



the danish house in palestine strategy 2021 – 2025

culture takes diverse forms
across time and space
this diversity is embodied in the uniqueness
and plurality of the identities of the groups and
societies making up humankind
as a source of exchange, innovation and
creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for
humankind as biodiversity is for nature
in this sense, it is the common heritage of
humanity and should be recognized and
affirmed for the benefit of present and future
generations

UNESCO UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY,
2 NOVEMBER 2001, ARTICLE 1.

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introduction

The Danish House in Palestine was founded as an association in 2005 by a group of Danes, who wished to strengthen dialogue and encourage greater understanding between Danes and Palestinians..

The Danish House offered an opportunity, while minor in the larger context, to create people-to-people engagement and meetings as a way of dealing with mutual prejudices towards each other. This was recognized by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one million DKK was granted as seed funds to the Danish House. In 2010, we opened the doors to the house in the old town of Ramallah. Our history is still very present in our work and mission statement.

the Danish House in Palestine is an independent civil society organisation - our vision is to strengthen the mutual understanding and appreciation between Danish and Palestinian cultures, as well as encourage values of diverse, open, and tolerant societies

The current document outlines the directions for the Danish House for the next five years, 2021-2025¹. It builds on a decade of experiences, partnerships, ongoing programs as well as dialogues with partners, board, staff members and external stakeholders. We have studied the findings and recommendations of the 2017 mid-term review, the 2018 strategic workshop, and the external evaluation completed in 2019, together with the annual reports from the last many years. Prior to COVID-19 we travelled around the West Bank and met with cultural organizations, practitioners, farmers and artists. Due to the COVID-19 crisis this journey is not entirely finalised. The strategy will be consolidated together with our partners and the board as soon as practically possible.

¹ Effectively August 2021 to December 2025

context

The following presents a few key points in what is a complex situation where the importance of a free and diverse art and culture scene to society is often sidelined. This is the context in which the Danish House operates:

- The establishment of Israel in 1948, the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza in 1967, failed implementation of essential parts of the Oslo Peace Agreements after 1993, internal Palestinian strife, and an economically and politically struggling Palestinian Authority, have contributed to fragmented and fragile Palestinian heritage, identity and culture – both on structural levels and in everyday life.
- In Palestine, culture is a platform to express, strengthen and promote a shared national identity amidst an everyday reality of geographical and societal division. Therefore, culture is a sensitive ideological and political matter and the space to debate, interpret and unlock diverse narratives of identity is narrow, just as the protracted conflict situation constrains quality art and cultural productions.
- Palestinian artists, cultural practitioners and organisations experience censorship, including self-censorship, limited access to equipment, venues, audiences, resources and restricted inter-personal contact with curators and colleagues living outside the country. Their freedom of expression is effectively and continually undermined.
- There are 2.3 million children in Palestine out of an entire population of 4.8 million (UNICEF 2018). Children are offered few creative and free means of expression by the formal education system, which mostly practices traditional passive pedagogical methodologies, and discourages independent critical thinking.
- The young Palestinians, age 18-29 comprise 23% of population, and despite representing a significant and growing segment, they remain disempowered, disenfranchised and disenchanted in society. Unemployment rates among young people are high and political representation is low. Young Palestinians often feel that their voices are not heard and that they have little to no influence on decision-making (UNFPA 2017).





the COVID-19 crisis

- The active COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Palestine. By mid-November there were almost 10.000 active cases. The official figures are believed to significantly underestimate the actual number, due to the testing policy in the country. The WHO risk assessment remains very high for Palestine.
- COVID-19 has had immediate and massive impact on all spheres of life in Palestine. Some have been hit harder than others. 360.000 children in Palestine do not have access to the internet. As a result, they cannot take part in distance learning, or cultural and creative educational programs made available on-line. They have been left out.
- Mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of the population are deteriorating, as the pandemic creates additional stress factors including social isolation, health-related fears, stigma and discrimination. Pre-existing protection concerns are aggravated. Reports suggest increases in gender-based violence and violence against children.
- Movement restrictions have made it a major challenge to reach communities in Area C. The lack of international protective presence in the West Bank, especially for hard-to-reach communities in Area C has been and still is of serious concern. Settler violence is reported to have increased.
- People are disillusioned. There is limited trust in the ability of the authorities to handle the situation. There are consistent reports of lack of public commitment to observe distancing, movement restrictions etc.

