



# **ACF Guidelines on Partnerships with Local NGOs**

**June 2008**

## **About the ACF International Network**

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The ACF International Network (ACF) is an international humanitarian organisation specialised in tackling hunger and malnutrition worldwide. ACF saves the lives of malnourished children and their families and works with vulnerable populations to preserve and restore their livelihoods with dignity. In situations of conflict, natural disaster and chronic food insecurity, ACF has pursued its vision of a world without hunger for nearly three decades.

We work in over 40 countries worldwide to carry out innovative programmes in nutrition, food security, water and sanitation, health and advocacy helping more than 4.5 million people every year. All ACF members adhere to a charter of principles that form the foundation of our humanitarian commitment: independence, impartiality, non-discrimination, free and direct access to victims, professionalism and transparency.

ACF works in partnership with local organisations in over 20 countries. Local partnerships are a key element in the fight against hunger and local organisations play a major role in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations, in particular of people suffering from malnutrition and affected by food insecurity

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## **Acronyms**

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<b>ACF</b>	ACF International Network
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organisation
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarter
<b>IO</b>	International Organisation
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation

## **Introducing the Guidelines: Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this document is to guide ACF staff on partnerships with local NGOs in the countries where it operates.

ACF has been working in partnership with and through local NGOs in at least 20 of its 43 countries of intervention. ACF's traditional approach to humanitarian and long term intervention has been typically based on a western model of direct implementation of projects through internationally-led approaches.

This document is being presented based on an identified need for ACF to improve its work with and through local NGOs. This need is expressed in two ways:

Firstly ACF has to adapt its mode of intervention with a *de facto* reality of working with local civil society organisations to assist its targeted populations. ACF operational reality shows a wide gap between established ACF modes of humanitarian intervention and the work that is done on the ground with local organisations. This means that partnerships with local NGOs have been dictated by an *ad-hoc* rather than a strategic basis, which has led to a consequent limited implementation and capitalisation of best practices and to an underestimation of the local NGO's full potential in working towards the eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

Secondly, ACF has recognised the value and importance of partnering with local NGOs. This recognition has been happening gradually and for different reasons that may be linked, among others, to an increased coverage of ACF target populations, the sustainability of our interventions through handover of programmes to a local partner, or to the fact that in some contexts ACF can only be operational if partnering with a local civil society organisation.

These guidelines also represent an opportunity for ACF to apply its core principles and values in a way that actively recognises the role of local NGOs and involves them in pursuing our fight against hunger. The idea is that ACF is in a position to enable local actors, as direct representatives of the hungriest and most malnourished, to be the primary protagonists of humanitarian and development processes.

Without aiming at solving all the challenges faced in local partnerships, this document will hopefully provide practical guidance on the fundamentals of good partnership practice. This should lead not only to improved partnership practices with local NGOs, but also to a more strategic approach to local partnerships. ACF will then be in a position to maximise and explore the full potential of local partnership in carrying out its mandate. At the time of writing this document is issued with the hope that a dynamic dialogue will be furthered between field teams engaged in local partnerships and local NGOs. Such dialogue will ultimately be considered in regular reviews and updates of the guidelines and practical tools linked to it.

It should be noted that this document is solely geared at partnerships with local NGOs. It does not include other types of partnerships, such as other forms of local civil society organisations (CBOs, unions, etc), international civil society and governmental organisations (INGOs, IOs, etc), government (Ministries, local government etc). While ACF values these forms of partnership, this document does not examine such ACF experience.

## 1. ACF Partnerships

### 1.1. ACF Concept of Partnership

ACF defines partnership as the relationship<sup>1</sup> between an ACF mission or HQ with a local NGO with the common goal of eradication of hunger and malnutrition. Entering into partnership entails the strengthening of the capacities of both partners as committed actors to save lives of vulnerable children, women and men which are threatened by hunger and disease.

### 1.2. ACF Partnerships in Practice

ACF has partnerships with local NGOs in more than half of the countries where it is present<sup>2</sup>. ACF local NGO partnership practice demonstrates that there are different ways of initiating and developing partnerships. They may be *ad-hoc* or strategic, spontaneous or imposed by the context where ACF operates, and may or may not include elements of capacity development of the local partner. Often, local partnerships assume a sub-contractual nature: where the local NGO is mandated to implement a specific task under a wider ACF strategy of humanitarian intervention. But in many cases ACF missions and HQs partner with local NGOs on the basis of negotiation, participation, collaboration, learning and complementarity where the local partner is actively involved in the relationship and different stages of the project or programme cycle.

There is a common understanding within ACF that successful partnerships with local NGOs require constant work on three key areas<sup>3</sup>:

- ✿ The first one is linked to capacity development<sup>4</sup> of the local partner. This concept will be developed further in this document.
- ✿ The second area is of a subjective nature and can be defined as a set of various principles or elements that need to be present in any partnership. A non-exhaustive list of these elements would include trust, reciprocity, sharing of responsibilities, co-ordination, equality, transparency, sustainability. In this document, the main principles for a successful partnership will be presented.
- ✿ The third area that requires attention in a partnership has an objective nature and is composed of formal and material elements.
  - A) Formal: it is well accepted that any partnership needs a contract or a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) detailing the roles and responsibilities of each partner, clarifying roles, regulating the relationship.
  - B) Material: it is recognised that in the assessment and identification of a local partner, a set of non-negotiable criteria needs to be met; this is mainly linked to the ACF charter of principles and ethos that reflect commitment to humanitarian assistance, professionalism etc. It is also commonly understood within ACF that, in one way or another, organisational systems and programmes need to either be in place (or demonstrate a potential to become operational) in terms of, for example, finance and logistics systems; organisational strategy and management; sectoral expertise and relationships with similar humanitarian organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines are focused in the relationship of partnership with local NGOs. There are other types of relationship or collaboration with local and international organisations that fall out of the scope of this document: network, alliance, consortium, coalition, co-ordination forum...

<sup>2</sup> See list of ACF Partnerships with Local Organisations in Annex 1.

<sup>3</sup> Summary of Local Partnerships Questionnaires, June 2007, HoM meeting presentation, ACF UK

<sup>4</sup> Other terms similar to capacity development are capacity building, or capacity strengthening. In this document we prefer to use the term capacity development; in most of the cases the capacities are already existent and they just need to be developed (rather than built from the beginning). It is also commonly understood that capacity development is a broad term which may include capacity building, capacity strengthening and capacity maintenance.

### 1.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of ACF Partnerships with local NGOs

ACF recognises the advantages of working with and through a local NGO partner:

- ✿ Increased grass-roots approaches and increased acceptance from the affected communities in the delivery of projects;
- ✿ Improved knowledge and assessment of needs, constraints and contextual situation;
- ✿ Improved communication with and access to local communities;
- ✿ Higher involvement of the communities and local population;
- ✿ Improved advocacy approaches;
- ✿ Increased use of local resources and knowledge in addressing problems, solving conflicts, producing new information;
- ✿ Increased cost-effective coverage of affected population;
- ✿ Opportunities to transfer ACF knowledge and skills, particularly in areas of ACF sectoral expertise (nutrition, food security, water and sanitation, advocacy);
- ✿ Chance for ACF to play an advisory and supporting role (aside from the operational one);
- ✿ Put in practice sustainability and exit strategy considerations, particularly with regard to the continuity of projects and the development of autonomy of local civil society structures;
- ✿ Reduction of financial costs, organisational systems and logistics resources (e.g. reduction of mission staff, simplification of HR issues, decreased daily management of field level tasks, simplification of logistics deployment...)

The present guidelines build on these and other advantages of working with local NGO partners.

Conversely, there are disadvantages and risks for ACF work in partnering with local NGOs:

- ✿ Organisational sustainability issues of the local partner: these are often associated with lack of capacity on the part of local NGOs to act as robust agents in addressing hunger and malnutrition, funding constraints (such as over dependency on one funder or on ACF as a partner, lack of funds, mismanagement of funds, misuse of resources...) and the potential double agenda of a local NGO with regard to their priorities as an independent actor and as an ACF partner;
- ✿ Programme constraints: these include lack of expertise in programming, standards in quality of programmes which do not meet ACF practice, slow pace of implementation and / or quality of project results and impact;
- ✿ Potential conflict with ACF fundamental principles, such as independence, neutrality, non-discrimination;
- ✿ Inadequate partnership practices: linked to power imbalance between ACF and the local NGO, conflicting priorities arising during the development of the partnership, insufficient acknowledgement of ACF limitations as a partner, lack of strategic focus of the partnership, inadequate implementation of programmes due to time and resources allocated to develop capacities of the local partner, imposition of ACF tools and methods which often lead to a patronising attitude towards the local partner and underestimating the value of reciprocal learning;
- ✿ Operational and reputational risks to ACF work.

In the following chapters, recommendations will be given on good practice to overcome such disadvantages and mitigate these risks.

## **2. Rationale for working in and developing partnerships with local NGOs**

In general terms, the rationale for ACF to work in and develop partnerships with local NGOs lies on the search for increased impact of ACF's work in addressing hunger and malnutrition. As an international civil society organisation, ACF should be able to maximise its results in each country of intervention by engaging with local civil society organisations.

Working with and through local NGO partners should be considered by ACF as a means to more effectively eradicate hunger and malnutrition. Partnerships are and will be central to the ACF way of working as long as it remains necessary to increase the self-sufficiency and autonomy of beneficiaries and for them to attain their fundamental right to food.

While the specific reasons for initiating and developing a given partnership will be dictated by the dynamics of each context – country, programme, initiative, local civil society, potential partners – the ACF rationale for partnerships with local NGOs is based in the following four main pillars:

- ✿ Increase the impact ACF interventions which cannot be achieved alone – this may be linked to wider accessibility and coverage, better use of local knowledge in project interventions, increased learning between local NGOs and ACF, exchange of complementary resources and skills, increased co-ordination with and participation of local actors, improved sustainability of activities and results, possibility to carry out community led advocacy and campaigns, strengthening the capacity of local NGOs for long term change on hunger issues.
- ✿ Support the autonomy of local NGOs committed to the same cause and to addressing the same needs as ACF – ACF should consider local NGOs as the natural representatives of the most vulnerable constituencies who are catalyst agents in making long term changes to the problems of hunger and malnutrition. ACF should look into supporting local NGOs as a natural component in the fight against hunger, both for emergency and long term programmes, as a natural way of ensuring that locally-affected communities and civil society are the main drivers in emergency and post crises responses. Building the capacity of civil society to demand and exercise their rights and contributing to the growth of social capital should be a key objective.
- ✿ Maximisation of resources – there is evidence that access to and management of resources can be maximised through work in partnerships. ACF's traditional *modus operandi* can, at times, be replaced by a strong partnership with a local NGO, considerably diminishing the generally accepted basic expenses (of international staff for example). Cost-effectiveness can thus be increased if the right partner is selected and a partnership is developed. Additionally, access to institutional and private funds can be widened when partnerships with local civil society organisations are in place: they often bring innovation and ownership factors which are considerably attractive to donors.
- ✿ Increase or maintain geographical presence in areas where either direct intervention is not possible or it is not justified anymore. This is valid in contexts where the work through a local civil society organisation is essential to operate in addressing hunger and malnutrition and / or is the most appropriate way to intervene in terms of sustainability and cost-efficiency. These two scenarios should encourage ACF-IN to work well and collaboratively with local NGOs so that a greater number of malnutrition affected people are adequately covered by our activities.

Even though ACF's work in partnership with local organisations is not new, the organisation is now attempting to adopt a more strategic and sustainable approach in the way it engages and develops partnerships with local civil society, particularly with local NGOs. Despite the fact that there may be specific reasons to initiate and develop partnerships with local NGOs in each country of ACF-IN intervention, they should lay their foundations on these four main reasons.

In Bangladesh, ACF partners with Shariatpur Development Society (SDS) a local NGO in the Shariatpur flood prone district. Being a development context, with a strong civil society sector, the partnership with the SDS is seen as a means to improve ACF operational capacity and reinforce its exit strategies. In turn, ACF is focused on increasing SDS capacities to respond rapidly to emergencies and in their technical capacities to operate in recovery contexts.



### 3. Who are our Local NGO Partners?

ACF can engage with different types of local NGOs.<sup>5</sup> The rationale for ACF working in local partnerships allows for a wide diversity of potential NGO partners:

- ✿ A) Sector specific NGOs – local NGOs which are particularly active in e.g. water and sanitation, food security, nutrition, advocacy or a combination of these sectors; B) local NGOs which have developed their expertise with a certain affected population, e.g. HIV/AIDS, orphans, internally displaced people, rural poor,...; C) even local NGOs that focus mainly in driving “cross-cutting” agenda issues forward in relation to poverty and hunger, e.g. environment, gender, capacity building, grassroots participation...
- ✿ National or local coverage NGOs – those that are present in a specific area / district / region or in the wider country
- ✿ Local NGOs with different ways of carrying out their mandate – operational focus through direct intervention (similar to ACF), operational focus through other community structures such as community based organisations (CBOs), committees; advocacy and policy influencing focus through work with local and national government, and possibly with international multilateral institutions and donors.

This list is by no means exhaustive and simply illustrates ACF’s flexible approach in selecting and working with a local NGO partner.

The main question though is who is this local partner? What are the common elements in this diversity of local partnerships that make of a local NGO a fit, reliable and sound partner? ACF has developed a set of partnership criteria that should be met by a local NGO before entering and developing a partnership with – the ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool<sup>6</sup>.

The criteria are divided in three main categories:

- ✿ organisational identity and values;
- ✿ organisational management, systems and programmes,
- ✿ external relations.

This tool requires that the ACF mission or HQ only initiates a partnership with a local NGO when the criteria are met (essential criteria). Otherwise, the tool may help in anticipating where ACF will need to invest its capacity development efforts after entering into partnership (recommended criteria).

