



LIGHT
FOR THE WORLD



POLICY

Partnerships in
Programmes



Introduction

Partnerships are of crucial importance and a necessary foundation for any successful and sustainable programme. Based on many years of experience, Light for the World is convinced that partnerships can be highly effective, can ensure the achievement of joint goals, can generate major improvements in human capacity, can bring about systemic change, and can give a greater voice to partners – if approached jointly and managed well.

The Partnership in Programmes Policy outlines the principles that are fundamental to Light for the World when working in partnerships. It aims to provide a common understanding of Light for the World's approach and to promote consistency and coherence in our programme work. This policy looks at a variety of possible partnerships in programmes, regardless of the nature of the partner, the

goal of the partnership and whether or not they involve funding from Light for the World.

A set of technical documents supports the implementation of this policy, including the due diligence process, assessment sheets, project agreements, etc. Our “Programme Work – Internal Process Optimisation Manual” describes when and how to use them.

For partnerships with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) aiming to strengthen the disability movement, a specific policy is in place called “Partnership with Disabled People's Organisations”. The DPO Policy builds on this Partnership Policy, outlining the particular roles and nature of DPOs and calling for strong collaboration with them.

Partnership definition, values and principles

The main purpose of working in partnerships is to increase the positive long-term impact for our intended beneficiaries. We believe that this is best done by fostering local development and working together.

In line with this, Light for the World defines partnerships as mutually agreed collaborations to advance shared goals,

to amplify reach to beneficiaries and to achieve positive programme impact.

Partnerships can be wide-ranging; from single projects to complex programmes delivering disability-specific or mainstreaming actions, all the way to joint advocacy for social change. At all levels, through geographical locations

and different specifications of partnerships, we are aiming for a “win-win” situation with partners.

The development of strong partnerships, based on respect and trust for each other, takes time and requires commitment from all organisations involved. Light for the World believes in the following values and principles, which should be taken up by all partners engaged in programmes.

Shared vision, goals and values

Light for the World and its partners should build their partnerships based on a shared vision and values, as well as common goals. Light for the World seeks compatibility whilst accepting that there might be some areas of difference, for example, in organisational directions or policies, etc. It is important to jointly acknowledge and agree on these differences, while finding common ground.

All partners need to acknowledge the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and foster the inclusion of people with disabilities within their mandate areas and reach. Further guiding frameworks are set out in the “Programme Approach, Policies and Guidelines”, which may need to be referenced, depending on the thematic area of collaboration.

In any type of partnership, it is very important to find strategic alignment and joint goals and priorities.

Mutual trust and open communication

We want to learn from our partners, and we expect our partners to be willing to learn from us.

Light for the World is committed to entering into a mutual partnership with organisations that share a common vision and that respect the partner’s perspectives and needs.

To develop mutual understanding and to build equitable partnerships Light for the World aims to:

- share information and opinions on matters of joint interest;
- be open and respectful in communication and the right for individuals to speak out;
- be respectful of each other’s opinions – to listen and be responsive;
- manage power dynamics carefully;
- treat problems as shared challenges, discuss them constructively and find solutions together;
- invest the necessary time and effort to develop this mutual understanding.

Accountability and transparency

Light for the World and its partners are accountable to each other and to other stakeholders, including beneficiaries and donors, for their actions, their impact and their efficient use of a range of resources. Mutual rights and obligations between the partners involved must be established and agreed formally from the beginning of the partnership.

Ownership and sustainability

Light for the World considers ownership as essential for the long-term sustainability of programmes. It ensures that the goals of the partnership address specific needs, rather than being imposed externally. Ownership implies the need for co-creation, participative planning and programme development, as well as each partner taking up responsibility for the shared action, even beyond the period of collaboration. It is also important to acknowledge each other’s contributions throughout the duration of partnerships, including with external audiences.

