



PARTNERSHIP POLICY

WSF partnership policy provides guidelines to WSF partnership

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Introduction:

We (WSF) aspire to build partnerships that are inclusive, accountable and empowering and based on relationships of openness and trust. Our approach to partnership reflects our values, is central to what we believe as an organisation and how we think change will happen. Our partnerships reflect our efforts to address the inequality of power, not just in society at large but in our own working relations with others.

Policy Statement

WSF works with and through others to take action to achieve common goals for overcoming poverty and injustice, based on complementarity and respect for the contribution that each party brings. WSF's partner relations will be informed by and managed to a set of clear principles. These five principles underpin our programme and partnership decisions in development, humanitarian and campaigns work at every level of activity.

We hold ourselves accountable to these principles and seek to be held accountable by partners, communities and other stakeholders with whom we and partners work:

- Complementary purpose and added value
- Mutual respect for values and beliefs
- Clarity of roles, responsibilities and decision-making
- Transparency and accountability
- Commitment and flexibility

Why do we work with partners?

WSF works with others to build a universal movement for change to support the actions of poor and marginalized people and communities to overcome poverty and suffering more effectively. We believe that this is more likely to ensure lasting, locally-owned development and relevant and accountable campaigns and humanitarian interventions.

We believe that local communities and other civil society partners can better understand, represent and address the rights, needs and aspirations of poor people. All partners, including government and the private sector, are key actors in creating the conditions and structural changes necessary for effective people-centered, sustainable change and development. The programmes we implement together can encourage and enable the real participation of people living in poverty, be more sustainable and have greater impact. The knowledge, skills, reach and experience that we offer each other mean that, together, we can make more of a difference than if we worked apart.

Who do we work with as partners?

WSF's work with others builds on an ever-increasing diversity of relationships. As the range of actors engaged in social change widens – from local communities to the private sector – WSF aims to establish effective and diverse partnerships to bring about change.

Within this context of increasing diversity, WSF partner relations fall into three broad groupings. These are not always clear-cut categories, and relationships may well fit into more than one Category at the same or different times:

- **Project partnerships** for a specific project with mutually agreed aims and objectives
- **Strategic partnerships** working together over time with the sufficient alignment of goals and objectives towards achieving a lasting impact on poverty.
- **Alliances** with individual or groups of organisations working together towards a specific goal even though organisational/institutional mandates and long-term purpose may be quite different.

The Policy governs all our work with local communities and other civil society organisations in both funding and non-funding relations. The distinctive nature of humanitarian and advocacy/campaigning contexts may present additional factors influencing how we work with others. While differences in context may require different approaches, we believe that the same principles apply to all activities across our one-programme partner relations.

As WSF develops its ongoing work with the private sector, a wider range of partner-type relationships will arise. In these cases, the emphasis will be on identifying the common goal towards which we are working, looking to build on the distinctive contribution of all actors and ensuring that our combined efforts bring change.

Principles of partnership

1. **Complementary purpose and added value any partnership** between WSF and other organisations is based on shared objectives to empower and/or otherwise benefit poor, suffering and marginalised people. The added value of working together is clear and recognised by all partners. Each partner brings different capacities and resources to an interdependent relationship and the diversity and value of all contributions is acknowledged. Each partner is clear about what each brings to the partnership as well as being open about limitations.

WSF adds value in partnership through the provision of financial and non-financial development, campaigning and humanitarian support and expertise. Increasingly we act as a catalyst for multi-faceted relationships involving alliances of civil society, including local communities, and other varied actors seeking to bring about change. We do not replace civil society in the countries where we work, but support its development and links with other global actors and movements.

WSF respects the right of partners to determine their own direction and priorities. We are open, within the limits of our mandate and mission, to being influenced as to where, how and with whom we work, and on the messages we convey through our campaigns. This includes being open to learning from different experiences of, and approaches to, development, campaigning and humanitarian work which may challenge us to question our own assumptions about effective practice.

We develop our analysis of the causes of poverty and suffering in any given context together with our partners, and we define joint goals and strategies based on this analysis. When our perception of priorities changes, we share our rationale for this, and are transparent in exploring what this means for the relationships we have.

2. Mutual respect for values and beliefs

Whilst recognising and respecting differences, sufficient common ground in terms of shared values and beliefs must be found for our partnership with others to be viable. We must share a desire to work towards a common position on important issues, including a commitment to gender equality and respect for diverse identities, a belief that people living in poverty should enjoy their fundamental rights, and that poor and marginalised people are agents of their own development.

3. Clarity about roles, responsibilities, and decision-making

Credibility and trust in partner relationships come from good communication, competence, reliability, and delivery. When we negotiate the rights and obligations of each partner, the expectation of the contribution each party makes, including WSF, is clearly stated. All partners are able to do what they say they will do, or describe the process and time frame needed to develop the required capacity. How major decisions are taken and who is involved is also stated and agreed. While the aim is to work towards shared decision-making as the work and relationship progress, this will not always be possible nor desirable. As we each take responsibility for fulfilling our agreed roles, so we take an equal share in celebrating success and learning together from failure.

Every effort is made to build mutual respect within the partnership, as characterised by open dialogue and a willingness to give and receive constructive criticism. Problems and disagreements are dealt with openly and transparently through agreed procedures, including WSF's formal complaint mechanism, to ensure that complaints against WSF staff are heard and properly dealt with.

4. Transparency and accountability

Our partnerships recognize the need for all parties to be accountable to people experiencing poverty or affected by disaster, and to other stakeholders, including donors and governments.

As part of the process of developing partnerships, we explicitly discuss how WSF is accountable to partners, and how we and our partners are accountable to people and communities with and for whom we work.

WSF and partners are serious about the importance of good financial management, as we hold in trust money which others have given in good faith, and for which we are jointly responsible. Genuine mutual accountability is rooted in a real understanding and recognition of the diversity of resources brought to the relationship. The power imbalance created by the financial and material resources which WSF makes available and the implications of this are openly discussed and handled with sensitivity.

The diverse knowledge, experience, and skills which other organizations and local communities bring to the relationship are valued and acknowledged as equally essential to ensuring the success and sustainability of our joint interventions. Working together is as much about an attitude and choice as about a balance of material resources.

We agree how we learn from our work together with the aim of incorporating learning, communications and the sharing of knowledge into the design and delivery of projects and partnerships.

We have a specific responsibility to encourage the active sharing of knowledge with and amongst partners.

5. Commitment and flexibility

Whilst short-term interventions can be appropriate, our humanitarian, development, and campaign work is more sustainable and effective if program approaches are based on long-term partnerships. Where WSF is in a donor role, we are open about our plans to fund or to stop funding and our reasons for doing so, and build capacity for fundraising and link partners to alternative sources of funding where possible.

We recognize the need of our partners to balance project funding with core funding and, within the limits of funding constraints, aim to increase the proportion of multi-year funding agreements with strategic partners. We recognize that for partners, WSF is often one piece in a complex and time-consuming jigsaw of funding and reporting requirements, and we coordinate financing and reporting requirements with other donor agencies.

The principles and values contained within this partnership policy serve as the framework for ensuring clear and transparent working relationships with others based on openness, trust, respect, and mutual accountability – enabling all of us to be more effective in the global struggle against poverty, suffering, and injustice.



Chairperson Board



Director