priorities COVID-19 crisis

It is the assessment that the COVID-19 crisis will extent well into 2021 and therefore we are or will be involved in the following initiatives:

- 1.43 million children need continuous access to child-friendly communication and education on COVID-19. A level of credible communication needs to be sustained throughout 2021. We need to reach those without internet access and those living in hard-to-reach communities in Area C on the West Bank. We are supporting Tamer Institution for Community Education to develop and distribute child-friendly material on COVID-19. It is coordinated with the relevant UN Clusters. The action is lifesaving.
- Our partners are on-line and providing access to cultural and creative education programs to aid resilience and enhance home-based learning. We are supporting their efforts, which will also ensure that audiences are retained and expanded.
- Art, culture and creativity can support young girls and boys to overcome anxiety and stress. Our partners are developing programs encouraging young boys and girls to document their COVID-19 stories and to produce eye-witness reports. This is the essence of art and culture. It reflects our lives and the world we live in. These productions can be curated and published in Europe and the Middle East to reach a wider audience.
- The COVID-19 has underscored an existing divide among young girls and boys in Palestine. Those who have proper access to the internet and those who do not. Fast-track learning and creativity programs should be initiated together with increased outreach to the hard-to-reach communities in Area C. Our programs under outcome 2 will address some of these concerns.
- Art and culture engage the senses and therefore virtual spaces have their limitations. We will need to find new ways for audiences to gather while practicing physical distancing. This requires space, outdoor venues with easy access and investment in mobile equipment and capacity. This is a part of outcome 2.

objective and outcomes 2021-2025

the objective

a cultural and creative sector that provides courageous and quality learning opportunities for young girls and boys, women and men, and produces daring artistic expressions, thereby contributing to increased cultural diversity, pluralism and freedom of expression in Palestine and Denmark

six outcomes

- an increasing number of Palestinians and Danes are engaged in and actively supporting the programs of the Danish House and our partners
- resilience of young girls and boys, women and men strengthened
- opportunities for young Palestinians, women and men in the creative industries enhanced
- range of artistic expressions, which address, unfold and challenge the world we live in, our collective memory and roots of identity expanded
- Palestinian civil society working with art and culture supported to contribute to freedom of expression and cultural life in Palestine
- the Danish House in Palestine has transitioned into an NGO with a more solid and diverse funding base



principles

freedom of expression

Our programs empower Palestinians to claim their universal human right to freedom of expression. Creativity, art and culture are powerful tools to empower people. Access to culture, production of culture and participation in cultural life contribute to democratic consciousness and social cohesion. It enables civic engagement, and aids informed and qualified dialogues in the public domains. All this is of particular significance in Palestine where freedom of expression is under pressure and where solid democratic practices are yet to mature.

trans-national collaborations between artists, cultural practitioners and academics from Palestine and Denmark

Mutuality has been a core value of the Danish House since its initiation. We have an impressive list of exchanges generating mutual learning and inspiration between artists, cultural practitioners and academics. Over the next five years, we will focus on concrete collaborations, co-creation and production of art and culture. We will work with artists, cultural practitioners and academics from Palestine and Denmark and we will reach diverse audiences in both countries and beyond.

a high artistic and cultural quality

We demand high artistic and cultural quality. Because people deserve quality. This takes time. Time to identify partners as well as donors, time to build relations, to do proper research, conceptualisation, develop and plan.

a long-term perspective, relationships, learnings and narratives with lasting impact

Tangible sustainable results require long-term efforts and investments to build a critical program mass, further increasing the potential for lasting impact. The programs and projects presented in this strategy are multi-year. Partnerships agreements will be entered, and together with partners, we will define results, indicators, division of labour, funding etc.

leave no-one behind

Living conditions in the Palestinian territories vary dramatically between Area A, B, and C. Palestinians in Area C live in the most restricted area in terms of access to essential services, resources and land. These areas are deliberately targeted through 'forceful relocation', demolishing and obstruction of livestock production, driven by Israeli state policy. Moreover, they are targets of violence from Israeli settlers. These communities have been further marginalized during the COVID-19 crisis as movement restrictions have hindered access of human rights protection partners.

