

Civil Society Partnership Framework

CARE International in Pakistan

Preamble

1. This Civil Society Partnership Framework (CSPF) forms an annex to CARE International Pakistan's (CIP) Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP). It outlines CIP's approach to working with civil society partners to take forward this strategic plan. It provides a framework for understanding partnership, parameters for our internal processes and approach, while outlining organizational changes and capacities to support the full adoption of this PF. This framework covers both CIP's emergency and development partnerships, and although the principles and approaches apply to all of CARE's partnerships, this document is focusses on civil society partnerships.
2. The development of this CSPF has been informed by CARE and partners' collaborative experiences over the years, largely but not solely humanitarian focused, captured through numerous reviews, studies and strategies¹. Recent workshops and consultations² with partners have helped re-examine CIP's partnership approach in light of its LRSP. Although providing an overarching framework, our approach to working with civil society is the core reference point in this framework. Engagement with the private sector is articulated in a separate framework, as is our approach to working with government. With each, CIP's role will be different than that of working with local civil society as peers.
3. CIP's PF is aligned with CARE International's Humanitarian Strategy and global vision for 2020, as both emphasize strategic partnerships and alliances to strengthen CARE's relevance in the future.
4. Increasingly as CIP and CARE Globally strives for relevance in an developing world³ and related changing aid dynamics, it will define its role based on its impact and effectiveness as a **'fourth position'**⁴ actor in and its ability to connect national civil society, the private sector and government through meditation, innovation, and validation so as to overcome poverty, alleviate suffering, and address inequality and discrimination. This CS PF support CIP's transition towards the 'fourth position'. *See Annex 1, page 8.*

Background

5. For development to bring sustained change in the lives of the most marginalized and vulnerable, particularly women and girls, and change the deep rooted societal and institutional and political power structures requires Identifying the right issues and strategies on which to focus, and the best stakeholders to ally with. Both require an in-depth understanding and analysis of the local context. This can only be had through engaging with local actors, largely civil society. A strong local civil society is the fulcrum for activism, giving voice to those who are silenced, protecting rights that are threatened, building and sustaining social movements for change, and holding power holders to account.
6. To do so, requires CARE to not only "partner" with civil society with an aim to strengthen it, but to play new roles as bridge builder and facilitator of linkages with the often diverging or even competing public and private sectors. There is an emerging pro-poor private sector development agenda challenging development advocates to find avenues, in "partnership" with private sector, to enable the poor to access services and economic opportunities that fit a business growth model. This is increasingly seen as an important opportunity for sustained development.⁵ In the same vein, greater emphasis is being placed on forging "partnerships" with and between the public and private sectors and civil society. All three play pivotal and complementary roles to ensure policies and services are equally responsive to

¹ Some include: Ken Baker's "Partnership in Emergencies" 2011; CARE Afghanistan's "What Makes a Successful Partnership" 2010 and "Partnership Roadmap" 2011; IRC's "Draft Partnership Policy Guidelines", 2011; CARE WBG and Uganda's "Partnership Strategy & Guidelines" 2012, Oxfam GB in Pakistan's compendium of INGOs' "Partnership Models", 2012; Fowler, Alan "Striking the Balance", 2007;

² Of particular note are: "LRSP & Strategic Partnership" meeting with partners, December 2011; PSE roundtable consultations with partners 2012;

³ While global poverty figures decline increasingly most poor people now live in 'middle income countries' and addressing inequality/inequity becomes the priority.

⁴ Alan Fowler, "NGO Futures: Beyond Aid: NGDO Values and the Fourth Position"

⁵ Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Private Sector Development – © OECD 2006

⁶ CARE Int'l in Pakistan, "Private Sector Engagement Framework", 2013, pg.2

those most in need, and growth and development is sustained in just and equitable ways in a vibrant economy.

7. CARE's role is, therefore, shifting from a "doer" to a "catalyst, facilitator, bridge-builder, encourager, supporter, capacity builder". In supporting civil society leadership as they push from the front on issues in Pakistan, CARE equally will take leadership in global forums and its home constituencies, taking Pakistan's issues into higher decision-making domains, informing and catalyzing change on new and old fronts. This is a new model for CARE, demanding new skills and capacities. In Pakistan, CIP's low profile policy, both with media and branding, places partners in the fore to reinforce their legitimacy, strengthen their acceptance and credibility, while building their institutional capacities for greater sustainability.

