



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

World Service

Member of **actalliance**

Women in Sohal Tole, a community of Santhal and Dalit (Musahar) people on the margins of society in Nepal, are involved in an LWF-supported project on disaster preparedness and improving livelihoods.
Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

FOR HOPE AND A FUTURE

The Lutheran World Federation

*World Service Global Strategy
2025-2031 (abridged)*

INTRODUCTION

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This 2025-2031 Global Strategy reaffirms the commitment of the Lutheran World Federation World Service (LWF World Service) to advancing human rights worldwide. It outlines a decisive path for a robust, inclusive, and responsive approach in an increasingly complex and fractured global landscape.

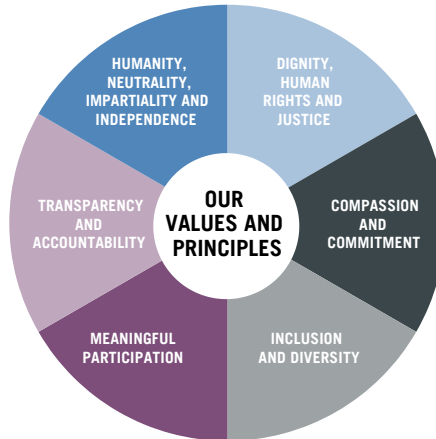
Despite the challenges, we have seen change for the better. We continue to believe that more can be done and that there is hope for the future.



A telecommunications student repairs a computer during a class at the Vocational Training Centre in Ramallah, run by LWF Jerusalem.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES



World Service is dedicated to challenging and addressing the causes and effects of human suffering and poverty, linking local responses to national and international advocacy. In doing this we work towards a world where people live in just societies, in peace and dignity, united in diversity, where they are able to meet their basic needs, achieve their full potential, and claim their universal rights.

World Service shares the values of the Lutheran World Federation. Additionally, humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence underpin the work of World Service. These values and principles, and the Human Rights-Based Approach (RBA), form the foundation for all that we do.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (RBA)

This approach **puts people at the center**, affirming that each individual is precious - a belief in common with the faith in which the LWF is rooted. It emphasizes the dignity of each person and **is an essential feature of all programming** and humanitarian response. It also draws on the prophetic call to justice in our own and in other faith communities. **Advocacy** thus forms an integral part of World Service programming and is **part and parcel of LWF's holistic mission**.

WHERE AND HOW WE WORK



Our operations across five regions – Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean – are coordinated from Geneva, Switzerland.

We collaborate widely through **strategic partnerships, networks and consortia**, to ensure impactful, inclusive, and effective programs that reach the most vulnerable.



We work with **local communities** to ensure our programs are appropriate; **civil society** to ensure effective change extends to more people; **LWF member churches** to reach out and show compassion to those in need; and **governments, intergovernmental bodies and other duty bearers** as key instruments of change.

We work through and learn from **ecumenical and interfaith communities**; collaborate with **related organizations** and philanthropists who provide valuable funding and/or technical expertise; **international institutions and UN agencies** to enable us to have a deeper and broader impact; and **regional and global networks** to ensure the voices of the local communities are heard at the highest levels.

Over this strategic period, we will expand our work with local partners, sharing expertise to ensure that while **local people and actors are in the driving seat**, we work jointly to meet the **standards of quality, accountability, and delivery** required by the international humanitarian community.

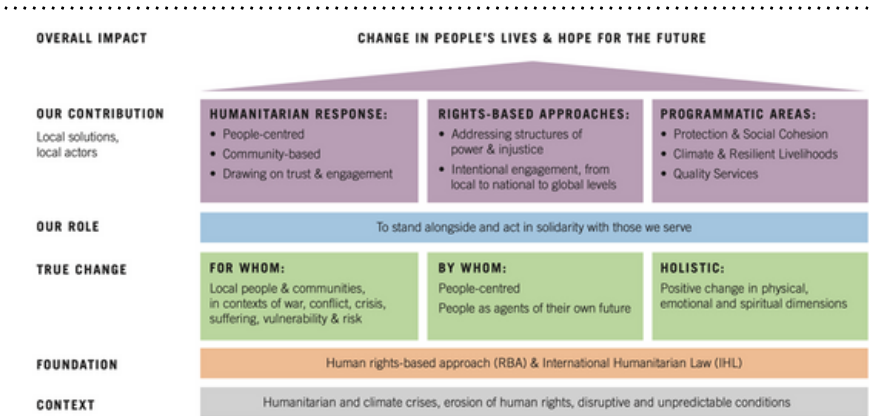
LOCALIZATION

LWF World Service is accountable to **150 local member churches across 99 countries**, predominantly in the Global South. Our approach blends **local rootedness with global action**, a hallmark of our work. We engage with diverse local entities, from **community-based groups and locally registered NGOs to national actors**. Depending on the context, we may directly implement initiatives with community representatives or collaborate with local NGOs and partners. Our goal in each situation is to create an **enabling environment, strengthen partner capacities, and promote civil society**, including faith-based actors.



A young girl listens attentively during a lesson at Peace Primary School, which is run by the LWF and supports refugees at Kakuma camp in Kenya.
Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



To achieve change in an unjust and unequal world, people and communities need **allies to stand and act alongside them in solidarity** to secure their rights. We choose to do this and work for **people-centred change** by engaging and supporting women, men, girls and boys in the communities we serve as the **key agents of their own future**, promoting their dignity, rights, creativity, and resilience, as detailed in the diagram.

Our response needs to be resilient and flexible, embracing a broad, adaptable, sectoral approach centered on local solutions and actors to achieve long-term change across the diverse contexts in which we operate.