Outreach will be an integrated part of the programs under the first, second, and third outcome. The programs will expand cultural capabilities and protection outreach, contributing to community coherence and resilience.

gender equality

We will use art and culture to address the structural causes of gender inequality, roles and perceptions. Theatre plays will provoke debate within the communities and highlight sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and the deprivation of women's basic rights in a patriarchal society.

Our programs will make a specific effort to provide equal opportunities for young girls and boys. Gender disparities within art and culture depends on age group, discipline and subject matter. Spaces for self-expression are different. In some cases, we see more girls and young women taking part in activities and in others, boys and young men dominate the space. Together with partners, we will analyse these patterns and dynamics, to understand the stereotypes and narratives at play to be able to ensure genuine equal opportunities for all.

climate and environment

The development in Palestine has not followed an environmentally sustainable path, in large part due to political constraints, the conflict and the illegal settlements. Some of the challenges are destruction of the natural environment, pollution of water resources, waste water, random dumping sites, accumulation of waste, and rapid unplanned urbanization. Further, climate change leads to desertification, summer draughts, increase in temperature and rainfall fluctuation. In addition, for a population living under occupation, the protection of the environment is often side-lined. Together with partners, we will seek to address this. How can environmental protection and consideration for the climate be integrated into the work with art and culture?

the sustainable development goals

The Danish House commits to the Sustainable Development Goals. Our work is a contribution to the achievement of Goal No. 16 (peace, justice and institutions), Goal No. 4 (quality education), Goal No 8 (decent work and economic growth) and Goal No. 5 (gender equality).



outcomes and outputs 2021-2025

outcome 1

an increasing number of Palestinians and Danes are engaged in and actively supporting the programs of the Danish House and our partners

With our popular engagement work, we wish to inform, educate, engage and inspire dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Danes and Palestinians. In the Danish media, most mentioning of Palestine is mainly linked to the conflict with Israel. As a consequence, the image of Palestine in Danish media is political, often reinforces stereotypes and with few examples of stories involving daily life and the actual consequences of the political context. We will challenge these typical media stories and stereotypes. We will share constructive and diverse stories about our partners, programs, art and culture in Palestine and Denmark.

notable Danish news coverage in recent years • the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 in December 2016, stating that the Israeli settlements constitutes a violation of international law • US President Trump formal recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017, and later, the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem • Denmark's withdrawal of support to civil organisations in Israel and Palestine in 2018 • the Gaza border protests, the 'Great March of Return', which from 30 March 2018 to December 2019 delivered iconic footage and tragically resulted in 256 killed Palestinian and more than 29.000 injured • the launch of Trump's Deal of the Century, January 2020 • the planned annexation of the Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank, May/June 2020 • and in all fairness, we should mentioned the articles on Christian minorities in Bethlehem, their life and ways of celebrating Christmas, December 2019

Our audience live in, have relations to, are interested or engaged in Denmark, Palestine or the Middle East. We are already reaching many. We will involve them more actively. We offer various opportunities for popular engagement. They vary in depth and intensity reflecting different levels of engagement i.e. support, connect, participate.

join us on social media, like, share, engage • sign up to our newsletter • give a donation • become a member of the support association • take part in an journey to Palestine with your Folk High School • work as a volunteer at one of our many partner organisations • become involved as volunteer at the Danish House • do your internship with the Danish House • participate in the General Assembly, get elected for the board • enter a professional and committing collaboration with us and our partner organisations

output 1.1

diversity and local ownership of the communication platforms of the Danish House enhanced

Our communication platforms are blank pages, canvases, open spaces for young upcoming as well as professional writers, graphic designers, filmmakers, photographers etc. Danes and Palestinians. We are outsourcing and creating work for more people. They will produce posts, articles, images and footage. We will edit and quality assure. We will collaborate with the communication teams of our partners. We may have fewer productions and less posts, but, it will be more diverse. It will be a one-to-one mirror of who we are and what we do. It will generate greater ownership to our communication and social media platforms.

output 1.2

the popular engagement opportunities of the Danish House further improved and marketed

We will continue to develop the quality, content and design of our engagement opportunities – and optimize efficiency to enable a larger pool of individual engagements. We will run campaigns and target new and existing members, supporters and audiences. Our development education creates the foundation for our campaigns. All Danish-Palestinian households should know of our engagement opportunities.



