

## 16. PARTNER AND AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS POLICY

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### **Introduction**

This Life is committed to ensuring that we engage with governments, organisations and individuals to achieve mutually agreed objectives in aid and development activities. The equal relationship with these stakeholders will be characterised by mutual respect, transparency, accountability and by a commitment and openness to two-way learning and support.

### **Additional Authority: Law and related organisational documents**

- Reporting Policy
- Program Management Manual
- Guide to Grants and Donor Reporting
- ACFID Code of Conduct
- Beneficiary Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Grievance Policy

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to guide This Life and our partners on the expected nature of our engagements with other organisations or individuals. Additionally, this policy addresses our ACFID compliance obligations when initiating and maintaining partnerships and joint collaboration for the purpose of achieving This Life's mission.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all This Life Board Directors, staff, volunteers, consultants and interns, and extends to This Life's partners and associated implementing organisations.

### **Partner Engagement**

This Life collaborates with many entities from around the world.

These partnerships enhance our capacity to effectively facilitate community development through relevant and sustainable programs and projects by harnessing existing knowledge, expertise and resources to enhance capacity for communities to determine and meet their own needs.

This Life regards partnerships as mechanisms for realising positive, constructive change and will ensure all activities are carried out responsibly, honestly and with transparency. This Life expects the same of all partners.

The nature of the relationship must be documented in a Memorandum of Understanding or equivalent document (see below), which should be signed by both parties and filed by This Life's Finance Department. Such agreements should only be entered into by the Executive Director or Deputy Director. This Life's partners must comply with certain standards set by the ACFID Code of Conduct.

This Life sees value in building coordinated partnerships where there is mutual accountability and a focus on development results. We also aim to deepen engagement with civil society and promote a culture of zero tolerance for corruption.

This Life's management and staff will:

- Support carrying out adequate research to be confident that the potential partner organisation is suitable. This research will verify that the organisation is financially viable and:
  - has appropriate procedures to minimise the potential for fraud, corruption

- o and money-laundering;
- o has appropriate processes to prevent transmission of funds to criminal or terrorist organisations;
- o shares This Life's objectives and understands This Life's vision, mission and values;
- o is considered legitimate, locally;
- o has an accountable and democratic organisational structure and is financially transparent;
- o is committed to working and communicating transparently, disclosing timely, relevant and accurate information in an accessible format;
- o is open to being monitored by This Life and will be responsive to recommendations. This Life must also be open to being monitored by the partner;
- o does not discriminate based on age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability or political affiliation;
- o will not engage in promoting religions through evangelising or proselytising;
- o has sufficient human and financial resources to achieve desired partnership outcomes;
- o is accountable to communities and donors;
- o is not on the DFAT and National Security Australia lists of terrorist organisations and proscribed persons or entities;
- o abides by or exceeds This Life's child protection requirements including signing the Child Protection Code of Conduct;
- o promotes equality within staff and community;
- o promotes equal participation of all, including but not limited to groups marginalised on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability; and
- o promotes gender equality.
- Formalise relations with partners, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities in a mutually accountable and respectful manner.
- Ensure that partner contributions and mutually agreed outcomes are adequately documented and monitored.
- Support partners to strengthen their systems and procedures where they are initially unable to meet organisational commitments for partnership.
- Only enter partnerships that are compatible with local cultural needs and values, and which are aligned with This Life's purpose and values.
- Clearly identify roles, responsibilities and guidelines to ensure the partnership remains mutually beneficial and effective in achieving agreed outcomes and take responsibility for ensuring roles, responsibilities and guidelines are agreed and documented when partnerships are established and that these are reviewed and adapted as partnerships evolve.
- Ensure that partner organisations maintain environmental sustainability through safe practices.

### **Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)**

All formal partnerships will be governed by an MoU or equivalent document which will detail the following:

- Statement of intent/ purpose
- Duration
- Background
- Partnership principles
- Partner roles
- Partner obligations and accountabilities
- Measurement, reporting and management of progress
- Partnership review
- Dispute resolution
- Termination
- Any additional ACFID requirements

### **Collaborative Relationships**

Collaboration is one of This Life's values, ensuring participation of all stakeholders. In addition to collaborating with partners to develop projects, This Life also collaborates with other non-government organisations where possible and appropriate, and is a member of various collaborative networks.

## **Partner Capacity Assessments**

Prior to the commencement of each program and project, This Life will conduct a partner capacity assessment. The assessment ensures that the program or project to be conducted will meet the needs of the target communities and other stakeholders, including This Life and partner organisations. It will also assess whether program or project will address cross-cutting issues such as gender, people with disabilities and child protection. The information gathered through the capacity assessment will be used to develop the program or project design.

## **Financial Accountability**

This Life must oversee expenditure made by partner organisations that are funded by This Life, to ensure that they are appropriate and within This Life's objectives. The nature of the oversight depends on the degree of financial control exerted by the partner organisation. Depending on the judgment of This Life's directors, the MoU will outline requirements at This Life's discretion. All relevant documentation must be retained by This Life's Finance Department.

If an organisation is to receive funds from This Life, before any MoU is entered into, an additional assessment of the partner's capacity to manage, control and apply funds or resources in accordance with the promise to the donor(s), the agreed upon strategy, and This Life's specific instructions must be undertaken.

## **Donations**

This Life shall only accept donations that are offered specifically to contribute to This Life's mission, and not from:

- Organisations
  - o that are found to be incompatible with This Life's activities, policies or principles;
  - o that are in ill repute and/or are not perceived to be acting in good faith; and
  - o if doing so may present any threat of negative publicity to This Life
- Individuals
  - o if there is any expectation or perceived expectation of reward from or influence over This Life;
  - o who are in ill repute and/or are not perceived to be acting in good faith;
  - o if doing so may present any threat of negative publicity to This Life.

## **Autonomy**

Partner organisations that are 100% controlled by This Life shall have all of their accounts consolidated into This Life's financial statements. There is no precise definition of "control" for non-profit organisations, so this needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Relevant factors include whether the partner organisation is independently governed, whether its budget or expenditure is subject to approval by This Life, whether it is largely or entirely financed by This Life, and whether it shares operational facilities such as accounting, office space, and personnel.

This Life may also offer support to partner organisations in the form of fundraising, management, administration, office space, and so on. The directors shall consult with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in order to agree on the feasibility of the support offered, as compared to the capacity and current workload of the finance and administration staff at This Life.

Unless specifically desired, 100% control over partner organisations should be avoided. MoUs should be drafted with this in mind, and should make specific reference to the independence or autonomy of the partner organisation as required. Control should be retained over the This Life "brand", such that partner organisations that are not 100% controlled by This Life do not release material in the public domain which implies that they are part of This Life, without prior consent.

## **Reviews**

Throughout each project opportunities are available to review project activities, implement recommendations and make changes to future projects. This review allows for ongoing collaboration and reflection by all partners.

**Grievances**

This Life recognises the rights of individuals and partner organisations to lodge a grievance and have it resolved quickly and fairly. This will be handled in accordance with our Grievance, Beneficiary Complaints and Feedback or Whistleblower policies depending on the nature of the grievance being lodged.

**Authorisation**