

# The Charter of the Communities of L'Arche

A draft for consultation 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022



As we look ahead to the next decades, we welcome this Charter to help guide us.



## This Charter is like a map for:

- Who we are
- What we do
- Our founding experience and guiding insight
- Our core values
- Our core practices
- Our Federation, one and diverse
- A more human society

### Who we are, our identity



- We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation.
- Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.
- We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.

### Our founding experience and guiding insight:



- Mutual relationships across difference transforms us. These encounters lead us to more authenticity and freedom.

### What we do, our mission

- We make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- We foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.
- We engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.



### Our core values are rooted in experience

- We are committed to the dignity of every person.
- People with intellectual disabilities have insights, leadership and gifts that society needs.
- We share life together. We choose the call and challenge of community.
- Difference is both a barrier and an invitation; in L'Arche, we translate our everyday experience of the world for each other: across different abilities, experiences, religions, cultures and languages.
- Spirituality and meaning are fundamental to the fullness of life. L'Arche is rooted in the Christian gospel, and continues to be shaped by people of different beliefs, practices and religions.



### Our core practices are rooted in daily life



- We create spaces to share life together: in households, workplaces or other forms of physical and virtual gathering.
- We choose to make time to share meals, work and activities; listening to, and being with, each other.
- We make space for reflection, storytelling, faith practice, ritual and prayer.
- We mark events and celebrate the cycles of life together, including birthdays, anniversaries, welcomes, departures, growth and death.
- We exercise leadership and decision-making based on practices of listening.
- We care for each other: growing in learning, resilience, safety and competence. Part of caring is telling the truth about community life.



### Our Federation, one and diverse

- Each L'Arche community is a network of relationships, bonded to other communities through stories, friendships, values and practices.
- We are part of the societies where our communities are located: while sharing values and practices, L'Arche looks different in different cultures.
- There are many ways of being committed to L'Arche and new models are emerging. Such expressions are grounded in our values, practices, identity and mission.
- Wherever we are, we are engaged with the work of partnership, advocacy, justice and empowerment with people with intellectual disabilities.
- Alongside the call to community, we also hear the call to environmental sustainability.
- While sharing in the gifts of our Federation, we acknowledge the shadows in our founding story. We collaborate for greater integrity and accountability across our communities.



### Towards a more human society



- Our communities are not an end in themselves. We live our mission more fully by being part of - and learning from - the societies where we are located.
- We find unity in diversity, strength in fragility, and freedom in interdependence.
- Encounters between people who are different leads to new ways of living and being and contributes to building a loving and sustainable world. These relationships are a sign of hope and reconciliation for our world, our common home.