outcome 2

resilience of young girls and boys, women and men strengthened

These two programs are about civic engagement and active citizen. It is also about the development of diverse and critical audiences, future artists and cultural practitioners. It is a contribution to quality education in Palestine and it is in line with the ambitions of the Palestine Ministry of Education. For the young girls and boys, women and men it is about finding their own voices. Their courage and self-confidence are developed through learning processes, which sets their creativity free. Taking part in artistic and cultural productions requires persistence, discipline, self-control and collaboration. It develops your identity, strengthen your network and social capital. All crucial elements for your resilience. The programs involve outreach to hard-to-reach communities in Area C, and to Jenin, Tulkarm, Silwan, East Jerusalem and Hebron area H2.

output 2.1

literature skills of young readers and writers strengthened

When children and young people are exposed to literary fiction their world expands. Literature is a window and a mirror. It gives us a deep and unique understanding of what it means to be human. It helps us develop empathy. We get to know ourselves better through the identification with the fictional characters.

Palestine and Denmark share a tradition for children's literature. We build on these traditions. We will translate and publish Danish and Palestinian literature for young girls and boys. We will support creative learning and training programs targeting young talented debutants. We will ensure inclusion and outreach and develop a program targeting 80 libraries in hard-to-reach communities in Area C. The partners are among others, Tamer Institute for Community Education, the Danish publisher, Dalgaard & Jensen, and Danish librarians.

output 2.2

cultural capabilities for most marginalised girls and boys strengthened

This program will initiate the creation of community-based flexible safe semi-outdoor spaces in Jenin, Silwan and Tulkarem. Here young girls and boys can exercise their right to freedom of expression through cultural activities such as drama, circus, music, sports, and dance organised by volunteers, cultural practitioners and organisations. Young cultural entrepreneurs will be trained to take leadership of these activities and spaces. We will work with performing arts productions, which create awareness of gender equality and child protection. We will support international festivals in Palestine and the participation of Danish cultural practitioners. Our partners are e.g. the Palestinian Circus School, Al Hara Theatre, the Freedom Theatre, Dar-Qandeel for Art and Culture, Al Bustan Association.

outcome 3

educational opportunities for young Palestinian women and men in the creative industries enhanced

The cultural and creative industry is one of the most dynamic sectors in the global economy and a strong creative sector is essential for the position of Palestinian cultural productions and designs at the domestic, regional and global markets, and directly linked to the social and economic development of the country. (Med-Culture, Employability, 2016; UNCTAD Creative Economic Outlook, 2018). The sector also provides a significant platform and opportunity for the renewal and reinterpretation of the cultural heritage and is hence, a means to preserve, reinforce and promote Palestinian culture as part of fostering national identity.

output 3.1

a Palestinian community of powerful, daring and independent filmmakers supported

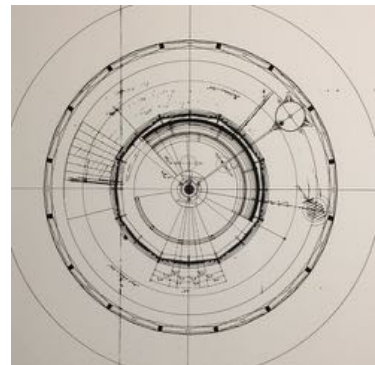
We will expand our support to the development of an independent Palestinian film industry. A major challenge in all steps of the value chain of the film industry in Palestine is the limited capacity-building for aspiring professionals (Value Chain Analysis of the Film Industry in Palestine. UNESCO 2019). The program will support the development and delivery of educational programs as well as access to quality equipment needed for specialized capable film crew members. The Danish film industry is one of the oldest film industries in the world. We will continue to draw on these experiences. We have a long-term and ongoing collaboration with stakeholders and partners in Palestine and Denmark. Core partners to this output is Filmlab: Palestine, Aarhus Film Workshop together with a pool of recognised Danish film makers and professionals.

output 3.2

creative design capacities of young Palestinian women and men strengthened

This program is driven by Nordic creative pedagogy, design and branding. Nordic specialists will work together with Palestinian colleagues, and young students will be exposed to new branding and design approaches. The partners are Birzeit University, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design and The Danish Museum of Art & Design, the Danish food-culture corporation Meyers and Palestinian agricultural and food-design activists and first-movers.