Reliability and credibility

Light for the World strives to be a reliable and credible partner and expects the same from its partners. This includes: delivering quality activities, meeting agreed deadlines, being responsive to input and suggestions, and being comfortable receiving feedback and learning. This demonstrates a commitment to put the values and principles described above into practice.

Light for the World's approach

At every level, from local community to global, Light for the World works with a wide range of highly respected partners to bring change and build inclusive societies. We value the role, expertise and resources of civil society organisations, Disabled People's Organisations, governments, faith-based actors, businesses and other organisations in addressing inclusion.

To enter into fruitful partnerships, Light for the World takes a considered approach which involves defining roles, strengthening structures and capacity, looking at the selection of partners, the participation of people with disabilities and additionally monitoring progress through qualitative and sustainable research and long-term engagement.

Clearly defined roles in the partnership

The roles of each party in a partnership should be clearly defined from the beginning. Light for the World can assume the following roles, which can vary among the different partnerships:

- **Convener:** actively bringing together partners for quality implementation by creating or supporting networks and alliances to achieve improved actions and advocacy;
- **Technical expert:** bringing in specific knowledge; combining thinking, approaches and research; strengthening capacities;
- **Resource provider:** bringing essential complementary resources and/or methods;
- **Facilitator of learning and exchange:** creating mechanisms for training, shared learning, innovation and exchange, as well as resources.

Fostering local development and capacities

For project and programme implementation, Light for the World is committed to strengthening local structures and capacity, building on local ownership and focusing on sustainability of the interventions it supports. We work mainly with partners in implementation. However, depending on the nature of the project, we may take a co-implementing or implementing role ourselves.

Light for the World provides support to the implementing partners in terms of finance, technical expertise, improving management capacity and organisational development, as well as facilitating knowledge transfer.

Light for the World puts emphasis on improving the mindset and abilities of its own staff to work and excel in partnership development and nurturing.

Selection of partners

When exploring a relationship with partners, Light for the World makes a careful selection. In return, Light for the World hopes to be a candidate for consideration in partnership work with other organisations as well. We expect each organisation to assess the potential risks and benefits of working together and to develop systems for monitoring and managing them.

Participation

Light for the World endorses the disability movement's motto "nothing about us without us" and aims to apply this in all its programmes. Indeed, the motto and its underlying principle of meaningful participation is paramount to sustainable development. Light for the World expects partners to ensure full and effective participation of targeted beneficiaries in all stages of programme planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This includes, for

example, women and men, girls and boys with and without disabilities, beneficiaries living in poverty, etc. Light for the World will collaborate with partners to overcome any barriers to participation that these groups may face.

Measuring results and learning

Light for the World believes that comprehensive planning processes, defined goals and measuring progress with a solid monitoring and evaluation system, are a necessary basis to achieve quality results. Another key element is mutual learning from experience and evidence, sharing with interested partners and putting this learning into practice. Light for the World is committed to facilitating, supporting and/or participating in such learning processes.

Long-term engagement

Light for the World believes that sustainable results and systemic change processes require time and hence long-term engagement. In this respect, Light for the World intends to enter into longer term partnerships, where possible, rather than “one-off” engagements.

We do however acknowledge that relationships develop over time. This requires regular attention, monitoring and reflection on the partnership from all partners involved and responding to necessary changes if needed.

Types of Partnerships in Programmes

Light for the World engages in a wide range of partnerships. Each type of partnership has its own complexities, according to the nature of the partner organisation (e.g. governments, civil society organisations, Disabled People’s Organisations, networks, companies), the goal of the partnership (e.g. implementation, advocacy), whether the partnership is deemed strategic for Light for the World, and whether it involves funding from Light for the World. While values and principles are to be applied to all types of partnerships, the role of Light for the World in the partnership may differ.

Nature of the partner

Government

Light for the World aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities in the long term in countries where we work and to help strengthen the systems and frameworks (“triggering system change”) around them.