The distinction is relevant: essential criteria are composed of non-negotiable elements, whereas the recommended criteria, if not immediately present, indicate to ACF the potential areas where it can help the local NGO in strengthening its organisational, programmes and external relations capacities. A simple ‘ACF and potential local NGO partner risk and management analysis’ can be carried based on these criteria. ACF should not enter into partnership if the essential criteria are not met – entering such partnership would be considered high risk.

### 4. Working in partnership with a local NGO

This section aims at providing guidance to ACF-IN on good practice regarding how to work in partnership with a local NGO.

#### 4.1. Selection of Local NGO Partners

The basis for a successful partnership starts in the way the local NGO has been selected to enter in partnership with ACF. While emergency circumstances – where the priority of saving lives can justify an *ad-hoc* selection of

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<sup>5</sup> ACF recognises the added value and importance of partnerships with other local organisations – government, other forms of civil society organisations (cooperatives, community based organisations, unions (trade, farmers), research institutes), private sector. However, the scope of these guidelines is primarily focused on the relationships with local NGOs. Any replication of these guidance notes into other forms of partnership should be taken with caution as this document is solely based on ACF evidence and practice with local NGOs.

<sup>6</sup> See Annex 2 for the ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool.

a local NGO for partnership – it is essential that in post crises and development contexts ACF follows a thorough process of selection of local NGO partners. Even in emergency situations ACF staff should have in mind what the ideal process in partner selection entails: ACF staff in charge of making the final decision in selecting a local NGO over another to become an ACF partner should take into account the normal selection process. The main steps and issues in the selection process can then be narrowed down to the essentials as required by the context.

The selection of local NGO partners entails two main phases: assessment and decision making. A tool has been drafted for the selection of a local NGO partner for this purpose – ACF Local Organisation Assessment Tool<sup>7</sup>.

- ✦ In the first phase, ACF staff will carry out an assessment, collecting information from the local NGO in relation to the ACF local partnership criteria (organisational identity and values, organisation management systems and programmes, external relations). When carrying out the assessment, ACF staff should look for evidence that actually reflects the information collected in the assessment interviews.
- ✦ In the second phase, a reflection on the information collected will take place; this reflection can be done through answering questions on whether or not the local NGO fulfils basic requirements, by making a SWOT analysis of possibly entering into partnership with that local NGO, and by formulating recommendations on what may be required to initiate (e.g. local NGO to set financial systems in place) and develop (e.g. anticipation of capacity strengthening efforts) a successful partnership. The comparison of the different selection tools should help in the decision making of the final selection.

In Indonesia, ACF was looking to enter in partnership with a local NGO for water, sanitation and hygiene projects in West Timor. The use of an ACF local organisation assessment tool allowed for assessing and deciding to select Yayasan Pancaran Kasih (YPK) as the local partner for projects in the area. A SWOT analysis of the local partnership enabled the identification of the main capacity challenges and opportunities to be taken into account in developing the partnership between ACF and YPK.

In both phases, ACF should be as honest as possible in sharing information with the potential partner on the steps of the selection process. To have an open communication attitude on why and how we do things regarding to selection of local NGO partners will not only reduce false expectations (especially important when assessing different partners) but will also give the possibility for the local NGO to assess ACF as a potential international partner. Before initiating a selection process ACF staff should be in a position to make available to the local NGO any information that it may require before considering forming a partnership with ACF. As such, the selection process should incorporate potential feedback from the local NGO in envisioning a partnership with ACF and dialogue on what a partnership would mean for the local NGO. When initiating a selection process ACF should thus take into account the fact that in a formal or informal way, the local NGO is likely to have its own set of required criteria to work with an international organisation.

#### 4.2. Partnership Agreements

Upon the selection of the local partner, the common interests of both ACF and the local NGO in initiating and developing a partnership relationship needs to be jointly agreed in written format (Partnership Agreement or MoU). A partnership agreement is essential in setting the foundations for a strong partnership, in clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each partner.

It is essential that both ACF and the local NGO have a clear understanding and endorsement of the agreement before signature. If negotiation is required, this should be pursued until both parties are satisfied with the final outcome of the agreement. It is also essential that ACF allows the local NGO to be an active participant in the formulation of the agreement, and leave classical unilateral donor patterns of imposing a partnership agenda behind.

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<sup>7</sup> See Annex 3 ACF Local Organisation Assessment Tool

Potential power imbalances between ACF and the local organisation should be acknowledged by ACF staff before negotiation takes place. They should mainly take into account the potential financial vulnerability of the local NGO, the technical strengths of ACF in its core activities, and the robust logistics systems in ACF.

Wherever a possible power imbalance may lie between ACF and the local NGO (typically ACF perceived as a northern actor with increased resources vis a vis the local NGO), the formulation of the partnership agreement should reflect the will of both parties with regard to:

- 🌱 the rationale for entering into partnership;
- 🌱 the clear goals of the partnership;
- 🌱 reciprocity of partners' behaviour;
- 🌱 how the partnership will work.

The partnership agreement should express, in a simple manner, partnership management systems that are practical, simple and transparent (e.g. reporting systems, information sharing, communication, decision making)<sup>8</sup>. The signature of the agreement is the expression from ACF and the local partner of commitment to shared agreed values and responsibilities in certain ways for certain purposes.

#### 4.3. Partnership Principles

ACF principles for entering and developing partnerships with local NGOs are in conformity with ACF charter of principles. While partnering with a local NGO, ACF respects the following principles<sup>9</sup>:

- 🌱 **Trust and respect:** signatory parties undertake to promote and consolidate their relationship and their cooperation by ensuring that each one knows and respects the mandate, charters or statutes of the other and by recognising the specificity of each other's contribution to the humanitarian and development work in the eradication of malnutrition and hunger.
- 🌱 **Mutuality:** each partner acknowledges the reciprocity existent in its actions and use of shared resources to achieve common goals.
- 🌱 **Complementarity:** partners carry out their roles in the execution of projects in order to support and supplement each other while preserving their autonomy and assuming their responsibilities.
- 🌱 **Transparency:** partners shall share and make information available between them, to beneficiaries, donors and to the public domain.
- 🌱 **Accountability:** partners are accountable to each other and towards stakeholders.
- 🌱 **Participation:** partners and programmes beneficiaries are actively involved in assessing needs, designing and implementing projects and in decision making.
- 🌱 **Capacity Strengthening:** partners should strengthen their capacities, learn from their relationship and value each other's ideas.

The risks of a partnership not working are considerably minimised if these principles are put into practice Effectively.

In Mali, ACF partners with Nouveaux Horizons (NoHo) a local NGO active in livelihoods, economic development and environment. Through the partnership with NoHo, ACF uses the local NGO's experience and technical knowledge in specific projects while helping the local NGO to improve its organisational capacities.

<sup>8</sup> Annex 4 shows a template of a Partnership Agreement that can be used by ACF as a basis for the negotiation of the agreement with the local NGO. It may be adjusted to reflect the needs of the partnership that is being created.

<sup>9</sup> Much has been written by other international NGOs on partnership principles and best practices. For ACF it is fundamental that partnership principles reflect ACF core principles and that they are based on solidarity and interdependency. The Global Humanitarian Platform agreed the partnership amongst their members in the following principles: equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. These principles can apply to any humanitarian partnership and are not far from ACF principles set in this section.

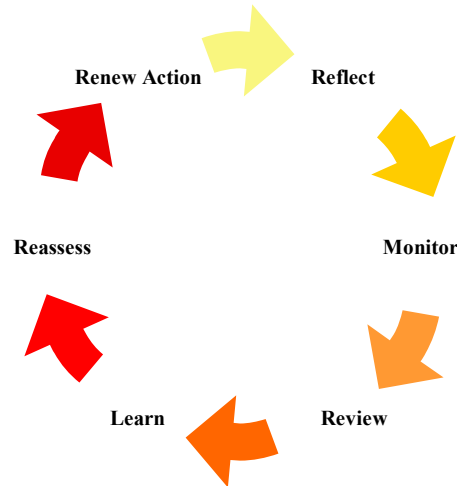
#### 4.4. Development and management of the partnership

A key factor in the success of an authentic partnership is the emphasis given to the development and management of this relationship. ACF needs to take into account partnership as an evolving relationship with an ethos of its own (which guides its development) and which requires that the involved parties are aware of their partnership dynamic (relationship management).

The following can be taken as features that should be present in the development of an authentic and successful partnership:

- ✦ **Decision making** affecting the partnership and joint programmes should be made by mutual consent
- ✦ Each partner's specific roles and activities should be carried out in an environment of **solidarity**, respect and trust by recognising the value and importance of each of their programmes' components
- ✦ Open **communication** and **dialogue** should be practised through regular exchange of information, technical meetings, reporting, documentation of important decisions towards open transparency and accountability between partners
- ✦ **Involvement** of both partners in strategic planning, programme cycle management, common goals and joint activities programme and any other factors affecting the partnership, in order to make projects more effective
- ✦ Promotion of a **learning culture** between partners, of each other's values and ideas in their relationship. This signifies flexibility from both partners in adapting way of doing things, sharing and dissemination of lessons learnt and best practices through partnership
- ✦ **Investment in new skills** and **organisational development** in order to strengthen the capacity to formulate and implement future projects and increase the sustainability and effectiveness of each partner organisation beyond each project
- ✦ Joint activities should be implemented according to **good management resources** practices and principles for the purpose of empowering local structures
- ✦ **Recognition and respect of beneficiaries and other stakeholders** to which each organisation is accountable
- ✦ Provision of **fair working conditions** of all workers, volunteers or salaried, with special attention to their safety in the field and, to the extent possible, to their professional development
- ✦ **Periodical reviews** of the partnership relation in order to jointly and continually seek ways to strengthen and adapt it as relevant.
- ✦ **Sharing of responsibility, assumptions and risks** both for failures and achievements
- ✦ Similar **approach to gender** within the organisations and in programme activities
- ✦ Shared perspectives in accountability, particularly with regard to the mobilisation and management of funds

While developing the partnership, ACF and local NGO partners should exercise awareness of their relationship. A partnership needs to be managed in the sense that partners need to reflect, monitor and review their relationship. Re-visiting the purpose of the partnership and reviewing how the collaboration is actually working towards the agreed goals, is as important as any monitoring and evaluation process in project cycle management. This awareness allows both for learning within the partnership and for the capitalisation of institutional learning within ACF to generate stronger partnerships in the future. If the partners think it relevant, a specific monitoring and evaluation framework of the partnership may be jointly developed.



**Figure 1 – Awareness of the partnership relation (Source: Action Against Hunger UK)**

This diagram serves to illustrate a possible way of exercising awareness in partnerships. While developing the partnership, ACF and the local NGO need to take time to jointly reflect on how the goals of the partnership are being achieved. Each of the partners should monitor how the relationship is progressing against the proposed objectives and carry out regular reviews of their partnership. The methods and timing for monitoring and reviewing may vary between partnerships and should be defined in each partnership based on its duration and the nature of the programmes. The learning about the partnership should take place through sound exchange of communication between partners and involving all the relevant people in the local organisation (e.g. senior management, programme staff etc). It is based on this learning that both can, if necessary, re-assess their relation and set new actions to improve. The different steps can be set in the partnership agreement with specific timings at the onset of the partnership.

#### 4.5. Capacity Development

The ACF approach to partnerships implies capacity development of partners. Traditionally capacity building is seen as a component of partnerships, often in a north-south flow. However ACF recognises a concept of developing capacity that incorporates ACF itself. It is important that in partnerships with local NGOs, the capacities of the local organisation as well as the capacities of ACF are developed.

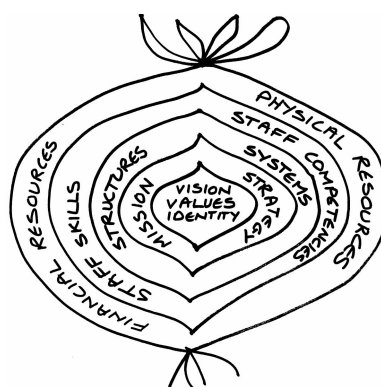
ACF needs to acknowledge what it learns and capitalises from every partnership with a local NGO, and not only assume that capacity development is about transferring ACF skills, inputs or channelling funds for project implementation. For ACF, developing the capacities of local NGO partners is about making their systems and processes robust to exist and act as sustainable and autonomous organisations which can increase their commitment to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition. It is about recognising the contribution of the local NGO partner made towards its primary stakeholders. This means two things

- ✦ Identify the technical, operational and organisational strengths and weaknesses of the local partner and ACF mission or HQ within that partnership: build on the strengths and address the weaknesses
- ✦ Work systematically in the development of capacities: it is not enough to carry out, for example, a series of trainings to tap in some technical competencies of ACF core domains (nutrition, food Security, water and sanitation, advocacy), if the wider organisational capacity is not taken into account.

In Liberia, ACF partners with Aid for the Needy Development Programme (ANDP), a local NGO addressing malnutrition in greater Monrovia and Lofa County. As part of the mission strategy regarding local partnerships in Liberia, ACF provides ANDP with technical know-how in the treatment of malnutrition and care practices and supports the local partner in organisational development (finance, logistics, HR, fundraising, strategy development)

It is clear that ACF will not work exclusively to develop the capacity of a local NGO partner (or its own); any capacity development initiative is only justified for the wider purpose of the humanitarian or sustainable development programme, to assist the most affected communities. But this does not mean that capacity development interventions should not be planned, strategic, and coherent to take into account the wide organisational needs of the local NGO<sup>10</sup>.

The figure below uses the metaphor of an onion, which grows in layers of skin from the centre (core) outwards. In organisational terms, this means that growth in the organisation should be coherent with the heart (core) of the organisation. Capacity development interventions should also take into account the coherence and consistency between these layers.