Context

8. Contemporary Pakistani civil society represents a vibrant cross section of small grassroots social and cultural associations, community organizations, professional associations, political, social and religious groups, media groups, learning forums, networks and alliances, and small, medium and large NGOs, some of considered repute at a national level. This is a civil society rich in fabric that provides a powerful force and voice well positioned to successfully advocate, deliver services and provide multiple avenues for change in society. *Pakistani civil society is the legitimate voice of Pakistanis best positioning it to hold the government and others to account.*
9. In 2011, CARE Pakistan developed a 15-year (2011–2026) LRSP. The overall goal of the LRSP is *to enable 28 million marginalized women to make choices that reduce vulnerability and impact their lives positively, and to have control over assets and exercise their rights in decision-making processes at all levels.* The LRSP focuses primarily on creating broad national level institutional change and an enabling environment in health, education and economic empowerment, with a programmatic focus on gender and governance. Strategic success is recognized as requiring a fundamental change in how CARE works. This involves working with a wide range of strategic partnerships to facilitate social movements and leverage impact. Advocacy will be a central tool, and building alliances to strengthen voice a key strategy.
10. With its local partners, CIP's ambition is to work with both the government and civil society to address formal institutions (legal framework, policies, programs, services etc.) and informal institutions (landlordism, religious radicalism, local customs and cultural norms) that create discrimination and barriers in the access to services (health and education) and the labor market (income generation opportunities) for poor girls and women. Without such significant changes of an "institutional" nature, the sustained change at a grassroots level cannot be achieved. Supporting civil society to mobilize, strengthen alliances, advocate and negotiate to influence governance at all levels on these issues, is, therefore, central to CIP's strategy to improve women's access to equal opportunities and better quality social services. Without leveraging the potential force and scope of such social movements, coupled with the private sector engagement initiatives, CIP will be unable to reach its goal.
11. CIP's partnerships to date have largely been implementing relationships of a contractual nature with local NGOs serving both development and emergency purposes. Given the ambitious nature of CIP's LRSP, CIP aims to increasingly shift its partnerships to be more "*strategic*" in nature, thus leveraging the impact of its work in Pakistan to contribute towards a more vibrant civil society, accountable government and responsible private sector in pursuit of our goal.

Defining Partnership

12. Partnership in CARE is a collaborative relationship based on trust and mutual accountability that evolves through putting into practice a set of 12 basic principles (*see Insert below*). The degree to which some or

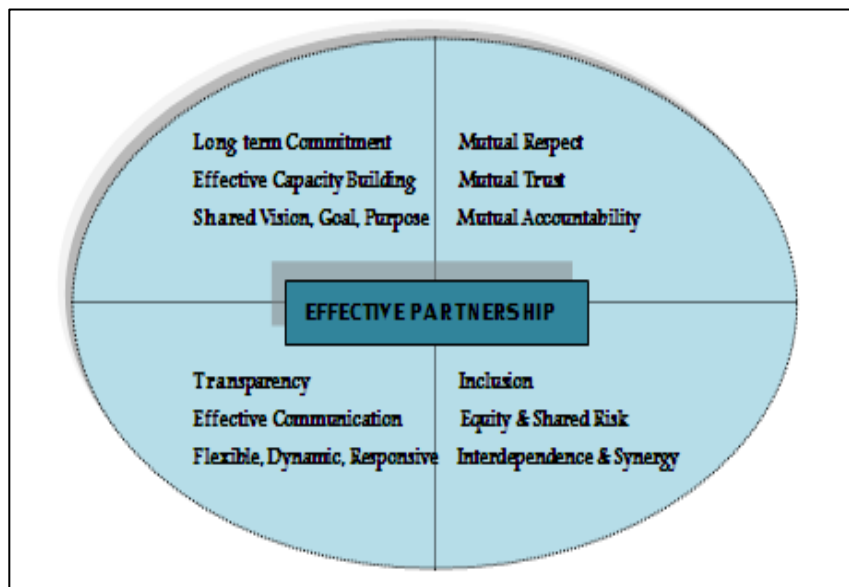
all of these principles are consistently applied determines the quality of the partnership. All partnerships are collaborative and need to apply these principles, but not all collaborations need be partnerships.

What is not Strategic Partnership
 A collaboration that is not defined by shared vision, nor relates to the LRSP’s strategic intent, has no intent to extend beyond a specific deliverable or initiative, or is purely monetary or contract service provision based, would unlikely be called a **strategic partnership**.

