to show how our advocacy aims are being lived out. This means showing coherence between what we say in our advocacy work and what we do in terms of organisational approaches and individual lifestyle. Contributing to movements such as the Renew our World Campaign, which calls Christians to climate action and which advocates for a circular economy, is one way of doing this.

We need to be able to communicate the universality of our justice goals, broadening our idea of partnership to support global citizenship for a just and sustainable world for all. As faith-based organisations we specifically want to contribute to dialogue and the evidence base of the role of faith-based organisations in relief and development. As such, it is important that we are able to measure and communicate the impact of our advocacy work for internal and external audiences.

Intermediate outcomes 3

- a) Strengthened partnerships between EU-CORD members*
- a) Advocacy Forum & Leadership group are the focus points for joint advocacy development and engagement*
- b) Theme-focussed advocacy working groups are working through the leadership of member organisations*
- c) Advocacy capacity is built within member organisations*
- d) Members link and collaborate with those who are working on similar advocacy goals*
- e) Members are living out and advocating on justice issues*
- f) We are able to show to internal and external audiences how our advocacy work makes an impact*