**Figure 2 – The Onion Model (Source: Intrac)**

This figure provides an indication for ACF capacity development interventions in its partnerships with local NGOs: it will not be enough to act at the levels (layers) of physical resources and staff skills. When working in partnership with a local NGO, ACF will most likely need to support or at least be aware of the local NGOs systems and strategy levels strengths and weaknesses. If necessary support will need to be given to these as part of a holistic and sustainable approach to partnerships: in the long run, it is this cross-level support to the local partner that will increase the impact of the programmes developed within the partnership framework. In the context of a partnership, the onion model can be also used as a comparative figure between ACF and the local NGO partner: to highlight the areas of complementarity and overlapping between the two partner organisations capacities at the different levels.

In Ivory Coast, ACF partners with CREPA-CI in water, sanitation and health urban projects in the two urban centres. Through this partnership, ACF reaches the poorer families in the most precarious districts of Abidjan and San Pedro by providing them with safe drinking water, health and hygiene education. A collaborative approach takes place in order to increase the projects' efficiency. CREPA-CI has been involved since the design stage of the project, and makes best use of its understanding of the context and community structures. ACF-F provides technical and organisational support to the local partner mainly through technical training, logistics and finance support.

Entering into partnership requires patience and determination from both partners; capacity development is in itself a process that can teach this to ACF and local NGO partners. ACF needs to be able to manage and play with the different timings at stake, particularly those of programme delivery and those of development of capacities.

<sup>10</sup> Capacity development interventions can take place through three approaches: a) stand alone: a programme in its own right; b) cross-cutting: capacity building activities incorporated within sectoral or geographical programmes, c) mainstreamed: seen as a critical lens that should be applied as a core way in which an organisation works, systems are built and / or a programme is designed. *Intrac, the programmatic nature of capacity building, OT course 2007: Introduction to Capacity Building.*

ACF has a model for possible capacity development interventions which can be used as a general basis to start working on the specific capacity needs that the local partner and the partnership require to make things work. But there is not such a thing as “one size fits all”, so this model requires adaptation to the specific needs of the local NGO and the nature of the partnership.

The ACF model of capacity development is based on three main aspects:

- ✦ Technical capacity needs – linked to the technical capacities of the organisations in nutrition, food security, water and sanitation and advocacy;
- ✦ Operational capacity needs – linked to the capacity of the organisations to plan and manage programmes;
- ✦ Organisational capacity needs – linked to the capacities of the organisation’s systems, processes (e.g leadership, governance, financial systems, logistics, resource mobilisation..).

When dealing with these three main aspects of capacity, ACF will commit to strengthening the capacity of the local partner through the following approach<sup>11</sup>:

- ✦ The local NGO’s capacity *to do* (to perform) and *to be* (to exist) - ACF aims at strengthening the capacity of the local NGOs to perform and to exist as independent organisations;
- ✦ Learn by doing - local organisations are involved in action learning processes linked to activities benefiting direct beneficiaries; ACF capitalises on local partnerships; ACF and the local NGO partner need to identify potential capacity results as outcomes of any capacity development intervention;
- ✦ Monitoring and evaluation – monitoring of any capacity development initiative needs to be done against set indicators; evaluation is a key component and should feed into learning;
- ✦ Active local ownership / participation – a) local NGOs and people they assist are not passive recipients / instruments of ACF capacity development interventions, but rather active agents of their own actions;
- ✦ b) capacity development, even if primarily directed at the local NGO, is a two-way process in which the local partner has an essential role to play and ACF a lot to learn;
- ✦ Sustainability – is a key element of the process. It means to strengthen the local organisations’ capacity with regard to processes and systems (not only the durability of the programme’s results);
- ✦ Accountability – capacity development interventions need to be framed within the notion of accountability: ACF and the local organisation are accountable to the local partner’s beneficiaries (not only donors) as the recipients of nutrition, food security, water and sanitation and / or advocacy support.

Subsequent ACF capacity development guidelines will be drafted in order to provide orientation on capacity development interventions for local partners.

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#### **Tips for a successful partnership**

- ✦ Be realistic about the local organisation’s capacity and size
- ✦ Refrain from imposing ACF-IN agenda unilaterally on the local NGO when negotiating the partnership agreement and while developing the partnership
- ✦ Recognise potential power imbalance in relation to ACF-IN strengths in terms of funds and technical competencies without abusing it
- ✦ Understand and appreciate the contribution the local NGO partner in the wider humanitarian and development context, its position in local civil society and what ACF-IN can learn from it
- ✦ Record good practice and lessons learnt from the partnership; disseminate that for future ACF-IN systematic and improved approach in partnerships
- ✦ Involve local NGO partner in strategic decisions and policy making of the ACF-IN mission and/or HQ
- ✦ Refocus on the purpose and revisit the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each partner
- ✦ Consider capacity development interventions within the organisational framework of the local NGO and the partnership relation.
- ✦ Exercise patience, look above and beyond the particular moment the partnership is at – invest in long term engagement that can bring about solid learning and change.

<sup>11</sup> See Annex 5 ACF model for Capacity Development interventions

## **5. Key Transversal issues in Partnerships**

This section looks into major transversal issues of partnerships. The selected issues are not an exhaustive list of cross cutting aspects that often permeate the dynamics of partnerships with local NGOs. We are focusing on major aspects that ACF more commonly comes across in the partnership contexts it is involved in: accountability, HIV/AIDS, gender, civil society, advocacy and sustainability. ACF staff needs to be aware of them in order to properly initiate and develop partnerships.

### 5.1. Accountability

The concept of accountability needs to be considered before and during the partnership. ACF is familiar with the concept of accountability through the evaluations practice of its international projects<sup>12</sup>. For ACF accountability means to be answerable for the impact of its actions towards beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders; ACF commitment to accountability means that programmes and responses to the needs should be effective, relevant and make best use of the available resources

In partnerships, accountability is a key concept with three components – internal organisational accountability (governance within the ACF and local NGO organisational structures), between partners (within the mutuality aspect that should guide ACF and the local NGO partner) and towards the local NGO and ACF beneficiaries.

The partnership relation entails shared responsibilities and risks: the performance and effectiveness of each partner organisation is reflected upon the other in an interdependent manner. This is why the commitment to accountability is crucial in the partnership relation:

5.1.1. Accountability between partners: maximising mutuality. It should be mentioned that being accountable in partnership with a local NGO is not about controlling the work of the partner, nor imposing reporting systems on the partner. During negotiation of partnership agreements, accountability mechanisms should be included in order to keep up to set standards of performance and collaboration. These accountability mechanisms may include negotiated ways of monitoring progress to achieve the goals of the partnership, commitment to joint planning and decision making, sharing financial and organisational information as required, reviewing strategic aspects of the relationship and clearly articulating financial accountability mechanisms.

Financial accountability remains one of the most challenging areas in partners accountability for ACF. Most of the time we are answerable to a funder for monies used in programmes implemented with a local NGO partner. Moreover, local NGOs may have weak financial systems in place, that lead to lack of trust in managing funds. It is essential for ACF to know the financial capacities and systems of the local partner and be straightforward on how financial accountability within the partnership should operate. The balance needs to be sought between recognising possible capacity development support on the local partner's financial systems while setting the financial accountability rules of the partnership in the partnership agreement. These may be changed or reviewed according to the progress made during the partnership. Financial staff at ACF, both at mission and HQ level need to become involved in the partnership relation as to ensure that appropriate financial guidance is provided, where necessary, to the local NGO partner.

There are also informal ways of promoting the partners' accountability to each-other: these are about promoting good communication, enhancing trust and respect, being open about each organisational capacities, strengths, agendas and being able to constantly dialogue on eventual power disparities (in technical know-how, financial resources, etc). Because partnership is an evolving relationship these non formal aspects are key to accountability between partners.

5.1.2. Internal Organisational Accountability – part of the ACF partnership criteria lie on internal accountability aspects. ACF should aim at finding a partner or helping a partner in working on issues linked to its constitution or legal registration, its organisational management (transparent governance, elected board) and to its

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<sup>12</sup> One of the purposes of humanitarian evaluation is to enhance accountability; for ACF the overall objective of evaluations is to improve the performance of our actions and programming; particularly ACF evaluations aim at producing and sharing analysis, propose recommendations, follow up on those recommendations, and enhance accountability.



management systems, controls and procedures (financial systems, accounting systems, procurement systems, decision making within the organisation...). ACF experience demonstrates that supporting these systems through capacity development increases openness within partners and knowledge of each ones capacities; it also improves more more transparent ways of working internally and externally with other donors and beneficiaries.

ACF has partnered with Children in Distress (CINDI), a local NGO in Zambia in food security and advocacy projects supporting orphans and their families affected by HIV/AIDS and food insecurity since 2004. The challenges faced by CINDI at organisational level (weak leadership and strategic direction, management weaknesses, uncertainty about the Board's roles and responsibilities, weak financial control systems...) meant that ACF moved from a programmes support model to an organisational level of partnership in 2006. Apart from project support, the partnership has since then included higher support to CINDI's Board, strategic direction, senior management, organizational systems and policies, particularly in financial and accounting systems.

5.1.3. Accountability towards beneficiaries - ultimately we do want to make the partnership relation an accountable one because ACF and the local NGO partner are both answerable to their beneficiaries. In advocacy activities and projects, we work with communities with the aim of making their governments or donors accountable; we advocate that communities should be able to exercise their fundamental rights such as the right to food or the right to water. In ACF partnerships we should also be answerable: our partnerships need to be transparent to final beneficiaries – information sharing at any given step on plans, actions and programmes and the involvement of beneficiaries in projects jointly implemented are key to giving affected communities the possibility to change what should be changed and to be more involved and active agents in addressing their own needs. When necessary, ACF should encourage local NGO partners to engage in community dialogue and thus become answerable to them. If such strategies are not possible due to lack of awareness, it is ACF's role to highlight and make known the reasons why being accountable towards beneficiaries (and not only donors) is essential. The promotion of a complaints mechanism and transparent ways to answer to them is essential. ACF and the local partner can also set up monitoring systems that allow tracking of the relation between the local NGO and the communities. Lastly, throughout the partnership ACF should constantly develop its awareness of the extent to which the relationship is actually improving programme impact and make adjustments as required.

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(...) it is important for Southern NGOs to remain accountable to their own local or national constituencies. However, funding processes often skew the accountability process for Southern organisations. The strict, control-oriented reporting requirements of Northern donors (both official agencies and NGOs) mean that accountability for funding comes from Southern organisations to the North. This can seriously undermine local accountability and the rooting of Southern NGOs in civil society, and – ultimately – their legitimacy. Northern NGOs need to be aware of these risks, and develop radical thinking on alternative forms of accountability. Southern NGO partners need to be given greater flexibility in setting the format for reporting processes. Furthermore, Northern NGOs need to move away from a control-orientation, and place more emphasis on ensuring that their Southern NGO partners have adequate processes of accountability to local stakeholders as part of their organisational structures. Finally, Northern NGOs need to strengthen and formalise their mechanisms for receiving feedback from Southern partners. (Brehm, Vicky, 2001, Ontrac Newsletter, 2001)

## 5.2. HIV/AIDS

When partnering with local NGOs in HIV/AIDS affected contexts, ACF should consider building organisational resilience of the local partner to the disease. ACF's overall programme policy objective is to improve the quality

and impact of our work through the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in our approach and intervention<sup>13</sup>. In addition to considering the ACF HIV/AIDS technical strategy<sup>14</sup> objectives, when working in partnership with a local NGO, the needs and constraints of its local partner in relation to HIV/AIDS need to be taken into account.

Local NGOs are not dissociated from the HIV/AIDS affected communities and individuals they work with. In HIV/AIDS affected contexts, often the effects of HIV have an impact on the operational and organisational capacities of local NGOs: from their human resources to their leadership, the organisational culture and morale may well be overshadowed by the burden of HIV/AIDS. ACF as a partner, needs to ensure that support is given to the local partner in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in to their strategic planning and programmes. If necessary, support should be provided in budgeting and increasing funding to mitigate the organisational impact of HIV/AIDS, to the development of partner policies (eg. HR Policy, HIV/AIDS policy), to addressing internal stigma and gender imbalances and to raising the local partners' awareness in relation to HIV/AIDS needs in their monitoring and evaluation processes. Furthermore, when relevant ACF should mainstream HIV/AIDS into its capacity development initiatives.

Working with partners in contexts of high HIV/AIDS prevalence requires longer-term organisational support rather than the short-term project support that still remains the norm. The need for organisational capacity building support to avoid an organisational crisis makes project funding even less relevant and appropriate. (James, Rick – 2005, Building Organisational Resilience to HIV/AIDS, implications for Capacity Building)

### 5.3. Gender

ACF needs to apply a gender lens in the selection of local partners and in the development of partnerships. If capacity development is part of ACF partnership strategy with a local NGO, gender issues need to be considered when working to support the local organisation's capacities.

Common examples of considering gender in partnerships are linked for example with the local partner's gender approach towards its programmes beneficiaries, the ratio of women participating in the local NGO leadership and governance system or how gender features in cultural history and organisational values of the local NGO. At all stages of partnership ACF should promote gender equality with regard to programme implementation and organisational practice.

[In partnerships] Changes should be identified and summarised in order to encourage gender fairness. Dialogue [among partners] should be used to

- Explore and prioritise respective positions;
- Create a consensus wherever possible and acknowledge differences where they occur;
- Look for likely internal and external resistance to proposed changes.

It is helpful furthermore to do a disaggregated stakeholder analysis in order to look for those actors who are likely to accept or reject change. Clarify the required personal attitudes of those who may function as change agents. (Fowler, Alan – 1997 Striking a Balance)

### 5.4. Local partnerships and local civil society

It may not be amongst ACF priorities to carry out a comprehensive study of local civil society in each given country of operation, however a minimum understanding of how civil society operates is key for a successful partnership and joint implementation of service delivery and advocacy programmes. Such understanding may illustrate and potentiate the local NGO partner's relations with other civil society organisations and its position in representing the interests of its targeted people.