The program builds on design tendencies in Palestine combined with inspiration from Nordic countries. Young Palestinian designers' present cultural heritage, aesthetics and distinctive values linked to *sumud* (steadfastness) through their product storytelling. This resonates with global drivers towards *resilience* as something desirable, which global consumers wish to identify with. In a similar manner, as are the Nordic countries, world-renowned for their distinctive *New Nordic* brands, vitalizing and bringing to life the essence of traditions. Both are utilising contextual dynamics and tensions between the old and the new as sources of creativity and core drivers of cultural renewal as branding strategies, matching desires and values on the market.



outcome 4

the range of artistic expressions, which address, unfold and challenge the world we live in, our collective memory and roots of identity expanded

Art reflects the world we live in. It makes injustice and falsehood clear. Art can be transformative, and as an artist, you are 'free game'. There are powers that will seek to silence you, critics, who may scrutinise your work, just as the public might turn a blind eye. We are not in the business of entertainment. We will seek to create spaces where dogmas and steadfast perceptions of identity, culture, land, heritage, shared history and future can be challenged and new narratives developed by a young generation of artists and performers. We will work with researched-based, curated, inter-disciplinary Danish and Palestinian co-productions. Target audiences are in Palestine, Denmark and Europe.

output 4.1

joint productions and co-creations by artists supported

the Ones Who Walked Away of poetry celebrated

A curated inter-disciplinary Palestinian-Danish contemporary art co-production covering several years. It is about our shared history - Palestinians and Europeans. In 2020, we researched, conceptualised, and took steps to identify artists and curators in Palestine and Denmark. We are developing a comprehensive 'catalogue of scripts', which unfold various themes e.g. Jerusalem, Area H2, shifting mountains, separation, universality, the spring, Silwan, the state. The catalogue will be used for resource mobilization, creating curiosity and engaging artists.

the Ones Who Walk Away - the working title is inspired by a novel, a 1973 work of short philosophical fiction by American writer Ursula K. Le Guin. With deliberately both vague and vivid descriptions, the narrator depicts a summer festival in the utopian city of Omelas, whose prosperity depends on the perpetual misery of a single child

the power of poetry celebrated

'Nothing is as sad as the predictable tragedy'. The words of a Danish chief editor on the death of Yahya Hassan, the Danish poet, who passed away at the age of 24 in 2020. Yahya Hassan was of Palestinian descent. His debut poetry collection sold a record 140.000 in a few months in 2013. Poetry is one of the most personal forms of expressions, and in Arab culture, oral arts predominated for centuries. We will create a summit with the traditional and the modern poet.

a storyline of climate change created

Using art, we will bring climate change and the history of Palestine together. We will ask questions: How are climate change and the history of Palestine linked? How has the impact of climate change affected livelihoods, food and water security, ecosystems, infrastructure in Palestine? What will it be like in 20 years? 100 years?



nothing is as
sad as the
predictable
tragedy



outcome 5

Palestinian civil society working with art and culture supported to contribute to freedom of expression and cultural life in Palestine

Palestine has a strong and vibrant civil society that fights for creativity, cultural expression and freedom. It is also a sector under massive pressure. Palestinian civil society organizations are targeted by smear campaigns, artists are threatened and plays are shut down. Legal frameworks, government support, and infrastructure is insufficient.

The Danish House will continue its support to Palestinian civil society organizations working with art and culture. A core feature in most of our projects is to provide quality learning opportunities and professional development through trans-national collaborations between artists, cultural practitioners and academics from Palestine and Denmark. We are also working with partners on infrastructure and outreach amongst others.

output 5.1

organisational capacities of partners further strengthened

We will work with each of partner to determine the relevant support and activities.

outcome 6

the Danish House in Palestine has transitioned into an NGO with a more solid and diverse funding base

To stay relevant, it is essential that we invest in growth and diversification of our funding portfolio. To this effect, we will untie resources and lower our core costs. This will furthermore improve our organisational agility.

We have not exhausted our opportunities at the Danish market i.e. institutional donors and private trusts and foundations. This will be the main priority of our investments together with other obvious international institutional donors foundations, such as the EU.