Due to this, government institutions at national and decentralised levels are very important partners in our

work. Our aim is to support the development and delivery of government policies and programmes in our mandate areas. Whilst we also offer financial support, the main role of Light for the World here is a technical one, ensuring that we capitalise on relevant expertise at national, regional and international levels.

Civil society

It is crucial for us to strengthen civil society because an effective civil society is the backbone of vivid communities and countries. Civil society organisations represent the concerns of their constituencies in policymaking processes, often have the role of holding governments accountable, defend human rights and foster the well-being of citizens.

In this type of partnership, Light for the World plays a financial role in the partnership but also a strong role in developing the capacities of the partner.

Our programme partners include international or national NGOs (mainstream or disability-specific), Disabled People’s Organisations, community-based organisations, human rights organisations, unions, networks, alliances and

umbrella organisations/federations, in line with our vision, mission and strategy.

Research institutes

Light for the World collaborates with research institutes, academic institutes and researchers with the goal of building evidence about our mandate areas and work, adhering to our research protocol.

Private sector

The private sector plays an important role in promoting economic development. Light for the World also works with companies, financial institutes and social enterprises in order to build capacity and synergies with regard to our mandate areas.

International and multinational institutions and organisations

To bring about systemic change, institutions working at international or multinational level in our mandate areas (e.g. WHO, World Bank) can be of utmost importance for our policy work, as well as setting quality standards which influence implementation in our programme countries.

Goal of the partnership

Programme implementation

Implementation partners focus on the delivery of specific project(s) or programmes(s), combined with a joint and thorough analysis and analysis of the results, impact and any learning. The partners have an excellent knowledge of the needs and local/national situations.

These partners are mainly public authorities (e.g. hospitals), local, national and sometimes international NGOs (both mainstream and disability-specific), DPOs or private sector partners.

In this type of partnership, Light for the World sees its role as a convener, bringing technical and financial resources to the table, and connecting local/national with international expertise. Capacity development is an integral part of this partnership and is based on identified needs and commitments from both sides. If required, Light for the World strengthens a broad range of capacities among partners, such as disability mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation systems, etc. Light for the World also plays a vital role in connecting projects in the field with advocacy aimed at policy change.

Advocacy

Advocacy partners are stakeholders who are committed to influencing policies on common causes within the mandate areas of Light for the World.

These are often other international or national NGOs, DPOs, human rights organisations, unions and alliances, but could be of any nature.

In this type of partnership, Light for the World sees its role as a convener, bringing different actors to the table and to the discussion and providing technical expertise. For advocacy with others, it is crucial to agree on joint interests supporting wider issues in order to build trust and common commitment to the cause.

Technical support or expertise

A technical partner has additional skills and knowledge which enable us and/or our partners to implement programmes with a greater impact.

Technical partners vary mostly from individual experts to private businesses or civil society organisations, and also include research institutes, academia and researchers with whom we collaborate with the goal of building evidence around our mandate areas and work, following our research protocol.

Funding

Donors

We count among our partners institutional donors and foundations who provide funding to our programmes, based on a funding contract.

Consortium partners

These are partners with whom we enter into a partnership for a joint programme, in order to mutually increase our impact and chances of funding, especially when approaching institutional donors.

Client partners

Client partners have a need for a certain expertise or service which can be provided by Light for the World (e.g. in disability inclusion) and are ready to contribute financially for Light for the World to provide technical expertise in the mandate areas.

Partnerships for Systems Change: Strategic and Boundary Partners

Light for the World uses **Outcome Mapping** as guiding methodology to track progress towards systems change in the area of eye health, inclusive education and economic empowerment. We therefore introduced the concepts of “Boundary Partners” and “Strategic Partners” in our planning, monitoring and evaluation approach to systems change. We define these partnerships for systems change as follows:

Boundary Partners

Boundary Partners are actors (usually organisations) that contribute to and are part of the programmatic vision of Light for the World but are on the **outer limits (boundary) of our sphere of influence**. We interact directly with Boundary Partners to **influence** their behaviour, actions, attitudes and affect sustainable, long-term change. Due to their sheer size, relevance and reach Boundary Partners can substantially affect the sphere of impact, i.e. the lives of persons with disabilities and those in need of eye care on a

larger, societal scale (far beyond the reach of partnerships for direct programme implementation). Typical Boundary Partners are national ministries, major companies or corporate networks and large mainstream (i.e. not disability-specific) NGOs.