13. In light of the development challenge CIP has subscribed to, it will expand the scope of its relationships with partners from being one primarily based on a project defined “implementation role” to one increasingly defined by the following core set of principles that lend scope and scale to what the partnership can achieve. These relationships CIP is calling “strategic” partnerships characterized as follows:

a. Having a **shared vision** – one that defines who is powerless and vulnerable and why, and what changes are required to build a better future. This could take many different forms such as strengthening civil society, improving service delivery, improving accountability in governance, enabling private sector to benefit the poorest of the poor. The relationship must **leverage positive impact** defined by both partners that helps advance the LRSP’s and partner’s strategic intent.

b. A relationship of **‘equals’** who find it **mutually beneficial** to work together on an issue, initiative, agenda or strategy, and generate new results and synergies. Power dynamics are neutralized by each recognizing the essential ingredients they bring for the collaboration to fulfill the desired aim(s). Each is learning from and valuing what other brings to the table. Focus is on maximizing and jointly seeking resolutions to



problems, and building capacities to mitigate risks each must share in. **Transparency and accountability is mutual.** In this way the collaboration is founded on a horizontal rather than vertical relationship, even where funds may be involved.

c. A strategic partnership can be, or emerge from, any type of **diverse relationships** e.g. formal or informal – alliances or networks – contractual or consortia – topical groups, forums, lobbying platforms, and many more (see Annex #1). It may serve different purposes at different times and assume different forms of partnerships. Neither is it tied to a set of deliverables nor restricted to a contractual relationship.

d. **CIP’s roles** are equally **diverse** in partnerships – facilitator, supporter, encourager, linker, bridge builder, capacity builder, advocate, funding resource generator, social investor. They cannot be pre-defined but vary according to the type of relationship, its purpose, and the issue being addressed. CIP’s added value will be largely dictated by its relevance in enabling civil society to play their roles more effectively - be it for improved service delivery, to engage with and position themselves for work with the private sector, advocacy with the government or donors.

- e. The relationship is **timeless** – it may be short-lived, or endure and evolve over time. It is one in which **joint efforts** are initiated by the involved parties, but may not entail active engagement in initiatives at all times.
13. In light of the above, CIP aims to partner with an increasingly diverse range of civil society actors, including national and international organizations, academic institutions, with social enterprises and media, with the private sector⁷ and others. CIP’s collaborative relationships with the public/government sector, is both described in separate documents capturing their unique characteristics. Partnerships may be with individual organizations – with networks, alliances, and consortia – social movements and interest groups - formal collaborations including contractual relationships – or informal collaborations and loose alliances including topical groups or forums.

Approaches

14. **CIP Organizational Culture** - Effective partnering is as much an attitude as it is a way of working to a set of principles. Creating an organizational culture that embraces partnership requires changing the mindset of all. A changed attitude will catalyze and lead to changed behavior, to be mainstreamed throughout all organizational policies, procedures and processes. Attitudinal change at an individual, group and leadership level is fundamental to CIP’s ability to take forward this partnering approach.
- a. **Mindset change.** Partnership requires a mutually supportive, continuous engagement in order to realize its full potential. Learning what partners bring to the table beyond “contracts” and understanding partners’ realities are required for support to be molded accordingly. This is as relevant to finance, administrative, and personnel units as it is for security, program development and project staff. Humility, openness, a thirst to learn, and energy to experiment, especially in front-line and decision-making roles, will reflect this mindset change.
- b. **Organizational roles.** A change in attitude is very much linked to accepting and embracing a different set of roles for CIP partnership, i.e. to promote a vibrant civil society to leverage change.
- **Encourager and Supporter.** CIP’s has a role in supporting partners’ to be more effective in doing what they do best, and in ways that will advance the goal of women’s empowerment. Our NGO partners already have close links with communities, relationships with key stakeholders, and are influencing decision-makers.
 - **Facilitator** that enables partners to lead from the fore and to advance in directions of mutual benefit. Pakistani civil society has much stronger legitimacy to take an active part in social development, as they have local acceptance and close links to communities.
 - **Linker, bridge builder.** Linking like-minded organizations with each other (alliances) with a purpose of influencing governance, or to others who can strengthen capacities of this kind (networks, advocacy groups) provides opportunities for much needed leverage in these domains.

15. Scoping and Selecting

- a. CIP must regularly map and identify civil society partners in-line with its LRSP. This will include profiling; mapping; interaction, meetings, joint initiatives in order to build a pool of partners. Exclusivity of partnership with a single or set of partners does not help CIP achieve its stated goal. CIP will continue expanding its partnerships to find like-minded partners seeking mutual benefit from partnering with CIP.
- b. CIP’s engagement in a partnership is based on value addition. Indicative areas of interest for CIP are given below (the list is not exhaustive):

⁷ Please refer to CIP’s Private Sector Engagement Framework, March 2013.

- Strengthening local civil society organizations for increased contribution to development in Pakistan
- Women empowerment, fundraising, innovation, research and advocacy, improved governance, emergency response etc.
- Knowledge of local culture, customs, power structure, aligning CIP's program objectives with local needs and context
- Out-reach to communities (program planning, program delivery, community involvement, research etc.)

