



Anti-Slavery International's Partnership Approach

May 2023

Introduction

This document has been developed following a review of our partnership approach (October 2022 – March 2023), including consultation with present and past partners. The review represented the first step on an organisational journey – one of reflection on our organisational mindset, systems, and practice in relation to the balance of power between ourselves and our partners. The findings from this review have informed this new Partnership Approach document, which sets out our organisational commitment to building more **equitable partnerships**.

The purpose of this document is therefore to set out - for our current and future partners - our partnership principles and approach, our commitment to building equitable partnerships, our 'offer' to partners, and our expectations.

1. Shifting the power through partnership

Anti-Slavery International has a long history of dismantling and disrupting the power structures which underpin slavery - our history is rooted in the movement for the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Nonetheless, we recognise that, as a UK-based human rights organisation working internationally, we occupy a certain place in a structural system that often disadvantages civil society organisations in the Global South. We also recognise that our role as an intermediary for funding (accountable to donors) often limits the extent to which our partnerships can be truly equitable, but we commit to constantly reviewing our practice and seeking ways to shift power within these constraints and to advocate for the same.

2. Why do we work in partnership?

Our work is developed and delivered in partnership with local/national and international organisations that share our values, vision, and focus on achieving the systemic change needed to end slavery. By working in this way, we can share expertise and increase impact, strengthen the global anti-slavery movement, and ensure our work is based on the lived experience of those vulnerable to, and affected by, slavery.

Benefits of partnership approach:

- Organisations are best placed to address slavery in their own context.

- Locally rooted organisations are best placed to facilitate the active participation of those affected by slavery.
- Both parties can gain access to the resources, information, or expertise they may lack.
- Enables links between organisations working in different contexts for learning and collaboration.
- Local organisations can gain a stronger voice in national, regional, and global advocacy where we can facilitate access and add our voice.
- Advocacy in the UK, EU and at the global level is informed by organisations working directly with those vulnerable to, or affected by, slavery.
- Increases the impact of advocacy work through sharing expertise, common messages, and coordinated action, and contributes to a stronger global anti-slavery movement.
- Working together to humanise the issues of modern slavery and communicate them in a way that drives action.

3. Achieving our strategic priorities through partnership

Partnership is a core approach to achieving our 5 organisational strategic priorities¹:

System Change: Seeking sustainable long-term change to the systems which underpin and drive slavery. Systemic change must involve all actors, including governments, business and civil society, and changes must have effect in law, policy, and practice.

We will seek partnerships with organisations whose work is focused on achieving the systemic change needed to end slavery.

We will cultivate an organisational culture which recognises our place in the existing system (as a UK based INGO) and seek opportunities to adapt and shift power where necessary.

Voice and participation: Ensuring that our understanding and responses are based on the lived experience of those vulnerable to/ affected by slavery, while taking steps to increase meaningful, effective, and ethical participation of those vulnerable to/ affected by slavery in our research, advocacy, and programmes.

We will work with organisations which actively support the meaningful participation of those affected by or vulnerable to slavery.

We will work together to strengthen our shared capacity to do this effectively and ethically in our programmes, advocacy, and communications work.

¹ Read more about how we work to end slavery here: <https://www.antislavery.org/what-we-do/how-we-work/>

Movement Building: Supporting increased coordination and collaboration between organisations working to end slavery at all levels and working to identify and address power imbalances within the global anti-slavery movement.

We will invest in organisational capacity strengthening and long-term sustainability of our partner organisations so that they can play a leading role in the anti-slavery movement over the long-term.

We will facilitate links between, and among, organisations in the anti-slavery movement, supporting the co-ordination and collaboration needed to increase impact. We will play an active role in platforms and networks within the anti-slavery movement and beyond and facilitate our partners' equal access to these.

Framing the issue: Creating effective ways of presenting anti-slavery issues so they remain a priority, so that responses are galvanised and change is secured.

Through our work with partner organisations, we will ensure that our understanding and presentation of anti-slavery issues is rooted in local realities and the lived experience of slavery. Through our communications and international advocacy work we will help our partners to amplify their experience and messages, and we will support them to develop effective communications tools.

Legal Frameworks: Working to ensure that international human rights instruments and other legal frameworks are used to their full extent to end slavery through the creation and implementation of legislation at local level to prevent slavery and protect those affected by slavery.

Our international advocacy work will be informed by and, where possible, carried out jointly with our partner organisations, ensuring that their experience and evidence is included in submissions to monitoring mechanisms and other fora. We will support partners to engage with powerholders at local level to advocate for the introduction and effective implementation of local legislation to end slavery.

4. What do we mean by partnership?

We work closely with external organisations in several ways including for fundraising, communications, networking, and collaboration. For the purposes of our Partnership Approach, we are focusing on **long-term formal relationships** where Anti-Slavery International and another organisation work together, with mutually agreed objectives, to end slavery and slave-like practices through **direct programme work, research, or advocacy**.

