

# Mercy Corps' 10 Principles of Partnership

## Private Sector Engagement Toolkit - Tip Sheet #2:

There are three overarching principles agreed among many organizations as important for partners to be able to work together. Practicing these principles in concert provides a firm foundation upon which to build effective partnerships. These principles apply to all partnerships, not just those with the private sector.

1. **Equity** – all partners have valuable resources and expertise, as well as risks and benefits that lead to a complementary purpose and respect.
2. **Transparency** – A crucial factor to developing trust, a positive environment to collaborate and ensuring decisions are made in a socially responsible way.
3. **Mutual benefit** – including commitment to other partners as well as to the shared partnership, leading to deeper engagement.

Additionally, a number of operational principles contribute to effective working relationships among partners.

4. **Communities are the primary stakeholders** – Their opinions and contributions matter and must be a part of any interventions we conduct in their communities. We will work to ensure to every extent possible that all groups in the community participate and that the community takes ownership of the projects.
5. **Non-discrimination** – Development assistance should be targeted for those in need regardless of race, religion, gender, political affiliation, ethnicity or ability. Partners will strive to make sure that our programs do not discriminate against people for these or any other reasons
6. **Fiscal responsibility** – Funds have been entrusted to partners for helping improve the lives of the most vulnerable. All partners have a shared responsibility to ensure funds are spent wisely and accountably both to our donors and to the communities we serve
7. **Consistent communication** – Partners will work to maintain an open and professional relationship with each other. When problems or differences of opinion arise we will jointly work to solve these harmoniously and come
8. **Coordination** – In order to avoid duplication and inefficient use of resources while maximizing

opportunities and effectiveness, partners commit to regular sharing of information from relevant programs and the context. This includes with each other and where possible and applicable with others working in the area.

9. **Learning** – Partners acknowledge that each has different experiences and by learning from each other we can enrich our organizations and the people we aim to serve. Additionally, in identifying shared interests and pursuing joint learning we build our relationship and the capacity of the partnership.
10. **Monitoring and evaluation** – Understanding the impact of joint work is an essential part of program development and design during which both Mercy Corps and its partners learn from the success and challenges organizations have in the field. Mercy Corps also agrees to establish and maintain a transparent monitoring system and its partners agree to cooperate with all monitoring visits conducted during and after implementation of the project.

All partnerships are developed in service of helping to support the development of secure, productive and/or just communities, not to partner for partnership's sake. Principles are guidelines. True partnership comes from making these principles a way of working together, not a check list. Flexibility is also important as teams learn what the principles mean for them practically and work with partners to integrate them in joint work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from the Mercy Corps Local Partnerships Guide.  
<http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/mcllocalpartnershipsguide.pdf>