Becoming a partner of choice and being sought out by like-minded organizations, small and large, formal or informal, for our added value and ways of working will be the real test of the effectiveness of our partnership approach.

- c. Defining the "strategic fit" requires understanding a partner's strategic interests, and determining how working together will help in achieving mutually agreed objectives. Even if a partner's driving motivation is to secure funding or build their capacities through a specific initiative, there is a need to link with the LRSP, either through research, project implementation or innovative approaches.
- d. A two-way due diligence process will be required with potential partners to understand each other's organizational depth⁸, skills sets, expertise, competencies, past performance and gaps that can be addressed by either partner. This enables each other's organizational profiles to be respected. The due diligence process, informational requirements and capacities to be assessed will be shaped by the *purpose and type* of partnership⁹, and whether it involves *funding*. The process is to learn about each other's organizations rather than an investigative one.
- e. CIP discusses with each potential partner its approach to partnerships, be it formal or informal. Depending on the nature of the relationship; roles, expectations, contributions, rules/principles of engagement such as conflict of interest, no support to terrorism, protection of each other interests, disclosure of information, all need to be agreed and documented e.g. through a MoU or alternative.
 - For non-contractual relationships, signing of a MoU may be considered for institutionalization to maintain continuity of the relationship in light of possible personnel changes. A formal framework may not be required in looser relationships deemed "informal" in which there are no formal obligations.
 - For contractual relationships (project/initiative focused collaborations that involve funding), contracts will be signed accordingly. CIP may have contractual and non-contractual relationships with the same partner at the same time.
 - For a short-lived partnership, a smooth, planned phase-out plan should be in place early on in the partnership.

16. Maintaining and Strengthening

CIP recognizes that partners have a unique identity, which CIP will not in any manner influence nor attempt to change, nor a partner's choices. This fundamental principle of mutual respect underlies all steps in our approach, and CIP will manage the relationship in this light.

- a. Mutually agreed Initiatives - Many existing and potential partners already have a strong history of working on the domains and along the pathways identified with CARE's LRSP. These partners may have already achieved success and reached significant milestones along the pathways and hence

⁸ Organizational depth relates to the degree of experience and resulting understanding of issues, drivers of change, and related proven programming approaches; how well structured and established an organization is to effectively perform in accordance; how visionary yet realistic in its forward thinking.

⁹ Examples include: - program design/delivery with a single partner or consortia – a network or alliance that is issue focused – informal collaboration for learning or longer term research collaborations. Working with private sector or public sector partners will similarly require tailored due diligence approaches.

provide CARE opportunities to build on and leverage their achievements. Where applicable, this serves a critical starting point for a mutually beneficial partnership.

- b. Communication – Continuous and open dialogue is essential for good partnership to enhance transparency and build trust. Communication standards¹⁰ between CIP and partners, that maximize contact for open information sharing and idea exploration, deepening understanding, and inform analysis for effective decision-making are needed by partners and CIP alike. Opportunities for face to face communication need to be maximized,
- c. Proactive Disclosure – CIP will proactively provide all such information to partners that have an impact on the partnership, fulfilling its due or expected role, or inability to meet commitments. Partners’ equal commitment for similar proactive disclosure of information is needed.
- d. Partnership Review - At an individual partner level, periodic reviews of the relationship including, reflection on progress towards mutual objectives, added value, meeting expectations, areas of improvement, institutional development strategic positioning etc. are desirable. Collective annual partnership meetings may be arranged for review of partnership approach via networking, cross learning, analysis, strengthening programs etc. Both will also help CIP determine strategic gaps and competencies in our pool to be addressed through new or existing partners and adjustments to the ‘due diligence’ process.
- e. Contractual Management – upholding contractual obligations requires maximum communication, transparency and ensuring mutually achievable targets. CIP and its partners will seek to improve their financial systems to make these sensitive to each other’s needs based on efficiency and mutual benefit. Mutual accountability will require CIP to establish, uphold and monitor turn-around times for key financial support procedures¹¹. This will be led by the Partnership Coordinator and the Compliance Review Committee. A strong degree of trust, transparency and support is required at the outset, to be maintained by both parties throughout the partnership. At the same time, both CIP and its partners will take all efforts to maintain highest standards for good stewardship of a third party funds.
- f. Institutional Development – CIP will support organizations to strengthen their capacities, as and where mutually agreed, in self-defined directions, and tracking with them this evolution, for:¹²
 - i. enhanced service delivery;
 - ii. organizational development; and
 - iii. A stronger role in civil society.