When relevant, through capacity development support, ACF should promote the co-ordination, communication and sharing of good practice between the local NGO and other local civil society organisations. This may

<sup>13</sup> ACF Programme Policy for the Organisational Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS

<sup>14</sup> ACF HIV/AIDS Technical Strategy, Revised 2007

facilitate the sourcing of knowledge and complementary capacities that might not be present in ACF and its local partner.

### 5.5. Partnerships and advocacy

Advocacy is one of the core activities within ACF's mandate. ACF's advocacy component should explore the opportunity that partnerships with local NGOs offers for effective community-led advocacy. Partnerships may be considered as opportunities to make community-driven advocacy strong. They also provide the option for local NGO partners to widen their channel of messaging to international fora. In a nutshell:

- ✿ Working with local partners allows ACF to listen to the real needs from a local perspective and hence be more effective in selecting advocacy issues that will gain popular and civil society support;
- ✿ This in turn provides authenticity and credibility to lobbying if ACF is able to demonstrate to decision makers that advocacy needs have been assessed in collaboration with people on the ground;
- ✿ Access to local knowledge about how to gain effective influence through media, civil society and political channels is crucial for successful advocacy initiatives.

By having one foot in the North and one foot in the South, Northern NGOs are in a good position to build on their experience in the South to inform their advocacy and policy work in the North. However, Northern advocacy needs to start by involving Southern partner organisations. This is not just a question of legitimisation, but also of being in touch with grassroots realities. (Heap, Simon, Advocacy from the Grassroots, Intrac, Ontrac September 2001)

### 5.6. Partnerships and sustainability

There are clear linkages and overlapping between partnerships and sustainability. Partnerships can be considered as a powerful tool in “phasing over” or as part of a disengagement strategy<sup>15</sup>. In this case, partnerships are part of an approach to make ACF interventions more sustainable.

Sustainability can be defined as the likelihood of structures, facilities, projects, initiatives continuing to provide a good service over the longer term beyond the lifetime of the project. The length of time that the same are expected to be sustainable depends on the design of the facility or project and may be time bound, or sustainability may be interpreted as having no time-line but continuing forever (ACF-IN sustainability manual).

Throughout the partnership, sustainability needs to be considered in order to make the local NGO partner a robust and autonomous agent that is able to address needs and advocate with and on behalf of affected communities independently of ACF. This includes helping the local partner in becoming financially autonomous from ACF and empowering the local NGO to have balanced relations with donors. For this purpose two main issues need to be considered: the time frame for the partnership should be equal or longer than three years; a component of capacity development, through mainstreaming, cross-cutting or stand-alone components should always be present<sup>16</sup>.

In the Philippines, ACF has been working with UNYPAD for over 6 years, a local NGO active in emergency and relief assistance, peace building and research on vulnerability issues. It is part of the ACF mission strategy to work with local NGO partners such as UNYPAD in the implementation of projects and in building their capacity to sustain project achievements and as part of exit strategy. The mission aims at supporting UNYPAD's capacity not only in the areas of technical expertise (food security and water and sanitation) but also in project cycle management, strategy development; design development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems and plans; fundraising; gender and equity issues.

<sup>15</sup> See ACF Sustainability manual: How to make projects sustainable and successfully disengage in vulnerable contexts, ACF-France, Technical Department, WASH Service, November 2007.

<sup>16</sup> See section 4.5.

## 6. Roll out – developing staff for effective local partnerships

ACF's traditional international staff led approach to direct project implementation represents a big challenge in our capacity to effectively engage and manage partnerships with local NGOs. The challenge lies in how to transfer traditional technical, operational and organisational ACF competencies in nutrition, water and sanitation to partnerships that directly impact in the reduction of malnutrition and hunger.

### 6.1. Key issues for ACF staff to have in mind when entering and developing partnerships

6.1.1. Map local civil society as part of assessment processes – understand the web of civil society actors and their relation to other civil and non civil society actors. This is fundamental to take the time to pick the right partner and to develop and make best use of the local partner's potential in their networks. Local NGOs also need to be given the time to understand ACF's ethos and ways of working to make their decisions of partnering with us.

6.1.2. Consultation and dialogue – be inquisitive, ask questions, be constructive in dialogue rather than presenting what should be done. Ownership happens at all levels of processes and outcomes and ACF staff should move away from presenting immediate solutions and instead engage in critical and strategic thinking with local partner's staff. This can also include bringing local staff on board of ACF strategic, planning and learning exercises.

6.1.3. Evolving thinking processes– as partnership is a dynamic relationship, ACF staff needs to be able to reformulate its thinking, analysis and understanding. While keeping strategic focus on the partnership relation, ACF staff needs to be able to envision different responsibilities and activities within the partnership as the roles in the local partner staff change and learning is capitalised. ACF turnover of expatriate staff in missions should encourage national staff to lead thinking processes in evolving partnerships.

The six thinking hats is a methodology, developed by Edward de Bono in order to help making people aware of the different thinking processes used by individuals. This methodology uses a tool represented by six symbolic hats that illustrate different thinking behaviours used by individuals in problem solving. The tool can also be used by individuals to understand other people's types of thinking and therefore incorporate other ways of thinking in their own thinking process. When working in a group, team or in partnership people can be encouraged to “wear” the different hats in order to recognise that different types of thinking can be used in different situations. This methodology is said to increase problem solving, reduce conflict, improve communication and team work performance. The six hats are:

**White** (blank sheet, informative): asks questions, seeks information, facts and figures - objective

**Red** (fire, intuitive): emotional and spontaneous, draws on gut feelings, opinion - subjective

**Black** (judge's robe, cautious): considers negative aspects, risks, identifies difficulties, criticism, judgment - objective

**Yellow** (sun, constructive): positive and optimistic, looks for benefits, thinks why it will work - objective

**Green** (plant, creative): explores possibilities and alternatives, generates new ideas, alternative solutions, accepts different ways – creative/speculative

**Blue** (sky, reflective): gives the big picture, structures the thinking process, provides focus, highlights the overall process – overview.

6.1.4. ACF as a promoter of partner's role as a driver of local development – While ACF needs to keep in mind that partnerships are a means to an end (eradication of hunger and malnutrition), it is essential that partnerships are considered and promoted not only for the purposes of service delivery, but also for building further the potential of the local partner to be a main driver in the local and national development process. This is very much linked to the fact that local NGOs as well as the most vulnerable people they represent must be encouraged to lead in addressing and exercising their own rights (to food, to water, to development...). Participatory methodologies usually used in programmes can be well transposed to the working in partnership and in this way

maximise the potential of the relation with the local NGO (which is much more than a contractor implementing for needs assessed and project strategies defined by ACF ...).

6.1.5. Build experience through ‘learning by doing’ – when entering in partnership with local NGOs, ACF staff should consider building its experience in a two fold approach: a) by developing the capacities of the local NGO staff through a learn by doing approach, e.g. associating capacity strengthening interventions to programmes and organisational changes; b) by practicing new ways of working in partnership that fall out of the traditional ACF direct approach to programme implementation and linking these to project outcomes and impact.

#### **Tips for ACF staff to work with local partners**

- ✿ Map the different local civil society organisations that may be of importance to the local NGO
- ✿ Give room to the local NGO partner to understand ACF ethos and select ACF as its partner
- ✿ Be inquisitive, be curious be constructive
- ✿ Let local partner staff lead thinking processes that will influence decisions, incorporate local partner’s thinking within your thinking
- ✿ Promote participatory practices within the partnership and joint projects
- ✿ Use a learn by doing approach

#### 6.2. Suggestions for ACF in developing staff for effective partnerships

ACF needs to consider developing its national and expatriate staff for effective local partnerships. This is crucial as it will on one hand enable ACF to move away from paternalistic models of partnerships, and on the other hand to suppress any eventual institutional superiority derived from ACF as competitor in local settings. Expatriate staff needs to develop those rather subjective skills, and national staff need to work with civil society local counterparts in a constructive engagement mode. It is essential that these are considered as part of the general programme and management activities with the view to improving programming and humanitarian/development practice. The following are possible ways for ACF to commit to fundamental equality in partnerships:

- ✿ Mainstream negotiation and facilitation skills module within ACF trainings – existing ACF training modules can incorporate local partnership sessions specifically focused in negotiation and facilitation for balanced partnerships and building strong autonomous local NGO partners. In addition, existing national and expatriate staff skills, capabilities and experience, should be used to facilitate workshops, provide internal trainings, formulate recommendations etc.
- ✿ Expose ACF approaches in partnerships to external mentors, facilitators who are strong civil society actors, particularly at local level – ACF should move away from having a self-centred approach to local partnerships; it should build on the diversity and experience that exists in each local civil society setting by inviting experts in building strong local civil society to share their lessons, consulting other local civil society organisations experience in partnering with other INGOs, establish links with local research and academic institutions and expose all staff to complementary ways of thinking (critical, constructive, curious, inquisitive, challenged by local partners and other local civil society ).
- ✿ Alternate capacity strengthening with active learning from local partner; stimulate thinking in different ways amongst teams – it is not enough for ACF to play the role of capacity developer. Staff need to spend time in learning and understanding local partners’ needs, ways of working as an attentive learner since, with regard to local partnerships, it is also ACF’s capacity that needs to be strengthened. ACF and local partner teams working together should exercise different thinking methodologies to find joint solutions to problems.
- ✿ Senior managers in HQ and missions should encourage staff to capture experience and build case studies with respect to specific local partnerships. These can be compiled on a yearly basis and thus contribute to

ACF's organisational partnership manual which will build the foundations for a partnership policy and help in the improvement of these guidelines.

- ✿ ACF to promote the active involvement of support staff (finance, administration, logistics) in the development of local partner's capacity. The more ACF missions and HQ partner with local NGOs with a long term perspective, the higher is the likelihood of involvement in capacity development support. This comprises organisational development. ACF programme staff is often not the most indicated to deal with key organisational development issues, as specific expertise is required in e.g. accountancy, administration, logistics etc. ACF support staff should be involved at all stages of planning, implementing and following up local partnerships.
- ✿ Promote communication and exchange of information between ACF and local partners' staff at mission and local level on local partnerships issues, exchange of experiences, feedback on local partnerships etc. This will allow for decentralisation and intrinsic ACF maturity in terms of partnerships, additional learning for ACF and local partner's staff, empowerment of national and local NGO staff in contributing to ACF's agenda.

### **Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations: Implication of these Guidelines for ACF**

This document has brought together various subjects linked to partnerships with local NGOs. It is based on a first capitalisation exercise of ACF's work with local NGOs and best practice from ACF and others. It has also considered the experience of thinking and practice groups involved in local partnerships with civil society and learning from some current ACF partnerships with local NGOs.

The present guidelines are also representative of the need and the will within ACF to improve further its local partnership practice. They can be viewed as a starting point to stimulate additional capitalisation and best practice. While they cannot cover all the range of partnership issues and challenges, they will hopefully assist in guiding ACF staff in their work with local NGOs and promote the contribution of their thoughts and actions to wider ACF learning on local partnerships.

Therefore, in the years to come, this document will need to be completed by evolving practice and consolidation of case studies with regard to partnerships with local NGOs. Otherwise ACF could incur the risk of having an initial set of best practice guidelines that easily bears no connection to intrinsic organisational practice.

The following are recommendations for ACF to turn the contents of this document into practice and to continually improve its work in local partnerships:

- ✿ ACF to roll out these guidelines to HQ and mission staff during 2008 and 2009: this could include a series of workshops and creation of modules that can be easily mainstreamed at mission level (to be implemented throughout 2009)
- ✿ ACF to consolidate existing partnership tools across the network and continuously update the local partnership tool box (2008/2009)
- ✿ ACF to consolidate in-depth case studies on partnerships with local NGOs and share existing ACF good practice (2009) within the network
- ✿ ACF to create good practice guidelines on capacity building of local NGO partners in the context of local partnerships (2008)
- ✿ ACF to adopt a programmatic approach to capacity development of selected local NGO partners: this will allow for increased effectiveness of local partners' work, organisational learning and strong local NGO partnerships in which ACF can rely on and work through an indirect approach

- ✿ ACF to agree on capitalising current practice with other local actors beyond civil society: government, other civil society organisations, international actors and work towards a general partnership policy (not exclusive to local NGOs). A new strategic framework regarding partnerships could be defined during 2010.
- ✿ ACF missions to explore the potential of advocacy work through partnerships.
- ✿ ACF to take advantage of existing local NGO partnerships to make new linkages / strengthen existing ones with wider local civil society, donors.
- ✿ ACF to mainstream partnership approaches into the recruitment and development of its staff, both national and international.

