

Program Partner Engagement Policy

Version 2.4

Introduction

ChildFund Australia forms partnerships with various entities to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable improvement in the lives of children and their communities. Our partners include governments, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations, the private sector, multi-party consortia, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), sporting bodies, community members (including children and youth) and ChildFund Alliance members.

We believe that working in partnership with others enhances our capacity to realise children's rights and improves the effectiveness, sustainability and reach of the programs, projects and emergency responses we support. We work intentionally with others in mutually respectful ways. Through partnerships, we are able to harness existing knowledge and expertise, enhance capacity for community needs to be met locally, and promote transparency and accountability. We also see partnership as an opportunity to build the capacity of our local partners, to ensure their ongoing development and sustainability.

ChildFund Australia undertakes due diligence and capacity assessments of organisations with whom we work in a formal partnership. This process enables us to identify potential strengths and risks that inform our approach to working with partners.

ChildFund works in accordance with principles of alignment and harmonisation determined by the international community (Rome 2003, Paris 2005, Accra 2008 and Busan 2011). Through our partnerships, we also aim to follow the agenda to 'revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development' set out in Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Domestically, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct also identifies 'collaborative working relationships' as one of its nine Quality Principles. ChildFund follows this partnership principle of working towards a shared goal, combining complementary skills and resources and working through established working relationships to ensure that resources support effective outcomes.

We recognise that in-country governments are duty-bearers and we will seek to build their capability to meet their legal obligations. We see value in donor countries building co-ordinated 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 fraud and corruption, crimes and terrorism and money-laundering.

Key Principles

Mutual Accountability and Respect: ChildFund Australia and the partnering organisation commit to shared goals and agree to be held responsible for the commitments that they have voluntarily made to each other. ChildFund Australia also recognises that partnering organisations must work together to be accountable to stakeholders, including beneficiaries and donors.

Capacity Building: ChildFund Australia will work with local partners, including governments, to strengthen their capacity and skills and enhance their effectiveness. Effective capacity building is a mutual endeavour, takes time and depends on respectful dialogue between the partnering organisations. Capacity building of partners will contribute to the ongoing strengthening of civil society and the public sector.

Grand Bargain: Through its humanitarian work, ChildFund Australia applies the principles of the 'Grand Bargain', the international agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid

providers, which aims to localize humanitarian responses. We therefore aim to work through and directly fund national and local responders and provide them with the organisational support and capacity building they need to respond effectively.

Values-based: ChildFund Australia’s approach to partnerships is informed by our organisational values; respect, integrity, collaboration, change, excellence and empowerment. ChildFund Australia believes demonstrating these values through our interaction and engagement with partner organisations is vital to the success of the partnership.

Policy Statement

ChildFund Australia is committed to working with all partners in a mutually accountable and respectful framework in order to achieve agreed outcomes for children.

Policy Commitments

ChildFund Australia will:

- assess all potential new partners using ChildFund Australia’s Program Partnership Due Diligence¹. This assessment will verify that the organisation is financially viable and has appropriate:
 - processes to prevent transmission of funds to individuals and organisations associated with terrorism and money laundering;
 - procedures to minimise the potential for fraud and corruption;
 - screening procedures to protect children
- formalise relations with partners, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities in a mutually accountable and respectful manner;
- minimise the imposition of ChildFund systems and procedures on partners². Where partners do not have the capacity to meet organisational commitments for partnership, wherever possible we will support them to strengthen *their* systems and procedures to ensure that they meet national, and where relevant international, good practice standards.
- ensure that partner contributions and mutually agreed outcomes are adequately documented and monitored;
- build partners’ capacity so they can sustain their work for children and young people;
- align all programs and projects with relevant laws, and government policy and planning frameworks;
- ensure that partner organisations comply with relevant policy requirements in donor project agreements.
- only enter partnerships that are compatible with local cultural needs and values, and which are aligned with ChildFund’s purpose and values;
- clearly identify roles, responsibilities and guidelines to ensure the partnership remains mutually beneficial and effective in achieving agreed outcomes;
- 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 written agreements with partners explain how partners will be held financially accountable, consistent with ChildFund Australia’s contractual obligations to donors. Written

¹ See Attachment 3.1 Partner Due Diligence Assessment in Chapter 3 of the Program Handbook.

² Some current ChildFund partners use financial and reporting procedures that were developed specifically for use with ChildFund. While this should be minimized, it is a good and pragmatic solution in many cases.

agreements with partners must also state that partners are responsible for ensuring their subcontractors also comply with these obligations, in particular in the following areas:

- processes to prevent transmission of funds to individuals and organisations associated with terrorism and money laundering;
 - procedures to minimise the potential for fraud and corruption;
 - screening procedures to protect children.
- before entering into partnerships ChildFund Australia will conduct adequate research to be confident that the potential partner organisation and key personnel and suppliers:
 - has the capacity required to meet their proposed partnership obligations, for example the implementation of project activities. This is determined by completion of the ChildFund Australia Program Partnership Due Diligence.
 - shares ChildFund Australia’s objectives and understands ChildFund Australia’s vision, mission and values;
 - has an accountable and democratic organisational structure and is financially transparent;
 - is open to being monitored by ChildFund and will be responsive to recommendations.
 - does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability or political affiliation;
 - will not use ChildFund funds to engage in evangelising or proselytising;
 - has sufficient human and financial resources to achieve desired partnership outcomes;
 - will work in partnership with children, young people and their communities;
 - is accountable to children, communities and donors;
 - is not on the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade Consolidated List; Australian National Security Australia listed terrorist organisations, The Asian Development Bank’s Sanction List and Work Bank Listing of Ineligible Firms and Individuals.

Guidance Notes

Consult the International Program Team for support documents, such as templates, resources and checklists, to assist with the implementation of this policy.

Document Information

Document details	
Name of document	Program Partner Engagement Policy
Owner	Global Programs Director
Approved By	Nigel Spence, CEO
Date of Approval	25 November 2019
Date of Effect	25 November 2019
Assigned Review Period	Every three years after Date of Approval.
Date of Next Review	31 January 2025

Version control				
Version No.	Version Date	Amendment Details	Amended By	Approved By
1.0	12/12/2007			Board of Directors
2.0	06/02/2013			Board of Directors
2.1	12/06/2018			International Programs Director
2.2	27/09/2019		Head of Programs	International Programs Director
2.3	28/10/2019	Updated to incorporate feedback from ACFID.	Finance Business Partner, Grants and Compliance	CEO
2.4	18/11/2024	Updated Date of Next Review updated to 31 January 2025.	Compliance Officer	CEO