

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS DURING COVID-19

During this period of uncertainty around COVID-19, Save the Children will be prioritizing people health (staff and partners), business continuity, preparedness and response. We must ensure that both Save the Children and our partners are conducting programmes safely so as not to do harm to staff or beneficiaries. We need to ensure our approach is in line with our partnership principles: **value driven and empowering relationships, transparency and accountability, mutual benefit and complementarity.**

There should be ongoing and open dialogue with our partners throughout this period, including on the challenges they are facing. The following guidance lays out how we should be engaging with our partners around COVID-19. It is important to identify who will lead discussions with each partner on each of the following aspects and that messaging is consistent if several staff are interacting with one partner organization.

### Health of Partner Staff

- Share information (behaviour change communication) on how staff can protect themselves with partners along with any well-being tips that are being shared across the Country Office. Share with the partners any measures Save the Children is taking to keep safe
- Check in with partners that they have the funds available for basic prevention (hand sanitizer, soap etc.) in offices and programme sites. Where Save the Children funds the partner, discuss if it is necessary to amend the budget to address any hygiene needs
- Talk to partners about their plans to support staff well-being and share any good practices that the CO may be implementing that the partner could also do (e.g. well-being focal points, access to free online resources)
- Share media digest (if you have this) and up-to-date information on COVID-19 with partners, including cases in areas of operation. Direct partners to reliable information sources e.g. [WHO](#)
- Request that the partner alerts SC of any COVID-19 case identified in SC programme areas. Make sure that you are aware of who to report this to within your office so the appropriate protocols can be activated

### Business Continuity Plan

- Ensure that the CO business continuity plan has factored in partners (payments, communication lines, responsible partnering, programming implications). Inform the partner if there are any implications for them in the CO business continuity plan
- Make sure you have an up to date contact list for your partners
- Encourage partners to develop and put in place a Business Continuity Plan for their organisation and all their activities (not for SC activities alone, although these should be incorporated). The template (see annex) provided by SC can be used by partners if the partner finds it useful. Provide guidance and support to the partners on how to create the plan (coaching, web session etc.) Encourage partners to share their Business Continuity Plans with Save the Children

## Programming – Safely and Responsibly

- Have ongoing conversations with partners about any problems they are facing in delivering their programmes as a result of COVID-19. Ask them in advance about anticipated delays, blocks, likely underspend etc. (this will also ease the pressure when donors start requesting information with short timeframes). There may be a need to formalize the frequency of these conversations if the situation deteriorates
- Share the communication flow to partners (i.e. the list of focal points from CO/FO who they should report to for any changes, challenges during this period)
- Facilitate partners to access online resources, including online meetings and trainings
- Share the Program Framework and Program Adaptations guidance (to mitigate risk/do no harm with our programme activities) with partner organisations. Discuss with the partner how these adaptations can be implemented, what support is needed (technical or financial) and any challenges they think they will face as well as any ideas and suggestions they have in addition to what SC has identified. Work with the partners to make any necessary amendments to the programme, work plan or budget to address the changing context, in line with donor regulations
- Share SC’s advocacy messaging on COVID-19 with the partners, for their information and should they wish to adopt these messages in their own advocacy efforts
- Set up short weekly (or bi-weekly call) with all partners within a specific programme to provide updates on the situation and share solutions and learnings with each other and SC
- Ensure the partner knows to inform SC in the event they need to suspend their operations/projects, programming is impacted OR if they want to add any new activities or change approved work plans. Ensure budget holders and Awards teams are informed and consulted with approval received as needed
- SC Programme Managers must link up with Member Focal Points to ensure information flow and decision-making is swift along the partner-SCI-Member line.

## Preparedness and response

- Ensure partner participation in the development of any preparedness or response planning and trainings
- Encourage partners to engage in any coordination mechanisms with the government and/or UN system to ensure they are able to prepare and respond in line with recommendations
- Design response activities jointly with partners if a response to COVID-19 is determined by the SMT
- Ensure partner engagement in any response is conducted in a safe and responsible way. We should not transfer our risks on to partners and there should be open discussion with partners on the risks involved in any response programming and the mitigations needed, with enough budget available to implement these mitigations.