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- Oxfam, *Counterpart Appraisal Form*



## **List of ACF Local Partnership Tools**

1. Map of ACF Partnerships with Local Organisations – Annex 1
2. ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool – Annex 2
3. ACF Local Organisation Assessment Tool – Annex 3
4. Template of a Partnership Agreement – Annex 4
5. ACF Model for Capacity Development Interventions – Annex 5

# **ANNEXES**

## Annex 1 – Map of ACF Partnerships with Local Organisations

	NA / WAITING REPLY	14
	NO PARTNERSHIPS	5
	PARTNERSHIPS LOCAL NGOS / CBOs	20
	OTHER FORM OF LOCAL COOPERATION	12

	ACFIN Country	Local Partners	Nature Local Partner	Nature of Partnership Programme
AFRICA	<b>Angola</b> ; ACF-E Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan, Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PROSAUDE</li> <li>Comision de Moradores, Kazenga-Luanda</li> <li>Escola de Ciencias Agrarias de Huambo, Angola</li> <li>Congregacion de Padres Salesianos de Don Bosco, Luanda</li> <li>Ministries of Water, health, Agriculture, Women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGOs / CBOs</li> <li>Government</li> <li>Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> <li>Food Security</li> <li>WatSan</li> <li>Gender</li> </ul>
	<b>Burundi</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan			
	<b>Central African Republic</b> ; ACF-F			
	<b>Chad</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security			
	<b>DRC</b> ; ACF-USA: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoH</li> <li>Local NGO/CBO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>CBOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition</li> <li>Watsan</li> </ul>
	<b>Ivory Coast</b> ; ACF-F: WatSan, Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Management Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watsan</li> <li>Food Security</li> </ul>
	<b>Ethiopia</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Centres / Posts</li> <li>Regional Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> </ul>
	<b>Guinea</b> ; ACF-E: Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEGUIRE</li> <li>AUDER</li> <li>PRIDE FORMATION</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGOs</li> <li>Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Assistance</li> </ul>
	<b>Kenya</b> ; ACF-USA; Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoH</li> <li>Local NGO</li> <li>Fisherman committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>NGO / Civil society group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Nutrition</li> <li>Nutrition Surveillance System</li> <li>Food Security</li> </ul>
	<b>Liberia</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ANDP (Aid for the Needy Development Program)</li> <li>LAM (in 2005)</li> <li>Note: ACF-F looking for future partnerships despite the challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition (running TFC in Monrovia; in charge of the detection of severe acute malnutrition including screening activities and training to health centres staff in the frame of ACF programme of treatment of severe acute malnutrition in Monrovia)</li> <li>LAM treatment of severe acute malnutrition) in Gbanga, Bong County.</li> </ul>
	<b>Malawi</b> ; ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maleza</li> <li>ACH E just started to work with them in May, so no assessment yet on the outputs of the existing partnership.</li> <li>Note: ACH-E is trying to work in collaboration with MACRO, a local NGO focused in HIV (Sensitization at community level). ACH E has already a partnership agreement but not yet feedback from donor (EU).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Security ( Nut and Food Security Surveillance (data gathering, coordination on data flow with Ministry of Health and Agriculture in Central Region)</li> </ul>
	<b>Mali</b> ; ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, Health, support to decentralisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GRAIPP</li> <li>Nouveaux Horizons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health projects</li> </ul>
	<b>Niger</b> ; ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNICEF, WFP, FAO</li> <li>Comite de la Crise Alimentaire</li> <li>Systeme d'alerte Precoce</li> <li>Hed Tamat</li> <li>MDM</li> <li>MoH Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IOs</li> <li>Government</li> <li>Local NGO</li> <li>CBO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition</li> <li>Food Security</li> <li>WatSan</li> <li>Livelihoods</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Surveillance</li> </ul>
	<b>Uganda</b> ; ACF-USA: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan			
<b>Sierra Leone</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Joseph's Lunsar Institute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hand over of equipment after programme closure</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoA and Food Security</li> <li>• MoH and Sanitation</li> <li>• Swiss Cooperation</li> <li>• Njala University</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government + Local Health Administration</li> <li>• National University</li> <li>• Institute of Agricultural research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordination, support in kind, facilitation of training to government; co-implementation of relief programme</li> <li>• University: training design and facilitation, student support and design of strategy</li> </ul>
	<b>Somalia;</b> ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan, Health			
	<b>Sudan;</b> ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan, Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBOs in Darfur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food aid distributions</li> </ul>
	<b>South Sudan;</b> ACF-USA: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoH</li> <li>• Local NGO</li> <li>• Fisherman committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• NGO / Civil society group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Nutrition</li> <li>• Nutrition Surveillance System</li> <li>• Food Security</li> </ul>
	<b>Zimbabwe;</b> ACF-F: Nutrition, WatSan			
AMERICAS	<b>Paraguay;</b> ACF-E: Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre of Education, Training and Rural Technology (CECTEC)</li> <li>• Centre of Studies and Researches of Rural Law and Agrarian Reform (CEIDRA), Universidad Catolica</li> <li>• Agronomy Department, Universidad Nacional de Asuncion</li> <li>• FAO</li> <li>• Rural and Indigenous Women Coordination (CONAMURI)</li> <li>• MoA</li> <li>• Cooperatives Ycua Bolanos y Capii Bary</li> <li>• Frutika</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local NGOs / CBOs</li> <li>• Government</li> <li>• International Organisation</li> <li>• Socially Responsible company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Security</li> </ul>
	<b>Argentina;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crecer Juntos, in Tucumán.</li> <li>• APROFA, de Moreno.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition and development.</li> <li>• Food Security and Nutrition</li> </ul>
	<b>Bolivia;</b> ACF-E: WatSan			
	<b>Colombia;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, Health, WatSan, Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (institución pública nacional).</li> <li>• Unidades Municipales de Asesoría Técnica Agropecuaria (UMATAS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Institute</li> <li>• Municipal Institute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Food Security (technical assistance and training)</li> </ul>
	<b>Guatemala;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, Health, WatSan, Disaster Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONRED</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Coordination for disasters reduction / public Institute</li> <li>• Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster Prevention</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> </ul>
	<b>Haiti;</b> ACF-F: Food Security, WatSan			
	<b>Honduras;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Mancomunidad de los municipios de la Botija Guanacaure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Watsan</li> </ul>
	<b>Nicaragua;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicasalud</li> <li>• Landgroup</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• GISSAN National food security group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National foundation (groups of NGOs national and international)</li> <li>• National and international NGOs working on land access</li> <li>• National food security group composed by NGOs (national and international)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watsan and Nutrition</li> <li>• Food security</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Food security</li> </ul>

ASIA	<b>Afghanistan</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, Health/Mental Health, WatSan			
	<b>Cambodja</b> ; ACF-F: WatSan, Disaster Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEEP, CHEED</li> <li>• Cambodian Red Cross</li> <li>• Ministry of Rural Development</li> <li>• National Committee for Disaster Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local NGOs</li> <li>• Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water supply</li> <li>• Hygiene Promotion</li> <li>• Disaster Preparedness</li> </ul>
	<b>Indonesia</b> : ACF-F: Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Agency (BAPEDA) DKI Jakarta</li> <li>• Disaster Co-ordination Unit (SATKORLAK) DKI Jakarta</li> <li>• Village (Kelurahan) Government of Penjaringan; Village (Kelurahan) Government of Kampung Malayu; ; Village (Kelurahan) Government of Cipinang Besar Utara</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Disaster management</li> <li>• Kelurahan's government works on administrative, governance and local level development</li> <li>• Improvement of local government and local communities' capacities on disaster management</li> </ul>
	<b>Laos</b> : ACF-F: WatSan, Disaster Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoA</li> <li>• MoH</li> <li>• Social Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Development</li> </ul>
	<b>Mongolia</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Health; Ministry of Food and Agriculture; Provincial Governors and Mayors</li> <li>• AVSF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Central and local Agencies</li> <li>• International NGOs</li> <li>• Local NGOs</li> <li>• CBOs and cooperatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information dissemination,</li> <li>• Coordination, consortium</li> <li>• Capacity building (on food security and project design, implementation); CBOs beneficiaries of ACF-F strategy</li> </ul>
	<b>Myanmar</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan			
	<b>Nepal</b> ; ACF-F: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sappros</li> <li>• Neprosc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and Local NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WatSan</li> <li>• Food Security / Nutrition</li> </ul>
	<b>Pakistan</b> ; ACF-USA: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan			
	<b>Philippines</b> ; ACF-E: Food Security, WatSan, Health, Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNYPAD (United Youth for Peace And Development)</li> <li>• BDA (Bangsamoro Development Agency)</li> <li>• KALASAG</li> <li>• KATRIMMA</li> <li>• Pakuan Monbo Indigenous Cultural Communities (PMICC)</li> <li>• San Miguel Manobo Indigenous Cultural Communities (SAMICC)</li> <li>• Cagwait Manobo indigenous Cultural Communities (CMICC)</li> <li>• Provincial Governments of Surigao del Sur, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes, City Government of Cotabato and regional Disaster Co-ordination Council of bicol Region</li> <li>• Note: These are not "technical partners" but "social partners": they act in a transversal way for community mobilization and conflict resolution, in the bumpy &amp; complex context of Central Mindanao. ACH-E a sort of Sub-contract relationship with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Local NGO</li> <li>• CBOs</li> <li>• BDA is not a local NGO but the 'legitimate' agency to address development in the conflicted areas of Mindanao (it was created by both Government of Philippines &amp; MILF in the frame of the 2003 cease-fire : it has therefore an "hybrid" status).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community organisation of food security, WatSan, Peace Building and disaster preparedness (NGOs and CBOs)</li> <li>• Technical assistance, Monitoring and follow up of project outputs (Government and CBO)</li> </ul>
	<b>Sri Lanka</b> ; ACF-F: Food			

Security, WatSan				
	<b>Tajikistan</b> ACF-USA: Nutrition, Food Security, WatSan			
<b>EUROPE &amp; MIDDLE EAST</b>	<b>Armenia;</b> ACF-E: Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARD (Centre for Agribusiness &amp; Rural Development)</li> <li>• Green Lane NGO</li> <li>• Democracy Today</li> <li>• SDA (Strategic Development Agency)</li> <li>• Sisian Business Support Center</li> <li>• Sisian Honey Association</li> <li>• Seed Producers Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government,</li> <li>• Local NGO</li> <li>• CBO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Security (Milk production &amp; commercialisation, Fodder production, Gender, Market Services Seed Production)</li> </ul>
	<b>Azerbaijan;</b> ACF-E: Food Security			
	<b>Georgia;</b> ACF-E: Food Security			
	<b>Iran;</b> ACF-E: Nutrition, WatSan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Water Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Water and Sanitation</li> </ul>
	<b>North Caucasus;</b> ACF-F: Food Security, WatSan, Psycho Social Care			
<b>Palestinian Territories;</b> ACF-E: Food Security, WatSan, peace building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palestinian Water Authority</li> <li>• MoH</li> <li>• Coastal Municipality Water Utility (Gaza)</li> <li>• Municipalities and Village Councils</li> <li>• Municipality of Tubas: Tubas laboratory</li> <li>• ARIJ (Applied Research Institute Jerusalem)</li> <li>• CJAED (Centre for Jewish Arab Economic Development)</li> <li>• Union for Agricultural Work Committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Local Government / Municipalities</li> <li>• National NGOs</li> <li>• CBOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water networks</li> <li>• Selection beneficiaries, monitoring, vulnerability assessment</li> <li>• Communication / advocacy / awareness raising campaigns</li> <li>• Co-ordination</li> <li>• Water sample analysis</li> <li>• Training / capacity building</li> <li>• Initial and final surveys / evaluation</li> <li>• Agricultural related research / training</li> <li>• Development of partnerships between Jewish and Arab economic Sector in Israel</li> </ul>	

## **Annex 2 – ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool**

### **ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool**

The ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool provides a general framework for missions and HQ planning to work in partnership with a local organisation. It aims at describing the essential and recommended criteria that a local organisation should gather to be eligible for partnership with ACF. This tool is complemented by the ACF Local Organisation Selection Assessment Tool.<sup>17</sup>

The criteria are explained and guidance notes are provided. The rating of the criteria is designed to help in making the decision of whether or not to start a partnership. Depending on the context and on the existing local partners that are being / going to be evaluated, the user of the tool will have some objective basis to decide whether or not to start a local partnership. Essential criteria dictate that the mission or HQ should not start a partnership with a local organisation if they are not met, whereas recommended criteria anticipate capacity building efforts that need to be undertaken by ACF.<sup>18</sup> The proposed criteria can also be used as a main reference in the development of the partnership with the local partner.

The Local Partnership Criteria should serve as a guide only. The user should be aware of two key issues:

- In remote areas there is often an absence of civil society organisations: many of the criteria listed below will be left unmet. This is often the case when the local organisation does not have a lot of history in carrying out activities (new organisation, grassroots based organisation, lack of funding...). In such situations the user should look into similar criteria that apply to the type of organisations existent in the area.<sup>19</sup>
- While this tool tries to reflect best NGO and partnership practices, it is limited by northern / western organisational NGO models. The user should ultimately incorporate cultural elements of each context with the values present in this table. This tool should by no means be imposed as a standardised model applicable and replicable in any context.<sup>20</sup>
- The criteria may be very limited in emergency situations as opposed to reconstruction and/ or development contexts. They may however serve as the basis of ACF positioning regarding partnerships with local organisations, particularly when ACF plans to invest in building the capacity of a local organisation.<sup>21</sup>

ACF missions and headquarters should aim at selecting local NGO partners based on the following criteria:

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<sup>17</sup> The ACF Local Organisation Assessment Tool aims at guiding in the selection of a local partner.

<sup>18</sup> While this is the typical rule, the absence of local organisations meeting essential criteria in a context where the only possible way to work is with and through local partners means that ACF will need to set those essential criteria in place through additional capacity building efforts.

<sup>19</sup> This could mean for example to look for the level of volunteering in the organisation as a criteria to replace the commitment, efforts to raise funds locally as a criteria to replace diversity of funds etc...

<sup>20</sup> Hence the evaluator of partnership criteria will need to assess how the level of commitment from the local organisation to the essential and recommended criteria takes place (behaviour modes, interest in learning, commitment to assist the most vulnerable within ACF priorities...).

<sup>21</sup> These criteria are typically drafted for NGOs as opposed to governmental bodies. Just like the ACF Local Organisation Assessment Tool the user may modify, add, remove the criteria that would best apply to other organisation.