Supporting partners, particularly women organizations, to develop or pursue new directions should be able to take multiple forms. Not all may involve funding or tied to specific projects.

- g. Learning will be mainstreamed at every twist and turn of the partnership serving multiple purposes:
 - for partnership relationship development, continuation, and expansion into new domains
 - for professional and organizational development
 - for programmatic innovation
 - to test theories and adjust our pathways

Mutual learning contributes innovation and sets a tone of equality. Partners are experienced in many of the areas needed to take forward CIP’s LRSP. Therein lays huge, untapped opportunities to accelerate learning.

17. Risk Management

In engaging with the civil society partners, CIP will promote mapping and assessment of risks for each intervention and relationship, and that efforts are made that these are not transferred to either stakeholders- the partner or CIP. Therefore building a relationship of mutual trust that when

¹⁰ Baker, Ken “CARE Discussion paper – Partnerships in Emergencies”, March 2011, pg 12

¹¹ These relate to budget approval, payment approvals, cash disbursements, financial report review & approval, audit review & approval, etc.

¹² IRC Afghanistan “Draft Partnership Policy Guidelines”, 2011, pg.18

issues are raised solutions are jointly sought is key to mitigating and managing risks, be they financial, programmatic, or security for minimum damage to all parties.

- a. Visibility: CIP does not limit partner organizations in their own visibility. Partner's visibility strengthens acceptance as partners have long-standing relationships with local authorities and communities and are responsible for social mobilization whereby they build on their existing rapport and credibility. CARE recognizes that partners approach security differently and often wish to proactively promote and publicize their association with CARE,¹³ but partners must respect and adhere to CIP's Visibility Policy and refrain from making any reference to CIP or its donors publicly.
- b. Reputational damage can arise from intentional negligence from any financial or programming irregularity¹⁴, discriminatory, defamation and malicious acts, with or without cause. CIP maintains a zero tolerance policy on all financial and programming irregularities.¹⁵ In all instances, CIP will conduct an investigation as outlined in its Investigation Guide¹⁶ for determining cause and resolution and help restore reputations where they may be at risk or damaged. Every possible attempt will be made by CIP to work with partners throughout an investigation process respecting the autonomy of its partners, their strategic relationship with CARE, and understanding the implications of any investigation on their reputation and status.¹⁷
- c. Financial – CARE globally has strong internal control systems set at the highest donor compliance levels to minimize risk and liability. Although lowering the risk threshold for CARE, by requiring partners' adherence to procedures that are incompatible with their operating contexts or organizational systems, may actually raise the risk threshold for partners. Their adaptability and ease of use by partners is therefore paramount. Wherever possible, CIP will minimize the transfer of risks and liabilities to partners through systems review and adjustment, work with partners to jointly assess, plan and build their capacities to manage risk and reduce the likelihood of liabilities occurring, and tailor approaches to support diverse partners. Partners will hold CIP accountable to fulfill contractual support and management requirements as will CIP of partners. Transparent management of risk for mutual benefit so as not to undermine the relationship's trust is central to building good partnership.

18. CIP Partnership Support Structure

- a. A **dedicated focal point** for "strategic partnership" coordination and management will support the identification, development and nurturing of strategic partnerships¹⁸. The Partnership Coordinator (PC) will lead at an overall strategic level and coordinate and support the program and program support teams to effectively carry forward the partnership approach to the standards desired.
- b. CARE will maintain adequate staffing and structure to fulfill needs of developing, managing and maintaining partnership relations. The structure will respond to the diverse needs of partnership, from identifying new partners to capacity building, resourcing, maintaining contractual relationships, communication, follow up, partnership lessons learned etc.
- c. A Committee will be formed of 3-4 senior managers tasked with approving organizational partnership decisions in a transparent and coherent manner.
- d. To become an organization that is responsive to partnership needs, a horizontal working will be required within the organization among all functional units of CARE. Three functional units of CARE regularly interact and engage in relationship management with partners: the Program Development and Quality (PDQ) unit for strategic level engagement with partners, the Program unit for project implementation related relations and Finance and Program Support for financial and administrative

¹³ CIP Visibility Policy, October 2012, pg.2, clause #9

¹⁴ Irregularities may arise from fraudulent or dishonest acts eg. misappropriation, forgery, impropriety, bribes, mismanagement for personal gain.

¹⁵ CIP Zero Tolerance Policy

¹⁶ "CIP Investigation Guide in Response to Misconduct or Fraudulent Acts", March 2013

¹⁷ Ibid, pg.3

¹⁸ Baker, Ken "CARE, Partnerships in Emergencies", May 2011, pg 4