Envisioned organisational changes include outsourcing, bringing on board capacities and experiences with regard to grants acquisition, fundraising, marketing, and popular engagement.

Our core organisation is in place. Relevant strategies and policies have been developed together with appropriate operational and financial procedures and systems. We are a lean organisation. As the portfolio grows, we can, when possible and necessary, scale and develop the organisation further across strategies, structures, competencies and processes including grants management systems. This will also involve recruitment of fixed-term contracts program coordinators.

output 6.1

the Danish House has increased its cash and grant's income

The strategy for the next five years is based on a decade of experiences and partnerships. We have a resource mobilisation strategy. We have analysed the market and our acquisition efforts are ongoing. We established the following conditions:

- The growth in the sector and the major sources of income is from institutional and private donors. We analysed the income of three organisations: In 2018, between 63-84% of their income was Danish public funding from one single source i.e. a strategic partnership or a framework agreement.
- The impact of the COVID-19 crisis will continue in 2021 and beyond. Private giving is decreasing. Donors are reallocating funds to COVID-19 operations.
- Individual giving i.e. cash contribution is a challenge for the entire sector. The market is very competitive. The return on investment is low. We will change our approach to popular engagement and we will be running one or two fundraising and member acquisition campaigns annually. Reference is made to outcome one.
- We are the only Nordic civil society organisation in Palestine working with art and culture, and we have not seen membership products 'targeting' Palestine.
- We expect to see no major changes to civil society space in Palestine. Hence, we and our partners can deliver.



result-based management monitoring, learning and evaluation

Our approaches are guided by who we are. We seek solutions that are relative to our size and the characteristics of the programs and projects e.g. subject matter, volume and depth of the engagement – hereby taking into consideration that we are working across a diverse spectrum of art and culture disciplines with different modus operandis, artistic aims and expressions.

Our approach will promote accountability and learning at both program and project level. It will enable us and our partners to have a clear view on how each actor and project contributes to the whole.

- At program level, we will review contribution to and achievement of outcomes
- At project level, we monitor and ensure learning in cooperation with partners
- At both levels, we will measure outputs, reach and indicators

The strategy is translated into an annual plan with key actions and results. The plan will be informed by the learnings and deliveries of the previous year, dialogue and planning meetings with partners and changes to the context. We will do an annual program review. It will be based on e.g. the project level monitoring, annual reflection workshops with the partners, insights from networking, field trips and desk-studies. The annual program review will include:

- An overview of the delivery of targets, an assessment of the contribution towards indicators at output level and towards the achievement of the outcomes
- Reflections on lessons learned, testing the underlying assumptions etc.
- Outline and analysis of significant changes to our context, which have had or

are likely to have implications for program relevance and delivery

- Adjustments to the program (outputs, targets, indicators) and the justification
- Review and update of risk register

The above will be consolidated in our annual report. An external mid-term review and final external evaluation of the strategy will be done.

Most of the outputs includes one or more projects. The objectives of the projects will be aligned to the output indicators. These may be further qualified at the project level together with updated baseline data upon initiation of the projects.

All projects are monitored. Program staff make frequent field visits and are often present during execution of activities. Methodologies include e.g. meetings with participants/partners, questionnaires, interviews and open discussions with audiences. Partners submit financial reports together with narrative and/or video reports. Larger projects will be subject to an external final evaluation depending on donor requirements and availability of funding.

Frequent reflection and learning meetings including annual workshops with the partners will take place. Our approach to long-term strategic partnerships is relational and it build mutual trust. This is a condition for joint learning.



risk management, security and safety

- Our area of operations is under military occupation by Israel. There can be armed clashes and attacks, violent confrontations, chaos and panic. Movement restrictions can be imposed unannounced by roadblocks and check points.
- The purpose of our Security and Safety Guidelines (2019) is to ensure that staff, interns, volunteers and guests are secure and safe, and show due diligence in minimizing potential risks to their own and colleagues' security and safety.
- Sexual harassment and exploitation are included in our briefing of new staff members, interns, and volunteers. We have a clause in partner agreements to ensure that the engagement is implemented in an environment free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, abuse and harassment, sexual or otherwise, especially in case of vulnerable groups. Cases of sexual harassment are reported to the director.
- We will update our Risk Register on a regular basis.