Strategic Partners

Strategic Partners are like-minded organization with a **complementary programme approach** with which we collaborate to jointly pursue advocacy goals, exchange technical expertise or enhance the reach of service provision. Strategic partners are **fully or partially aligned with Light for the World's vision** and contribute to it in a complementary manner, usually not involving financial support (exception are Organisations of Persons with Disabilities). Due to their aligned vision and complementary mission, there is no need to influence Strategic Partners for change. A typical strategic partner would be a major INGO working together with us to strengthen eye care service provision in a given country or an OPD which joins us to advocate for policy change. .

Partnerships involving financing from Light for the World

Light for the World believes that sustainable development means working hand in hand with local partners to implement common programmes.

As a result, Light for the World regularly enters into partnerships with selected partners with the goal of providing funding for projects and programmes which advance our mandate areas and support our vision. Light for the World has a responsibility towards its donors to ensure that the funds are used in the most efficient way possible and make a real impact on the lives of our beneficiaries.

Therefore, we have developed tools to make sure that partners who receive funds from Light for the World are properly selected, supported and monitored throughout the collaboration. This is described in more detail in the next section of the policy (see 5.1.).

Life cycles of partnerships at Light for the World

Life cycle of partnerships involving financial commitment from Light for the World

Partner selection

From the outset, Light for the World and partners need to develop a good understanding of each other and agree upon their mutual values and principles. (For Light for the World, this is defined under item 2.)

In addition, Light for the World will prioritise partners:

- who have a holistic approach and consider all aspects of the needs of people with disabilities. This does not necessarily mean that the same partner must address all the needs within the programme itself, but look for ways to cooperate with other stakeholders.
- whose work fits within the national development frameworks and is embedded in national plans and policies.
- whose services are accessible to the poor without discrimination based on race, religion, or ethnicity.
- who focus on the most marginalised and underserved communities and groups, with a specific focus on women and children.

Partner Capacity Assessment

For the joint project or programme to be successful, the partner needs skills, capacities and a level of expertise needed to deliver on defined goals and objectives to the highest possible standard. They should also meet the requirements of Light for the World and its funding partners in terms of transparency and efficient use of

funds. Light for the World assesses the capacities of its partner before entering into a partnership and may suggest capacity building measures if necessary.

The tools available for the capacity assessment can be found in the list below and its standards must be applied to all projects funded by Light for the World. These include aspects of policies relevant to Light for the World with regard to partner capacities, including for example, “Anti-Corruption” and “Safeguarding”.

- **Basic Partner Capacity Information** (basic capacity information of the partner; completed and submitted by the partner together with the project description)
- **Advanced Partner Capacity Information** (more detailed capacity information of the partner, required for all partners who receive more complex institutional funding)
- **Partner Capacity Assessment Sheet** (assessment sheet filled out by Light for the World to assess the capacity status of the partner)
- **Project Agreement** (based on the capacity assessment, activities to address potential capacity gaps are included in the project agreement with partners)

The detailed process to implement these assessments and the respective tools can be found in the ‘Programme Work – Internal Process Manual’ and on our internal knowledge platform. As long as the assessment standards are respected, national management can decide on the final model to be implemented, taking into account specific donor and national requirements.

Light for the World will agree with partners on whether capacities need to be strengthened. Partners will be supported by Light for the World and will jointly agree on how to monitor progress. Respective measures and timelines become part of the formal project agreement.

