

The Charter of the Communities of L'Arche

A draft for consultation 21st January 2022



Our charter helps us to see our way

The Charter of the Communities of L'Arche

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



L'Arche is us together



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.



We have a common mission

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.





The most important thing for us is our mutual relationships



Our founding experience and guiding insight:

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



We live together a commitment for the dignity of every person.



We learn to live with our differences

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.





We choose to share



And we learn to live and work together

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.



Our communities around the world look different



We build together





We contribute to a caring and sustainable world

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.