	Criteria <sup>22</sup>	Description <sup>23</sup>	Guidance notes <sup>24</sup>	Rating <sup>25</sup>
<b>Organisational Identity and values</b>	<b>1. Shared vision, mission and values</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACF Charter, Principles</li> <li>• ACF Mission and vision</li> <li>• ACF Core activities</li> </ul>	Commitment to principles which form the foundation of ACF humanitarian commitment: independence, neutrality, non discrimination, free and direct access to victims, professionalism and transparency. Consonance with ACF vision and mission. The local organisation programmes and activities fall within the ACF priority areas: nutrition, food security & food aid, water & sanitation, health, advocacy	These criteria need to be completely fulfilled for ACF to establish / develop a partnership with a local organisation.	<b>E</b>
	<b>2. Organisational identity and structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision, mission statement, objectives</li> <li>• Organisational structure</li> <li>• Policies and procedures in place</li> </ul>	The local organisation has a sound organisational structure and defined processes within which it works.	The local partner needs to demonstrate a clearly defined organisational structure and that policies and procedures are in place.	<b>E</b>
	<b>3. Legally constituted and registered</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituted and registered according to the country laws as relevant organisation</li> </ul>	The local organisation is legally recognised by a relevant authority or association.	This criterion needs to be in place or else the local organisation needs to be in the process of being legally recognised.	<b>E</b>
	<b>4. Work with targeted people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs driven</li> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Knowledge of context</li> <li>• Relationship with beneficiaries / links with communities</li> <li>• Well known within its constituency?</li> <li>• Accountability towards people benefiting from projects</li> <li>• Advocacy approach involving targeted people</li> </ul>	The work of the local organisation with the most vulnerable people should reflect the commitment to meet their needs. The experience of the local organisation should be built on the knowledge of the context and the people's needs. The local organisation should play a key role within its constituency and communities it assists / is planning to assist. The local organisation's processes and programmes (assistance and advocacy) associated with targeted people / communities should be both transparent and participatory involving the beneficiaries	In its work with targeted people the local partner should demonstrate elements of needs driven actions and accountability towards programmes' participants. However if the criteria is not completely fulfilled but there is evidence suggesting the potential within the organisation to meet the criteria through capacity building or ACF partnership, the local organisation is still eligible to work in partnership with a HQ or mission. This means that capacity building and partnership relation need to be defined accordingly.	<b>E</b>
	<b>5. Area of expertise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sectoral focus</li> <li>• Expert capacities</li> <li>• Seen on the ground?</li> </ul>	The area of work developed by the local organisation is defined according to the needs on the ground and its capacities. Programmes and projects are in place and effectively implemented and demonstrate coherence between the organisation's mission, values and the context needs.	There should be evidence that the organisation is or has the potential to be specialised in a given area of work to fulfil its mission; this should be linked to the activities that are actually carried out rather than random funding opportunities.	<b>R</b>

<sup>22</sup> States the required criteria to start and develop a partnership with a local organisation.

<sup>23</sup> Explains the criteria set in the previous column.

<sup>24</sup> These notes provide support to the decision maker: Is it essential or recommended that the local organisation meets the described criteria to start / develop partnership with a local organisation?

<sup>25</sup> Rating: E = Essential, R = Recommended.



<b>Organisation management, systems and programmes</b>	<b>6. Organisational Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board</li> <li>• Responsibilities of the board members</li> <li>• Governance culture</li> </ul>	There is an active board, board effectively meets or/and clear decision making structure. Governance is meaningful to the local organisation and is taking place. Responsibilities are clearly established.	Active governance may manifest in different ways but it is essential that at least some degree of activity does occur. Decision making process reflects some degree of participation / consultation and is transparent.	<b>E</b>
	<b>7. Organisational Strategy and Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals of the current leadership</li> <li>• Strategy for the whole organisation</li> <li>• Planning systems in place</li> </ul>	This aspect relates to the evidence of strategic orientation and goals of the organisation.	There should be a consistent and updated strategy in place (written or through verbal consistency). The leadership of the organisation needs to reflect clear and updated goals (rather than vague or dominated by opportunistic funding approaches).	<b>R</b>
	<b>8. Accountability and transparency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Towards donors and stakeholders</li> <li>• How does it perceive accountability</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>	These criteria relate to the ability of the organisation to reflect transparency of its projects and processes: they need to represent beneficiaries and represent the interests of the most vulnerable; an attitude of sharing its information, processes and accounts towards donors, stakeholders and ACF needs to take place as opposed to an evasive one.	The local organisation needs to be committed to transparency and accountability.	<b>E</b>
	<b>9. Sources of Funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversification of the sources of funding</li> <li>• Funding and financial sustainability</li> <li>• Past, current, prospective funders</li> </ul>	They relate to the number of funders supporting the local organisation and also the attitude of the local partner towards funders. What is essential is for the evaluator to understand the coherence of funding sources and its relation to financial sustainability of the organisation / essence of the projects.	It is recommended that the local organisation displays diversity of funding sources and is able to relate them to the financial sustainability of the organisation / quality of projects.	<b>R</b>
	<b>10. Financial Management and Control</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall budget</li> <li>• Financial systems</li> <li>• Accounting systems</li> <li>• Internal control mechanism</li> </ul>	Basic financial and control mechanisms and procedures reflect the financial management capacity of the organisation.	Without basic financial and accounting systems within a local organisation, ACF cannot enter initiate a partnership. The quality of existing systems may however be reinforced through the mission or HQ's partnership.	<b>E</b>
	<b>11. Logistics systems , controls and procedures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistics systems in place</li> <li>• Procurement controls and procedures</li> <li>• Inventory management</li> </ul>	The attention to dedicate to these criteria varies immensely depending on the type of projects being delivered by the local organisation (do they involve handling large stocks of supplies?) and what ACF is searching in a local partnership.	Depending on the type of projects being implemented by the local organisation (delivery of goods vs. advocacy), ACF may decide to transfer more or less skills in logistics management of the local organisation.	<b>R or E</b>
	<b>12. Human Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives for different functions</li> <li>• Job descriptions</li> <li>• Staff salaries</li> <li>• Written procedures</li> <li>• Training approaches</li> <li>• Staff participation in organisational processes</li> </ul>	These criteria relates to the attitude of the local organisation to HR issues: policies and practices, salaries in relation to prevailing conditions in local market, equal opportunities, gender balance, awareness of personnel in procedures, job descriptions, existence of enough technical expertise to carry out organisation's main areas of activities, openness of staff...	The style and degree of HR practices in local organisations vary immensely; while the attitude towards HR needs to be assessed and understood in relation to the potential local partner, there is no specific threshold on the attitude to HR that a local organisation needs to demonstrate. The local organisation needs however to express some sensitivity to core HR issues and plans to address them in the future. ACF may also come in as a	<b>R</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement staff in planning and decision making</li> <li>• Freedom of staff</li> <li>• Gender balance / equality opportunity</li> </ul>		capacity building agent.	
	<p><b>13. Management capability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects being implemented</li> <li>• Project plans</li> <li>• Projects goals</li> <li>• Targeted groups / their main problems</li> <li>• Are projects designed / implemented to meet needs or donor driven</li> <li>• Targeting methods / criteria</li> <li>• Where does organisation source expertise from?</li> <li>• Are projects effectively being implemented?</li> </ul>	<p>These criteria relate to the capacity of the organisation to manage projects: it refers to quantitative and qualitative aspects of project management. Quantitative: the number of projects, correlated project documents, number of beneficiaries, number of experts involved in the projects... Qualitative: to which extent are projects related to objectives, plans; how do they relate to the needs; types of targeting criteria applied by the organisation; actual implementation of the projects; emergency versus development projects; relation to the expertise existent in the organisation / sourced...</p>	<p>ACF needs to be sure that the local organisation target of a potential partnership needs to demonstrate credible general management capacity. While it is accepted that the degree of qualitative and quantitative elements may differ from local organisation to local organisation / context to context, the HQ or mission decision maker of the local partnership needs to have a clear understanding of the management capacity of the local organisation. In addition there has to be concrete evidence of a potential for credible management capacity through the establishment of a partnership.</p>	<b>E</b>
	<p><b>14. M&amp;E</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with indicators from M&amp;E</li> <li>• SMART indicators</li> <li>• Lessons learned / shared</li> <li>• Monitoring reports?</li> </ul>	<p>M&amp;E systems in place; extent to which the local organisation is aware of M&amp;E.</p>	<p>However it is recommended that the local organisation monitors and evaluates its projects, ACF can actually start / develop a partnership without them. It would mean that capacity building needs to contemplate M&amp;E of the local partner projects according to ACF standards.</p>	<b>R</b>
<b>External Relations</b>	<p><b>15. Co-ordination with other actors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities and de facto co-ordination (overlapping / gaps...)</li> <li>• Coordination type (consortium, meetings, exchange info, sharing...)</li> <li>• Partnerships (with NGO's, CBOs, IOs Government, International / national, universities, networks.....)</li> </ul>	<p>The local organisation may relate to other organisations / government bodies in different ways (coordination and cooperation vs. competition). The knowledge of what other actors are doing might express some of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's programmes. Relationships with other organisations, actors may be meaningful of the local organisation's position in representing the interests of its targeted people and the most vulnerable and the way the links with the different actors mutually reinforce its activities.</p>	<p>Depending on the context, these criteria are not absolutely essential to start / develop a partnership with local organisation. The decision maker should however balance these factors when considering a potential partnership or deciding the aspects of the local organisation that need to be developed in its relation with other actors.</p>	<b>R</b>

<p><b>16. Positioning and motivation in external relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and national level reputation (community, relation local government, government, other organisations)</li> <li>• Dissemination of materials / information to the wider public / sharing of expertise</li> <li>• Motivation to work with ACF</li> </ul>	<p>The local organisation may be perceived in different ways among its targeted communities or those vulnerable people it has links with. The reputation among different governmental bodies and other organisations may reveal organisational and working patterns. The dissemination of the organisation’s work (locally / internationally) may or may not benefit the most vulnerable people in the communities and the organisation’s profile. The local organisation demonstrates that the reasons to work with ACF go beyond funding and derive from a wish to improve practice, increase its operational capacity and learn.</p>	<p>There should be some elements present within these criteria or at least to work towards what the ACF mission or HQ perceives as strategically relevant within the context. While local / national reputation might be key to success of some activities, ACF may well contribute for an added profile of the local partner and its work. A motivation to work with ACF and interest to learn from it, should lead to a clear setting of expectations from ACF if the partnership is to be initiated.</p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
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## **Annex 3 – ACF Local Organisation Selection Assessment Tool**

### **ACF Local Organisation Selection Assessment Tool**

#### **A. Local Organisation Details**

**Organisation Name:**

**Street Address:**

**Postal Address:**

**Focal Point:**

**Telephone:**

**Fax / Email:**

#### **A1. Organisational Identity and Values:**

1. Type of Organisation:
2. Vision, mission and values:
3. Identity and governance:
4. Constitution:
5. Registration:
6. Area of work developed (sectoral and geographical):

#### **A2. Organisation management, systems and programmes**

7. Board (m/f) / Staff (m/f):
8. Goals of current leadership:
9. Strategy in place:
10. Planning systems:
11. Management capability:
12. Accountability:
13. Transparency:
14. Internal Management culture:
  
15. Financial Management Capacity:
16. Financial Management System:
17. Current Funding Sources (donors, size, projects):
18. Previous Funding Sources (donors, size, projects):
19. Prospective Funding Sources:
20. Logistics controls and procedures:
21. Attitude to HR:
  
22. Programmes' goals:
23. Current Projects:
24. Targeted groups:
25. Targeting criteria / methods:
26. Project links to communities:
27. Project links to needs:
28. Expertise / source of expertise:
29. M&E systems in place:

#### **A3. External Relations**

30. Relation with other actors:
31. Partnerships with other actors:
32. Local and national level reputation:
33. Motivation for working with ACF:

#### **B. ACF notes on collected information**

**B1. Does the local organisation display the following mandatory requirements? (rate out of 10, or Yes/No)**

1. Identity / mission values match / compatible with ACF Charter of principles:
2. Commitment to assist the most vulnerable and their needs:
3. Credible management capability:
4. Credible leadership:
5. Basic financial systems in place:
6. Basic accountability mechanisms in place:
7. Committed to transparency:
8. Open to share expertise:
9. Interested in learning / increasing technical expertise:
10. Community links and reputation:

**B2. SWOT for a local partnership**

**Main strengths of the local organisation (in order of priority)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 4<sup>th</sup>.
- 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Main weaknesses of the local organisation (in order of priority)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 4<sup>th</sup>.
- 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Opportunities for ACF / local organisation partnership**

- 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 4<sup>th</sup>.
- 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Constraints for ACF / local organisation partnership**

- 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 4<sup>th</sup>.
- 5<sup>th</sup>.

**B3. Recommendations based on B1, B2. and ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool**

**B4. General recommendations (for a successful partnership with local organisation / follow-up / decisions, support required from ACF, etc)**

**B5. Relevant additional info related to context specificities:**

<p><b>Name:</b>  <b>ACF Mission or HQ:</b>  <b>Position:</b>  <b>Date:</b>  <b>Signature:</b></p>
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The ACF Local Organisation Selection Assessment Tool aims at guiding ACF missions and HQ in the selection of a local partner. It is typically designed to select local NGOs as partner organisations.<sup>26</sup> This tool aims at gathering the ideal information that should help ACF in deciding whether to select a local organisation as a local partner or not.<sup>27</sup> However, the circumstances may make it difficult to go through all the listed themes. The user of the tool should take a pragmatic and flexible approach in order to make the necessary adjustments required by the situation. The tool should not lead to an interrogatory mode of understanding the local organisation’s local capacities.

This tool consists of two parts. The first part is aimed at collecting the main information that falls within the ACF partnership selection criteria (organisational identity and values, organisation management systems and programmes, external relations). The second part aims at summarising the user’s understanding of the local organisation as to whether or not it is able to initiate a partnership with ACF. The user may gather thoughts, conclusions and recommendations of the assessment; they will contribute to the final decision of entering into partnership as well as what type of support will be necessary from ACF (capacity building, technical support, logistics, etc). The final result is a two page summary of the local organisation. When different organisations have been assessed a comparison of the results will allow for easier decision making. In addition, the mission or the HQ will have a record of potential local partners and what to expect with the partnership.

The tool may be used any time when a mission or HQ is selecting a local partner. This tool is not meant to assess the full capacity of the local organisation. This tool is also not meant to be used to develop the partnership with the local organisation. This tool is designed mainly for rehabilitation and long term contexts where partnerships benefit better from a thorough selection process from ACF. Partnerships in emergency tend to be had-hoc; however, knowledge and use of this tool from ACF staff could allow for more sustained decision making in selecting a local organisation.

