

L'Arche USA 2021-2025 Mandate

Approved by the National Assembly 11/23/2020



As a vessel for change, L'Arche USA exists to support its member communities, ensure standards, and unite member communities in a common vision and mission. Furthermore, L'Arche USA offers formation programs and services for individual members. L'Arche USA influences the public's awareness and perception of people living with intellectual and or developmental disabilities, including public policy. L'Arche USA is living into its deep and real potential.

As we finish a mandate of reframing L'Arche in the US and L'Arche USA, we honor the fruits of our learning - key gifts, gaps, and contexts.

The **gifts** that strengthen us in our work are our people, our grounding in the mission and spirituality in L'Arche, our daily embrace of difference, and the sacred value of our relationships and stories.

Identified **gaps** exist that herald this mandate process and include: the need to grow trust throughout all levels of L'Arche; the necessity to clarify and develop structures and processes between local communities, L'Arche USA and L'Arche International; a scarcity mindset, the constraint of insufficient resources to meet worthy aspirations; a need for greater diversity within leadership and membership; the need to reframe and renew our shared story.

The interrelated **contexts** and perspectives in which the mandate are framed and realized include:

- The uncertainty, fear and constraints that Covid-19 has brought and the knowledge that its impact will be significant for years to come,
- Cultural Context of the US (polarization, the reckoning with racial injustice, individualism, desire for community, diversity, economic realities),
- Federation context (the inquiry results and the impact on our story and culture, solidarity, post-founder, charter process, a call to unity),
- L'Arche USA (emerging definitions of individual and community membership, sharing ownership of L'Arche in the US, a changing service provision landscape), and
- The diversity of each local community's gifts, gaps and context.

As we set off on this mandate, we are called first and foremost to strengthen and deepen our practices and experiences of unity and trust. We also acknowledge that today's unique context has so changed us that we will be required to bring a spirit of openness and creativity to all that we do.

Empowered and guided by our essential values of spirituality, mission, and relationships, we commit to five priorities: governance and accountability; member care and development; diversity and inclusion; our story; and our funding.

The fruits of this five-year mandate will be seen in how unified, engaged, diverse, known, and resilient we are across the US and in our progress towards each priority. We advise that the priorities of this mandate be instrumental in the creation of a strategic plan with measurable outcomes. We are committed to a mid-mandate review undertaken by representatives of the ELT, National Board and the International Leadership.

Mandate Priorities



Governance and Accountability: We will simplify and clarify the lines of communication, roles and responsibilities for L'Arche in the USA. We should use our collective time and strengths to agree on decision-making and accountability between local, national and international bodies. We will attend to and strengthen our leadership culture and practices.

Success will look like:

- The National Leadership and ELT embrace and engage in a unified working culture marked by honesty, responsiveness and healthy collaboration.
- Leadership in L'Arche USA is empowered to make and implement decisions to meet local and national needs; they are held accountable and receive oversight and support as appropriate.

Member Care and Development: We will support the well-being and safety of all members. Nationally and locally, we will establish safeguarding governance and implement enforceable policies and practices, with attention to the guiding principles of accountability and subsidiarity. We will foster a culture of honesty, transparency and learning that assures that all members grow in membership and leadership in L'Arche as abundantly and safely as possible.

Success will look like:

- A clear and open process for making, responding to and learning from safeguarding reports, used and embraced by members, communities and national leadership.
- Clarity on our understanding of individual membership with its rights and responsibilities, and greater national and local capacity to help all members develop as individuals and leaders.

Diversity and Inclusion: L'Arche USA will foster inclusion and diversity to promote authentic belonging for all its members. We will review and revise our processes, practices and resources to better meet the needs of those with different identities and abilities. We will empower the use of everyone's gifts in decision-making, celebration, and strengthening of community.

Success will look like:

- We invite, recruit and retain a greater diversity of members and particularly leaders, nationally and locally.
- Core members and others with intellectual disabilities are more actively engaged in consultation and leadership responsibilities.

Our Story: We will explore, refine and honor our shared story post-inquiry as members of the International Federation. We will strengthen the role that each member of L'Arche has today in shaping our shared story, including engagement in the Federation Charter process. We will amplify L'Arche's emerging voice in the US, building new audiences, recruiting new members and raising our outreach and public policy presence.

Success will look like:

- A shared story that is grounding to our members and inviting to potential members, donors and friends.
- L'Arche's increased voice and presence in the public sphere as a thought leader in our areas of expertise.

Our Funding: With grateful hearts, we will develop and build funding partnerships that meet evolving financial needs, underpinning and supporting the needs of L'Arche USA, enhancing the efforts of local communities, and supporting the work of the Federation. We will align on the principles of collaborative fundraising and implement local-national-international fundraising initiatives.

Success will look like:

- Increased funding from new and existing donors, partnerships and revenue streams.
- Local, national and international collaboration supports a flourishing of fundraising at all levels.