

# HOW WE APPROACH PARTNERSHIPS: WORKING TOGETHER FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT



## IN PARTNERSHIP

Our partnerships are built on a foundation of aligned values, trust and shared areas of strategic interest. We commit to acting in accordance with our principles and values to support ethical and equitable partnerships. We aim to leverage each partner's capabilities and expertise through capacity sharing and knowledge exchange, and to engage in continual learning. These partnerships may have funding attached to them, but the transfer of funding is not at their core. We believe that whilst funding is important and is a reality of power imbalances in the humanitarian sector, it is a means to achieve our goals, together.



### The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

HAG's vision is that our partnerships make us stronger than when operating as individual agencies. We believe that working in partnership enables a collective contribution that can more effectively drive positive change in the humanitarian system.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PARTNERSHIP?

Partnerships are the formal relationships we build with other organisations so that we can work together for collective impact in a meaningful, mutually beneficial way. Partnerships are central to how HAG works.

## WHAT GUIDES OUR PARTNERSHIPS?

- ▶ **Global best practices** – such as the International Council of Volunteer Agencies' (ICVA) *Principles of Partnership*, which we follow to ensure our national partners benefit equally from their work with HAG. The five ICVA principles of *Equality, Transparency, Result-oriented approach, Responsibility* and *Complementarity* are foundational to all our partnerships. We are also committed to working towards the funding commitments outlined in the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change, including allocating 25% of all funding to our local and national partners.
- ▶ **Our values** guide how we work across all initiatives, including with our partners. We strive to be *Brave, Ridiculously flexible, Continuously enabling, Unfailingly curious* and *Ethical*.
- ▶ **Jointly determined measures of success** are developed for each partnership. We assess our partnerships with local and national actors through internal success monitoring processes under our Key Objectives and Results area 2: *Operate in a way that reflects and elevates local leadership*.



# HOW WE DO IT

## 1. Partnership framework

### The foundations: ethical and equitable partnerships



Shared principles / aligned values – contextualised versions of / acknowledging the *Principles of Partnership*



Trust, openness and transparency

### The mechanisms: key pillars of our partnerships



#### Shared areas of strategic interest and mutual benefit

Agreeing on specific areas of focus we want to tackle together, which may be technical, thematic or geographic.



#### Capacity sharing

Identifying and agreeing upon our shared priorities for two-way capacity exchange.



#### Effective communication

Committing to communication that is open and honest in nature, and both formal and informal in structure.



#### Reflection and learning

Committing to regular, rich reflection and learning about ourselves as individual partners, as well as our partnership together, helping to make us stronger.

### The enablers: How we make it possible



#### Elevating local leadership

Recognising our partners' expertise and elevating, accompanying and supporting their growth as they work in their own communities.



#### Connecting and facilitating

Creating networks and promoting new relationships between our partners and other organisations, including donors. Helping pave the way for new conversations and new contracts.



#### Profiling and promoting

Using our platforms to promote our partners, highlighting their integral role in helping our work to have impact.

Photo by Tasha Banks on Unsplash

## 2. Our partnering process<sup>1</sup>: How do we get there?

### Scoping

This is the exploratory phase before entering into a mutual agreement to partner, including scoping needs (e.g. specific areas of interest, technical capabilities or geographical reach) and options.

**Indicative outputs:** shortlist/longlist of prospective partners and high-level mapping of how they align with where we're going

### Bridging

The focus of this phase is moving from conversation to action – putting in place what has been discussed, including establishing governance structures and mechanisms such as partnership agreements and management arrangements.

**Indicative outputs:** signed partnership agreement/MoU and specific output-based contracts

### Adjourning

This phase focuses on delivering on projects and deepening engagement. It involves sharing knowledge and expertise, scaling and increasing impact.

**Indicative outputs:** partnership lesson learned/reflection report summarising our journey together (either internal or external)



### Building

Once potential partners have been identified, this phase focuses on building relationships and planning to partner, including how we intend to work together and the principles that guide us. This phase can take time, requiring frequent formal and informal communication to determine if the relationship is a good fit before launching into a formal agreement.

**Indicative outputs:** partnership brokering meetings/workshops and drafting MoUs

### Actioning

This phase focuses on delivering on projects and deepening engagement. It involves sharing knowledge and expertise, scaling and increasing impact.

**Indicative outputs:** specific partnership deliverables (such as implementing capacity-building plans, facilitating partnership review meetings) and specific project contract deliverables

### Ongoing



**Reviewing and revising:** measuring results against agreed measures of success or benchmarks, reviewing efficiency and value. This should be ongoing and captured in informal (such as regular check-ins) and formal processes (such as annual partnership review discussions). Outcomes of these processes should be fed into the partnership to continuously learn, adapt and improve.



**Communication:** across channels, between team members and switching between formal and informal processes.



### Decoupling partnership agreements from contracts

Partnership agreements or MoUs are the documented basis of our partnerships, detailing our shared principles, agreed ways of working and mutual areas of interest. These documents articulate the foundations of our relationship. One or more specific project contracts sit underneath each agreement, and detail agreed deliverables or outputs for an individual project. The foundations of the MoU hold for each project.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Partnership Brokers Association, *Brokerage Better Partnerships* workbook. Accessible here: <https://partnershipbrokers.org/w/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Brokerage-Better-Partnerships-Handbook.pdf>