Within this definition, our partnerships can be described across four distinct categories (although elements may overlap between them):


- i. **Advocacy partnerships** – convening advocacy networks and consortia; working with other national and international actors on shared advocacy objectives.
- ii. **Project partnerships** – working with other organisations to co-create and deliver projects which combine work on the ground and advocacy at all levels for prevention and protection from slavery.
- iii. **Research and learning partnerships** – developing and carrying out research and learning with other organisations to inform advocacy and programme responses.
- iv. **Strategic Partnerships** – longer term relationship with shared objectives and agreed areas of collaboration or exchange (where we may not always have funded work together).

5. Our Partnership Principles

These principles underpin our approach to partnership:

- i. **Shared vision and values** – working for systemic change to end slavery, with approaches rooted in human rights (including right to participation)
- ii. **Complementarity** – each partner brings a unique contribution which adds value to the work of the others, increasing overall impact.
- iii. **Mutual respect and support** – of each partners' directions and priorities, respecting the different contexts in which we work.
- iv. **Mutual accountability** – answerable to each other, giving and receiving constructive feedback, transparency.
- v. **Equity and inclusion** – ensuring that everyone is listened to, valued and included at all stages, including those with lived experience of slavery, and those who may experience exclusion and discrimination based on personal characteristics such as ethnicity, disability, gender and age.
- vi. **Co-ownership** – equal participation and recognition in developing and implementing joint work.
- vii. **Solidarity** – publicly demonstrating our support for partner organisations in our shared commitment to ending slavery.

6. Adding value to each other's work through partnership

Anti-Slavery International		Partner Organisation
We offer the following contribution to partner organisations, depending on agreed needs and priorities:		Partner organisations may offer the following contributions to Anti-Slavery International,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to donor funding for shared priorities/ joint work • Commitment to including relevant partner core organisational costs in any funding agreement • Support on donor compliance, reporting and accountability • Support on organisational capacity strengthening in areas such as governance, financial management and compliance, safeguarding, MEL, fundraising and communications • Access to direct and indirect channels and fora for advocacy at regional and international level, with support, knowledge-sharing and capacity-strengthening to enable direct and meaningful involvement • Speaking out on issues when our partners are constrained by their context to speak out themselves • Convening partners from different contexts for shared learning, solidarity, and peer review • Brokering links with other individuals and organisations in the anti-slavery movement and beyond for learning, mutual support, and collaboration • Access to information and resources for strengthening the partner's work • Supporting partners to build their profile and amplifying shared messages through our communications work. • Support and advice on long term strategic and sustainable development 	<p>depending on their strengths and agreed priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In depth knowledge and understanding of slavery issues in the partner organisation's context, for co-creation of effective responses and advocacy • Current evidence and data on slavery issues in the partner organisation's context, including the lived experience of those vulnerable to/ affected by slavery, which can be used to inform international advocacy, research, programming, communications and fundraising • Inclusion, representation and participation of those vulnerable to/ affected by slavery • Providing input and critique on Anti-Slavery International's policy positions and strategies • Direct involvement in Anti-Slavery International's regional or international advocacy • Sharing information and exchanging learning on effective approaches which can be replicated or adapted • Access to other local and regional actors in the anti-slavery movement for promotion of shared messages • Feedback on Anti-Slavery International's approach to partnership, to support continued commitment to improvement and shifting power • Advice and input into Anti-Slavery International's strategic thinking and plans
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7. What kind of partners do we look for?

When seeking new organisations to work with in partnership we will look for the following criteria:

- i. A focus on changing the systems that underpin and perpetuate slavery, and on the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of those vulnerable to or affected by slavery.
- ii. An approach that is consistent with Anti-Slavery International's values: Dynamic; inclusive; transformative.²
- iii. Shared focus on Anti-Slavery International's strategic priorities, thematic and geographic areas
- iv. Commitment to supporting the voice and participation of people vulnerable to and affected by slavery in the organisation's work.
- v. Commitment to gender equity and other aspects of equity, diversity and inclusion in the organisation's work.
- vi. Commitment to safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the organisation, through safe practice and systems.
- vii. Willingness to engage with Anti-Slavery International in an open, professional manner.
- viii. Willingness to share and incorporate learning and to adapt accordingly.
- ix. Commitment to regular communication and willingness to share relevant management documentation in a timely manner and to the required standards for accountability and donor compliance, including changes in internal processes and procedures where agreed.
- x. Capacity to implement and report on an externally funded project in line with donor compliance requirements, or the willingness to build the capacity to do so.
- xi. Willingness to engage with and feed into Anti-Slavery International's organisational strategic thinking.

² **Anti-Slavery International's values:**

Dynamic - We commit to continuous improvement and do not assume yesterday's ideas will work today. We are flexible, open-minded, take calculated risks and respond to opportunities.

Inclusive - We believe that everyone has a role in ending slavery, we make sure every voice is respected and nurture diverse perspectives and partnerships to create better solutions. We make sure that those with direct experience of slavery and survivors inform our work.

Transformative - We are determined, taking considered and courageous action that has lasting, systemic impact with humans at its heart.