



Dear friends,

The Charter Team offers this new Charter to the Communities and settings of L'Arche for adoption as the map which will inspire and guide us in our mission and journey. It sets out our guiding insight/vision; our core values and our core practices; it speaks of our unity and diversity; and it sends us out into the world with a mission.

Our International Mandate adopted at the 2017 Federation Assembly in Belfast called us to co-create a new Charter. Over the last four years, the Communities and settings of the International Federation of L'Arche Communities have engaged in re-reading, sharing, and gathering our experiences of shared life. Over 90% of our communities and settings have participated in the process at some point as we have discerned together our new Charter.

An initial draft (v6 dated January 2022) was circulated for consultation last year. We received feedback from a good cross-section of Communities and settings from across the whole Federation. Feedback was also received from various structural meetings, including the Federation Council, the International Reflection Council, the Extended Leadership Meeting, the International Stewardship Board, and the International Leadership Team. Furthermore, the International Formation Team used the draft Charter as the basis for a number of formation sessions over the year and we used these as a way of testing the draft.

On the basis of all this feedback, the Charter Team worked together through October to December 2022, culminating in an intense discernment retreat in January 2023 which agreed a final draft of the Charter (v12 dated 20th January 2023) to offer to the International Federation Assembly in June for adoption.

The Charter is integrally made up of both core images and text. The base text is in English with French and Spanish translation, as well as in 15 other languages used in the International Federation. There are initially two 'more accessible' versions available – one with simplified text and drawings alongside the core text & images; and one with blank space alongside the core images & text, in which each Community can add their own drawings, images, and photographs.

This work has been done in tumultuous and challenging times. The ground on which we thought we stood has been pulled away by the inquiry into our founder and the subsequent study commission results. The covid19 pandemic undermined much of our way of life. Whilst this has made the process more challenging in many ways, it has also focused us on the essentials of our own experience and on the importance of naming our fundamental values and practices.



L'ARCHE

This Charter cannot say everything; nor can it resolve all questions and tensions. We will not all agree on every word. The aim of the Charter is to inspire and enable conversations. It will help us to continue to reflect on and share our experiences of shared life and mission. It will help us to wrestle with making our mission alive and impactful in our diverse and changing world. The Charter is not just a piece of paper; more importantly it is the ongoing shared inclusive conversations together.

Padraig O'Tuama, who has served as an external critical friend on the Charter Team throughout the process, shared a reflection on the Charter as a map. See the video of his reflection [here](#).

The Federation Assembly delegates are asked, along with their Communities & settings, to receive and reflect on this final draft Charter in preparation for the Assembly. Then voting delegates will vote in the name of their Community or setting on whether to adopt this draft as our new Charter during the Assembly.

Peace,

John Sargent, Maria Kearney, Rachael Wangui, Candice Wilson, Pedro Toussaint, Stephan Posner, Stacy Cates-Carney, Padraig O'Tuama

The Charter Team