The following table should help in identifying the required information, the valid sources of information and types of indicators on which to base recommendations.

	<b>Information<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Source of Information<sup>29</sup></b>	<b>Examples of Indicators<sup>30</sup></b>
<b>A1. Organisational Identity and Values</b>			
1. Type of Organisation	NGO; CBO; group of CBOs; non-profit or for profit; local; national, international; local government; semi-government; cooperative; federation?....	Organisation; Local target group.	Registration paper; statutes; articles of association; mission statement; who has been benefiting from activities?
2. Vision, mission and values	Is the mission of the organisation clear / well articulated? Are the members aware of it?, and the stakeholders? Are the activities in line with the mission? Is the mission dictated by funding opportunities / could a mission drift be related to lack of funding? Is organisation committed to the same humanitarian values / principles as ACF?	Organisation; target group.	Registration paper; statutes; articles of association; vision and mission statement; past and current activities.
3. Identity and governance	Is there a sound organisational structure and defined processes within which its members work such as: official address, policies and procedures, systematised efforts to fulfil organisation’s mission	Organisation; members of organisation; Board members; founders.	Constitution; Board meeting minutes; contacts of board members
4. Constitution	Does the organisation have a written constitution? Do structure and activities adhere to the constitution?	Founders.	Officially signed constitution / hard copy OR verbal intentions of founders to establish one and their

<sup>26</sup> If you wish to use this tool in selecting other type of local partners such as local government or other civil society organisations (CBO’s, cooperatives, unions) you may need to make adjustments to the specificities of the organisation.

<sup>27</sup> This tool should be used with the ACF Local Partnership Criteria Tool which provides the essential criteria that need to be met by a local organisation to be eligible for a partnership with ACF.

<sup>28</sup> It describes what type of information to look for. Make sure to summarise the the information keeping 1 line per question.

<sup>29</sup> Directories should provide general information and this tool can be used to narrow down the number of potential partners. The following are useful sources of information (order of importance: NGO networks / co-ordination bodies; local government / authorities; IOs that have been working in the area; local organisations themselves; local communities).

<sup>30</sup> Indicators provide evidence of the information being collected / collected; they can be **hard** (objective, factual nature: documents, reports, agreements, minutes, evaluations...) or **soft** (subjective, open nature: opinions, claimed capacities, verbal intentions, discussions, trust...); triangulation is strongly advised for subjective indicators.

			stated vision, mission.
5. Registration	Is the organisation legally registered / recognised by a relevant authority/association, such as: NGO affairs agency, Co-operative society, Attorney's General Chambers.	Government body members / report.	Registration paper stamped by Gov body; if not registered: date of foundation stated by founders.
6. Area of work developed	Is there a sectoral/geographic focus / specialisation of the organisation to fulfil its mission? Has it changed over time? Is it led by the needs, experience, expertise, context or is it connected to funding opportunities?	Leader, staff, communities.	Staff's qualifications; project documents; training lists; claimed capacities.
<b>A2. Organisation management, systems and programmes</b>			
7. Board / Staff	Does the organisation have a board of directors? Does it meet at least twice a year? Are the members of Board responsible for signing contracts, reviewing and approving budgets? Reviewing the performance of the organisation etc? how many Board members? What is the background of Board members? m/f? What is the organisation's staff background – their experience, education etc?	Minutes of board meetings; contracts; constitution/ statutes.	Last minutes of meetings; dates of next meetings; signatures in contracts; audited accounts; annual reports.
8. Goals of current leadership	Is there evidence of organisational goals? Are the goals clear? Are goals vague or dominated by funding possibilities?	Board members; staff.	Strategic plan; verbal consistency and vision of the current leader.
9. Strategy in place	Is there a strategy in place? Is it updated? Are there systems in place to revisit the strategy? Are there strategies articulated in the project proposals?	Members of staff, board; project documents and proposals.	Current strategy; strategic plan; verbal consistency.
10. Planning systems	Are there action plans? What is the planning system in place? Who participates in the planning activities? How often does the organisation carry out planning exercises (yearly, etc)? Are action plans followed and revisited periodically?	Members of staff.	Current and past action plans, consistency in verbal contributions.
11. Management capability	How many projects are being implemented (effectively implemented vs. funding attraction discourse)? Do they have a document each? Do projects have objectives, plans? Are they updated? What would be the impact of an emergency programme in the current management capabilities of the organisation?	Staff, communities, other organisations involved or government if applicable	Verbal testimony from staff; proposals; narrative reports; funding agreements/contracts; visible activity developed on the ground.
12. Accountability	Are projects and related processes transparent and participatory involving beneficiaries? Does the local organisation represent different stakeholders acting on behalf of the interests of the most vulnerable or is the governance board / structure composed by friends of the leader?	Project documents revealing participation of communities; founders / board members / members.	Internal control mechanisms in place; minutes of board meetings (reflect debates with leader); organisational reports are clear (especially financial); OR there is clear understanding of accountability and plans to move towards it.
13. Transparency	Is it easy to get information? Is the leader evasive? Is the leader open to ACF to meet / talk to other members of staff? How open is staff in discussions / meetings etc? Accounts open to public and donors?	Staff; leader; board members.	Clear financial records; full organisational financial records (not programme ones only); comprehensive documentation in all areas; easy access to documents and records; general openness from staff and leader to ACF.

14. Internal Management culture	Is there active participation from the members of staff? Are women part of the organisations' leadership? Does the leader control everything? Can management style be explained within the cultural context? Does all staff participate or are there members excluded from decision making?, why?... Is there adequate division of responsibilities in the leadership and delegation of authority to the different levels?	Staff, leader, board members.	All inclusive atmosphere; all staff is active in participation; other staff apart from leader represent the organisation; discussion and participation of staff recorded in minutes of meetings.
15. Financial Management Capacity	Can the local organisation keep proper accounts and account for every penny spent and received? Is the organisation able to manage and record its income and expenditure? Are there financial procedures and controls in place and active? Is there lack of trust among staff?	Finance staff, senior staff.	Audit reports; organisational and project reports; financial records are clear; list of financial procedures and controls; contra indicators: absence of those; internal conflict / mistrust among staff.
16. Financial Management System	Is there a sound financial management system, taking into account ethical and adequate financial policies and systems? Does the organisation have an overall budget? Are there complete financial records? Do systems and procedures provide accurate information reflecting the true financial position of the project and the organisation? Are there simple internal control mechanisms in place which display a need to have accountability within? What is the current average of overhead per project?	Finance staff, senior staff.	Master budget; audit reports; organisational and project reports; financial records are clear; board members' knowledge of financial situation of procedures; procedures require consent of several people; internal regulations have tight procedures for procurement, administration and finance.
17. Current Funding Sources	How many sources of funding does the local organisation have? Is the organisation seeking funds externally only, or also mobilising local / national resources?	Staff; donors.	Funding agreements; organisational financial reports; Statements from funders.
18. Previous Funding Sources	Who were the previous funders? Why are they not supporting the organisation's projects anymore? (important to contact previous funders for references)	Staff; donors.	Programme records; financial records; statements from funders.
19. Prospective Funding Sources	Is the organisation looking at new sources of funding? What is the consistency / logic in the new search for funds?	Staff; donors.	Existing funders in the area / supporting local organisations in the context; Statements from funders.
20. Logistics controls and procedures	What logistics systems are in place? Are there written procedures on purchasing supplies? Is there more than one price quote sought before buying? Above what level? Is there a register of assets?, how often is it updated? Are assets marked with an organisation reference? IS there any inventory management mechanism / written procedures in place?	Staff; senior staff.	Written procedures; there are internal procurement regulations; register.
21. Attitude to HR	Are staffing policies and practices appropriate and ethical, inclusive of gender and diversity and do they take into account the required levels of expertise and conditions prevailing in the local labour market? Is the technical and general expertise available sufficient and appropriate in view of the organisation's objectives, and programmes?, if not are there plans to address this in the near future? Are there written job descriptions? Are staff salaries in line with market rates? Is there effectively equal opportunity in the organisation? Is there awareness of gender balance	Staff; senior staff.	Policies; awareness of staff in procedures; relation between technical and general expertise available and the nature of programmes being implemented; Job descriptions; staff records; Women and men in positions in the organisation; atmosphere of openness.



	/ equality?		
22. Programmes' goals	Are the goals of the programmes in line with the organisation's general goals? Are the goals of the programmes consistent among them and do they aim to achieve?	Board members, staff.	Past and current programmes; staff knowledge of programmes in relation to the organisation's objectives.
23. Current Projects	Summary of what the organisation is currently doing. Is there a satisfactory record of implementing projects? What are the geographical areas of work?	Staff, communities, government.	Current proposals and reports; current funding agreements; activities on the ground; feedback from communities benefiting from projects.
24. Targeted groups	Who are the targeted groups of the organisation? Is the organisation clear on who is trying to reach? Is the organisation working for the most marginalised? Is it an organisation geared to assist others or is it self focused? Is there a gender balanced approach in the targeting and selection of beneficiaries?	Most vulnerable communities; local government.	Projects' documents; feedback from claimed target groups.
25. Targeting criteria / methods	Does the organisation have methods of targeting its claimed groups? Does it use wealth ranking, own assessments, official statistics, own/other organisations surveys? Are there specific criteria in use to select the most vulnerable?	Communities; programme and senior staff.	Project documents; training materials; beneficiaries' lists/database; discussions with programme staff.
26. Project links to communities	Rhetoric versus reality: check what is said to be done versus what is effectively done; check links between the organisation's projects and the communities; find out about grassroots initiatives; are beneficiaries involved in activities as described in project documents for donors, especially women / minority groups?	Programme staff, communities.	Communities ownership / perception of programmes; organisations' discourse is funder's rhetoric oriented rather than community oriented.
27. Project links to needs	Are projects geared to respond to needs or are they funders driven? Do projects adjust according to evolving needs? Do the project documents reflect clear understanding of problems of the area / targeted population?	Programme staff; senior staff; communities.	Staff rhetoric is needs driven rather than funders' jargon driven; project documents contain description / analysis of needs.
28. Expertise / source of expertise	To which extent does the local organisation gather the expertise to assist people? If not available, where does it source it from? What are the plans to strengthen its expertise?	Senior staff; board; technical staff if available; similar organisations; communities.	Project documents; future plans; other stakeholders.
29. M&E systems in place	Are there M&E systems in place for the projects (SMART indicators...)? Is the organisation aware of M&E? are monitoring reports prepared? Are lessons learned from evaluations?	Senior staff; project staff;	Project reports; monitoring reports; evaluations; knowledge of indicators; awareness of M&E
<b>A3. External Relations</b>			
30. Relation with other actors	Does the organisation coordinate and cooperate with other organisations / governmental bodies? Is there knowledge of what other relevant actors are doing? Are the relations with the local government so close that suggests that they might not represent / advocate the interests of the most vulnerable? Does the organisation belong to any consortium of organisations? Does the organisation cooperate or compete with other organisations?	Staff from other organisations; gov officials/local gov staff; consortium / coordination body.	Participation in consortium/network/coordination meetings (minutes); bilateral meetings (minutes); narrative reports of advocacy initiatives; feedback from other NGOs/CBOs on forms of cooperation; opinions from gov staff; advocacy attempts vs. government partisanship.

31. Partnerships with other actors	Is the local organisation work together with any other agency? Does it have any MoU with other organisation / government agency? Does the organisation have links with other possible support organisations (universities, international agencies, private sector?)	Staff from other organisations / universities etc...	Agreements/MoUs with other actors; joint projects; sharing of resources
32. Local and national level reputation	How is the organisation perceived among other organisations (watch out for jealousy but look for common description patterns)? How is the organisation perceived by the communities it claims to assist / have links with (get views from local people, most vulnerable, how they have been involved in local organisation's work, is it known?..)	Local organisations (NGOs, CBOs...) Vulnerable / targeted communities.	Opinions from other organisations / communities (keywords: capable, committed, integrity, ...); key actor in network; large membership; different donors; track record of support and recognition; positive evaluations
33. Motivation for working with ACF	Is it to access funding only? Is it to improve its access to communities through funds and expertise? Is there a wish to improve practice, raise the capacity and learn? Are there specific expectations from a potential partnership?	Senior staff; leader; programme staff;	Funding agreements ended / ending; discussions with staff at senior level;

## Annex 4 – Template of a Partnership Agreement

### PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

between **Action Contre la Faim - (ACF -)** and **local partner**

#### PREAMBLE

The present Partnership Agreement between **Action Contre la Faim** <(ACF-) Headquarter> and <.....local partner.....> establishes the general mutual understanding between the two organisations in its strategic relationship in designing and implementing programmes for <the most vulnerable affected people (specify)> in <. Location and country..>

This Partnership Agreement is a statement of shared goals, roles and responsibilities to which the two organisations are bound. This is done in a spirit of mutual trust, respect, solidarity and shared humanitarian commitment to assist the most vulnerable, in particular, <specify target population>

In entering this agreement the autonomy of each organisation is preserved. The signing of this agreement does not preclude each organisation from working independently and with other partners. Nevertheless each organisation should be transparent in the establishment and development of other partnerships as much as they could affect the <ACF-...> and <local partner name> collaboration.

For each jointly developed programme, a Project Agreement should be signed and developed according to specific project plans and budgets.

#### ORGANISATIONS to the PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

##### 1. Action Contre la Faim - <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >

###### 1.1. The Organisation

**Action Contre la Faim** - <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > is an independent, non-political, non-religious charity registered under <specify> and a signatory of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

**Action Contre la Faim** - <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > operates as part of the Action Contre la Faim International Network (ACF). The Network comprises 5 head offices (London, Paris, Madrid, New York and Canada). Each office is an independent charity in its own right, which manages specific country programmes. The network members pool their collective resources on areas such as human resources, training, specific projects and certain campaigns or global advocacy work in order to make the best use of limited resources.