We address major challenges through work in these three areas:

- **protection and social cohesion,**
- **climate and resilient livelihoods, and**
- **quality services.**

Our distinctive **'local to global to local' (L2G2L) methodology** combines the rights-based approach and the principle of localization to leverage our role as an international actor.

ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY – LOCAL TO GLOBAL TO LOCAL

Through our 'local to global to local' (L2G2L) advocacy approach, we **address power structures** and injustices, **amplifying local voices** globally and **returning with actionable outcomes**. We work with **individuals** to increase their skills and confidence to voice concerns and advocate for their rights; we work to **enhance community capacity** to monitor and hold duty bearers accountable; and we **support local authorities** in fulfilling the rights of the people they serve – crucial for sustainable change.



A young Honduran carries garden tools provided by a project in El Guante, Cedros, supporting societal reintegration of young, returned migrants.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK



Central to our programmatic work is **recognition and support for the rights and dignity of every individual**, as set out in the diagram. We **work with diverse groups of individuals** to reinforce their skills and confidence to **voice their concerns and advocate for their rights**.

We work with **individuals and communities affected by war, conflict, or natural disasters**, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities. Our efforts also extend to **communities at risk**. Our programming is **gender-responsive and inclusive**, prioritising key groups such as women, girls, and youth, while increasingly emphasising **key vulnerable and marginalized groups** such as people with disabilities, those with special education needs, the extremely poor, and those in need of social protection.

This work aims to **improve living conditions and livelihoods** and **to help develop capacities to monitor and hold duty bearers accountable**.

A distinctive aspect of the work we do is **engaging with duty bearers, such as local authorities, supporting capacity building** to ensure they uphold the rights of all those they are meant to serve, including disadvantaged people. We also **work with other institutions** where **we advocate for structural change and address the power structures and injustices that perpetuate crises** and undermine the people we serve.

The programmatic framework guides the work we do across **emergency, recovery, and longer-term resilience** phases, adapting with changing conditions and intersecting where these phases may coincide in the same country.

LWF World Service has a **wealth of experience and a proven track record** of successful work in these areas, which intentionally overlap to create synergies.

Promoting access to quality services underpins environments that foster resilient livelihoods; likewise, protection and social cohesion are preconditions for building climate-resilient livelihoods. Synergies across the different programmatic areas thus allow World Service Country Programs to implement **comprehensive humanitarian programming** dedicated to driving **momentum for longer-term change**.

Programmatic Area: Protection and Social Cohesion

World Service includes protection as a key component of humanitarian action, working to uphold, fulfil and protect people's rights. We interpret the term 'protection' broadly, to encompass **protection of the human rights and dignity of people and communities**. This approach emphasises our commitment to protection as established in International Humanitarian Law and informs our advocacy and communication relating to war and conflict.

World Service protection work includes registering refugees and internally displaced people, identifying and assisting individuals with special needs, promoting community-led protection mechanisms, addressing sexual and gender-based violence, and advocating for child protection.

The work we do in **social cohesion supports our protection initiatives, nurturing peaceful and just relationships within communities**. This holistic approach helps to lay the groundwork for broader peace processes.

We recognise and **encourage the active involvement of faith communities in this work** to reinforce inclusive social values and actions to protect the most vulnerable.

Programmatic Area: Climate & Resilient Livelihoods

LWF World Service engages with individuals and communities to encourage **resilience and economic self-reliance** by safeguarding and increasing assets, building capacities, and promoting productive activities that **meet their basic needs and diversify their income**.

We aim to promote renewable energy solutions and digitalized services at community level. This work is accompanied by **initiatives to address impacts in the context of the global climate emergency**, particularly among those worst affected by **climate-induced displacement and migration**.

We work with rights holders and duty bearers to avoid and **reduce negative environmental effects** of economic development activities and climate change.

Programmatic Area: Quality Services

World Service works to ensure equitable access to essential services, such as water, sanitation, shelter, food, energy, health care and education, at **an appropriate level of 'quality'**. **This access is a right that must be claimed by all**, including those displaced because of violence, conflict, or natural disasters.

During crises, World Service will provide **life-saving humanitarian assistance and meet basic needs** through coordinated emergency responses, but **for no longer than necessary**, aiming to transfer responsibility to local authorities and other duty bearers as soon as possible.

In working with displaced people and host communities, we are increasingly **focusing on strengthening integrated service provision at the community level**.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

World Service is committed to **effective and efficient resource use**, emphasising good governance, accountability, quality, and responsibility. **Risk management and risk sharing with partners** are becoming increasingly important in our work.

With the rise of **digitalization and generative artificial intelligence**, including in the Global South, LWF World Service is actively seeking innovative solutions and transformative changes. Our programming will more intentionally integrate the use of digital tools and processes to the benefit of the people we work with, while addressing associated risks.

The global climate emergency heightens the need to **strengthen our climate-responsive programming and integrate green solutions** into our organisational practices.

We are investing in **staff development and duty of care**, as well as increasing our visibility within the sector and our positioning on key issues and themes. Sharing insights gained from our work on the ground through our networks, partnerships, and the international community helps to promote the interests of those we serve.

CONCLUSION

As we launch our 2025–2031 strategy, we invite you to be a part of this vital journey. Whether you are a partner organization, member church, donor or advocate, your active involvement is crucial. Together, we can tackle the root causes of human suffering and poverty, and work to ensure that everyone can live in peace and dignity. Join us in our mission to empower communities and transform lives. At LWF World Service we believe that together we can do more. Stand with us for Hope and a Future.

Children ride a bicycle through Minawao camp, which was set up in northern Cameroon to accommodate refugees who fled violence in Nigeria. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



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[Worldservice.lutheranworld.org](https://worldservice.lutheranworld.org)