Contracts also include clauses related to donor requirements, such as visibility and reporting requirements.

Disabled People's Organisations are crucial for the empowerment of women and men, girls and boys with disabilities and in making their voices and interests heard. Light for the World supports DPOs in their capacities and recognises that some might require basic capacity building. In these circumstances specific capacity building projects will be jointly designed and agreed upon.

Equally, if Light for the World itself is assessed we provide any information requested in a timely and accurate manner.

Partnership formalisation

Once Light for the World and its partners have agreed on common goals, actions and budgets, for a given period of time, the partnership is formalised through the signature of a project agreement between Light for the World and the partner. This includes the "Code of Conduct for Partners".

Partnership development and review

Projects are monitored at least once a year by Light for the World staff. On these occasions, Light for the World aims to not only review the status of the implementation of the joint project or programme, but also to review the collaboration and partnership.

Monitoring visits are crucial to ensure an open dialogue between partners, to have the opportunity to voice concerns and problems and highlight successes in our collaboration. Capacity-development measures are also reviewed and adapted or developed further as deemed necessary.

Partnership termination

However successful partnerships might be, for one reason or another they might come to an end.

When planning a common initiative or project, it is crucial to reflect on how impact will be maintained beyond the project duration from the very beginning.

Light for the World is mindful to avoid a relationship of dependency between partners where possible, and minimise this through capacity-building measures. Indeed, it would be not be acceptable if the partner is no longer able to function beyond the time frame of the partnership, as it would most certainly jeopardise impact on the ground.

That being said, partnerships, if successful and still relevant for both parties, often go beyond the time frame of a single project and can develop over time.

In principle, Light for the World tries to avoid disruptive termination for both projects and partnerships and aims to always have a proper "phasing-out" period.

Nonetheless, there are reasons for partnerships to end unexpectedly, if it becomes clear that the objectives will not be reached, if inappropriate behaviour is identified, if principles and agreements are violated, or if the reputation of Light for the World is assessed to be put at risk. The parties involved should strive to minimise any negative effects. Project agreements include technical and legal clauses to guide termination.

Life cycle of partnerships where no funding from Light for the World is involved

Partner selection

From the outset, Light for the World and partners need to develop a good understanding of each other and agree on mutual values and principles. (For Light for the World, this is defined under item 2.) In addition, Light for the World looks for partners who complement its work, where we find synergies, and with whom we can achieve our goals more efficiently together than on our own. We can explore any overlap with partners in our thematic areas, our geographic presence, around our strategies and approaches or vis-à-vis our target groups.

Partner Capacity Assessment

Light for the World assesses the capacities of its partner before entering into a partnership. The tool available for such an assessment is the Partnership Engagement Strategy. The following Light for the World policies are in particular relevant when doing Partner Assessments: **"Transparency and Anti-Corruption"** and **"Safeguarding"**. Others might apply depending on the nature of the partnership.

Equally, if Light for the World itself is assessed we provide any information requested in a timely and accurate manner.

Partnership formalisation

Once partners and Light for the World have agreed to work together for a particular time frame, the partnership will then be formalised. The actual agreement is based on the type of programme and partnership and could take the form of:

- a Memorandum of Understanding (a statement of mutual intent and collaboration)
- a Pre-teaming Agreement (an agreement to collaborate with another organisation for a specific call)

Partnership development and review

The time frame of the partnership will be established in the partnership agreement. While achieving our shared goals is the main focus of the partnership, we will also take time to reflect on our ongoing partnerships. A clause on partnership review is included in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Partnership termination

However successful partnerships might be, for one reason or another they might come to an end. It could be that the programmatic directions of the partners change, that joint goals are not reached, that inappropriate behaviour is identified, that principles are violated, or the reputation of Light for the World is deemed to be put at risk. In this case, all partners involved should strive to minimise any negative effects. The Memorandum of Understanding and the Pre-teaming Agreements include clauses to guide any termination.



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