ACF works in countries where there is the greatest need. ACF specialises both in emergency relief and longer term rehabilitation and development programmes. ACF works in order to enable the affected people to regain their autonomy and livelihoods as quickly as possible, so that they can live without depending on external assistance. ACF works directly with people in need and also with local partners, in particular with local Non Governmental Organisations

###### 1.2. Action Contre la Faim - <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > vision

*“A world in which all children and adults are able to realise their right to sufficient food and water, to live secure in the knowledge that they have sufficient food and assets to survive the future, have equitable access to the resources that sustain life, and are able to attain these with dignity.”*

###### 1.3. Mission Statement

*“The prime aim of ACF is to combat hunger, disease and those crises threatening the lives of men, women and children around the world. All of ACF’s programmes aim to enable the beneficiaries to regain their autonomy and self-sufficiency as soon as possible.”*

###### 1.4. Principles of intervention: The Charter (enclosed)

ACF **directly** assists populations vulnerable to hunger according to the fundamental guiding principles of our Charter: **independence, neutrality, non discrimination, free and direct access to populations, professionalism, transparency.** All members of ACF adhere to the principles of this Charter and are committed to respect it.

##### 2. <Local Partner>

###### 2.1. The Organisation

<description of the local organisation>

## 2.2. <Local Partner Vision>

<description of the local partner vision>

## 2.3. <Local Partner Mission>

<description of the local partner mission>

# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The purpose of the Partnership Agreement is to define the goal, reciprocal roles and responsibilities of the partners in implementing humanitarian programmes supported by ACF- <specify HQ>

## Article 1 – Goal of the Partnership

Action Contre la Faim - <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >and <.....local partner.....> shall work together, for the <specify main objective of partnership>. The two organisations commit themselves to a relationship based on the principles enumerated in Article 2.

## Article 2- <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >Partnership Guiding Principles

The partnership between <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >and <.....local partner.....> is based on the following principles:

**Trust and respect:** Signatory parties undertake to promote and consolidate their relationship and their cooperation by ensuring that each one knows and respects the mandate, charters or statutes of the other and by recognising the specificity of each other's contribution to the humanitarian action.

**Mutuality:** Each partner acknowledges the reciprocity existent in its actions and use of shared resources to achieve common goals.

**Complementarity:** <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >and <.....local partner.....> carry out their roles in the execution of projects in order to support and supplement each other while preserving their autonomy and assuming their responsibilities.

**Transparency:** Partners shall share and make information available between them, to stakeholders and to the public domain.

**Accountability:** <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >and <.....local partner.....> are accountable to each other and towards stakeholders.

**Capacity building:** Partners should strengthen their capacities, learn from their relationship and value each other's ideas.

## Article 3 - Development of the Partnership

Partners undertake to develop jointly a quality partnership by promoting the above mentioned principles. The development of the partnership should further operate by putting the following into practice:

- a) **Decision making** affecting the partnership and joint programmes should be made by mutual consent
- b) Each partner's specific roles and activities should be carried out in an environment of **solidarity**, respect and trust by recognising the value and importance of each of their programmes' components
- c) Open **communication** and **dialogue** should be practised through regular exchange of information, technical meetings, reporting, documentation of important decisions towards open transparency and accountability between partners
- d) **Involvement** of both partners in strategic planning, programme cycle management, common goals and joint activities programme and any other factors affecting the partnership, in order to make projects more effective
- e) Promotion of a **learning culture** between partners, of each other's values and ideas in their relationship. This signifies flexibility from both partners in adapting way of doing things, sharing and dissemination of lessons learnt and best practices through partnership
- f) **Investment in new skills** and **organisational development** in order to strengthen the capacity to formulate and implement future projects and increase the sustainability and effectiveness of each partner organisation beyond each project
- g) Joint activities should be implemented according to **good management resources** practices and principles for the purpose of empowering local structures
- h) **Recognition and respect of primary and other stakeholders** to which each organisation is accountable
- i) Provision of **fair working conditions** of all workers, volunteers or salaried, with special attention to their safety in the field and, to the extent possible, to their professional development
- j) **Periodical reviews** of the partnership relation in order to jointly and continually seek ways to strengthen and adapt it as relevant.

- k) **Sharing of responsibility, assumptions and risks** both for failures and achievements

#### Article 4 - Essential procedures for the implementation of the partners' programmes

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> commit to humanitarian programmes in accordance with the best practices in the sector and taking into account the particular operating environment, based on the concept of quality in aid.

The quality of joint programmes implies a clear focus from the partners on the most affected people. Priority shall be given to the collection and analysis of information pertaining to the most vulnerable and to the monitoring of their situation. The assessment of needs, collection of information and analysis of data should take into account the specificities of the area, context, culture and gender issues.

<.....local partner.....> will:

- a) Implement activities, allocate funds and resources to respond to the needs and promote common partner objectives of responding globally to humanitarian needs
- b) Promote the participation of volunteers, community members and most affected people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects;
- c) Endeavour to carry out its projects in order to strengthen the local capacities, by respecting the culture, the structure and the customs of the different communities
- d) Assist the affected population to regain a minimum level of self sufficiency, taking long term development objectives into account, whenever possible;
- e) Work with the affected communities, in order to prevent, prepare for, reduce and respond to potential future humanitarian crises.
- f) Ensure the timeliness of different programmes' activities amongst all actors involved in its implementation
- g) Maintain the communication flow within its structure and make sure that reports are submitted on time
- h) Monitor and periodically evaluate its activities and make adjustments as relevant

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > will:

- a) Share knowledge and provide technical support in all matters relevant to the partnership and joint programmes
- b) Disseminate best practice in project management and disseminate expertise on health, nutrition and food security through formal and informal information sharing, training, information and coaching
- c) Ensure, together with <.....local partner.....>, that programmes are implemented according to their objectives, outcomes and budget
- d) Promote and support <.....local partner.....> process of strategic organisational transformation towards improved ways of working. This should be done through the continuous analysis of each partner's capacity to fulfil their missions and visions
- e) Ensure and work to improve the quality and timeliness of reporting systems
- f) Instigate partnership periodic reviews in relation to joint programmes

Both partners shall furthermore respect these procedures by observing articles 2 and 3.

#### Article 5 – Project agreements

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> work in partnership in order to meet the most vulnerable population's needs on the basis of impartial needs assessments. Any agreed programmes should be implemented directly by <.....local partner.....>.

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> are committed to transparency and accountability for the use of funds, not only for their own management but also for results of the projects funded.

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> will ensure that the quality of their partnership and their projects meet high-level targets, in particular in terms of efficiency and accountability.

All project proposals approved by <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > will be confirmed by means of a **Project Agreement** signed by both partners. Each Project Agreement shall regulate the management of specific grants allocated to <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> for the implementation of previously agreed projects.

#### Article 6 - Eligibility criteria and exclusion situations

To be eligible for the signature of this Partnership Agreement with <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >, <.....local partner.....> must meet the following criteria:

- a) Be a non-profit-making, non-governmental and non-confessional autonomous organisation;

- b) Be able to produce certified audited financial statements covering the last two financial years. These must be carried out by professionals, which can be either firms or individuals, provided that they are fully independent from the organisation;

By signing this Partnership Agreement, <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> recognise the importance of the following factors for a successful partnership:

- a) Each organisation’s impartiality, independence and neutrality in the implementation programmes;
- b) Each organisation’s administrative and financial management capacities;
- c) Each organisation’s technical and logistical capacities;
- d) Each organisation’s experience in the humanitarian field and their specific fields of expertise in assisting communities in need;
- e) The results of previous joint programmes carried out by the organisations;

The following situations exclude CINDI-Kitwe as an NGO of entering and maintaining the partnership with <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >:

- a) Be bankrupt, wound up, have their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, be the subject of proceedings concerning these matters or analogous situations;
- b) Be convicted for an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgement with force of *res judicata*;
- c) Be guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any justifiable means;
- d) Be unfulfilling the obligations relating to payment of social security and taxes in all countries where these payments are due;
- e) Be subject of judgement with force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in criminal organisation or any other illegal activity;
- f) Be declared in serious breach of contract in other grant award procedures financed by other donors.
- g) If any of <.....local partner’s.....> partners, contractors or staff indulges in corrupt practices in connection with any programme supported by <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >;
- h) Reiterative failure by <.....local partner.....> to produce reports will be considered a serious breach of the Partnership Agreement and may be considered sufficient reason for its suspension and, ultimately, its termination;
- i) Intentionally make false declarations, is guilty of misrepresentation or submits reports inconsistent with reality;
- j) Has, intentionally or by negligence, committed a substantial irregularity in performance of a Project Agreement funded by <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >.

In case of breach of the above mentioned clauses <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > shall inform <.....local partner.....>, by registered letter or equivalent procedure, of the termination of the Partnership Agreement and of the grounds that justify this decision.

<.....local partner.....> shall have 7 days after receiving the written notice to submit its observations and take any necessary measure.

**Article 6 - Disputes**

The Parties endeavour to settle amicably any dispute or complaint relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Partnership Agreement and specific project agreements if applicable, including their existence, validity or termination.

The Partnership Agreement shall be governed by <xxxxspecifyxxx> law

**Article 7 –Duration the Agreement and Assessment of the Partnership**

The Partnership Agreement shall remain valid for <xxxxspecifyxxx> years, starting from the date of signature.

The renewal of the Partnership Agreement shall be re-discussed <xxxxspecifyxxx> years after its starting date.

The partner organisations may renounce to its partnership at any moment by serving 30 days advance notice.

<... (ACF - ...) specify HQ > and <.....local partner.....> must ensure the good development of the partnership according to the principles and factors established in articles 2 and 3.

Under this Partnership Agreement the organisations should also carry out a **mutual annual review** of their partnership relation in order to improve and strengthen their relation and learn from experience.

Date: .....

For <... (ACF - ...) specify HQ >

<.....local partner.....>

Signature

Signature

## **Annex 5 – ACF Model for Capacity Development Interventions**

### **ACF model for Capacity Development Intervention**

The following model is based on the consultation of 10 ACF local NGO partners in Liberia, Ivory Coast, Mali Zambia Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Philippines. The local organisations have been involved in one or more of the 4 activities to address hunger issues.

<b>Capacity development issues of Local Partner NGOs</b>				
Local NGO Core areas of activity	Water and Sanitation	Nutrition	Food Security	Advocacy
Major capacity development needs - technical / operational (examples)	<u>Premise:</u> local organisation need to ensure access to safe water and sanitation, this performance depends on capacities of local organisation	<u>Premise:</u> local organisation need to ensure adequate nutrition, this performance depends on capacities of the local organisation	<u>Premise:</u> local organisation need to ensure the right to food, this performance depends on capacities of local organisation	<u>Premise:</u> local organisation need to advocate further with their communities / participants, this performance depends on capacities of local organisation
	<u>Examples:</u> - water and sanitation management - hygiene promotion - emergency preparedness / response - water and sanitation construction	<u>Examples:</u> - malnutrition management - nutrition and care practices	<u>Examples:</u> - technical food security know-how - livelihood - Agro technical skills - Technical assistance	<u>Examples:</u> - community led advocacy - advocacy towards policy makers
General Organisational Issues / Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governance and strategy</li> <li>- Leadership</li> <li>- Fundraising / resource mobilisation / proposal writing</li> <li>- Communication</li> <li>- Human Resources</li> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>- Financial management</li> <li>- Project Cycle Management</li> <li>- Logistics</li> <li>- Individual capacities (computer literacy, English, technical reporting...)</li> <li>- Administration expertise</li> </ul>			
Possible mainstream issues to be addressed in Capacity Development work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HIV/AIDS</li> <li>- Urban contexts</li> <li>- Working in partnership with other local institutions</li> <li>- Gender / maximise women's role</li> <li>- Environment protection / ecology preservation</li> <li>- Community development / empowerment through local knowledge / wisdom</li> </ul>			
<b>ACF Approach to capacity development of local NGO partners</b>				
<b>Issues of focus in Capacity Development</b>	Comments			
Capacity to do (to act) and to be (to exist)	- ACF aims at strengthening the capacity of the local NGOs to perform and to exist independently of international partners like ACF and reinforce their autonomy			
Monitoring and evaluation of Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring will be done against set indicators (hard and soft) which should be designed and managed by the local organisation in order to assess the performance of the capacity development</li> <li>- Evaluation is a key component of any Capacity Development programme and will feed into learning and dissemination of success stories</li> </ul>			
Learn by doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local organisations are involved in action learning processes</li> <li>- ACF capitalises on local partnerships through capacity development interventions</li> <li>- A programmatic approach falls out of the traditional project cycle management as solutions to capacity needs cannot be determined at the outset of a capacity development project: they need to be determined</li> </ul>			

	through the capacity assessment; establishment of indicators emanate from it and monitoring will be done against it. A results based framework could identify potential capacity results that may occur as a consequence of proposed capacity development interventions.
Sharing and dissemination of knowledge / learning / results / success stories	- Mutual learning between local partners and ACF and within the ACF International Network
Active local ownership / participation	- Local NGOs and people they assist are not passive recipients / instruments of ACF-IN assistance, but rather active agents of their own actions - Capacity Development interventions success depends largely on the project ownership from the local partner: essential to prevent destitution which is often rooted in capacity constraints - Ownership and participation of local organisation is essential part of the process as of programmatic outcomes
Sustainability	- Sustainability is a key element of the process of capacity strengthening and of the capacity development intervention (impact) - Sustainability means to strengthen local organisations' capacity processes and not only the durability of the programme's results
Accountability	- The concept of accountability requires ACF and local organisations to be accountable to local partner's beneficiaries (not only donors) as the recipients of nutrition, food security, water and sanitation and / or advocacy support.
<b>Process of Capacity Development Intervention:</b>	

