



**samen** werkt.

# **Partos** Code of Conduct

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# Introduction

Partos members are professional organisations that work in the field of International Collaboration. Their activities take place both here and abroad or in the global arena, and partake in the roles of societal organisations as set out in the Partos Basic Vision “The Future in Development” (summer 2011). In order to optimise the pursuit of the objectives set down by the member organisations themselves, they wish to orient and equip their organisations to achieve jointly expressed values. Everything in this Code has been formulated in the interests of effective collaborative development. Trust within society in the manner in which the organisations connected to Partos organise themselves and carry out their activities is also of great significance for the sector as a whole as well as for the individual members. A Code of Conduct reflecting the values in accordance with which the member organisations within Partos wish to act is an essential tool here.

In 2009 the members indicated that the previous Partos Code of Conduct, ratified in April 2006, was due for adjustment in line with new developments in the sector and in society. Efforts have been made since then to get the VFI, the sectoral association for the larger fund-raisers, to work on a joint Code. Unfortunately this proved to be impossible due to circumstances within VFI and SBF, the so-called “Collaborative Philanthropic Sectoral Association”, who subsequently ratified a covenant with the Rutte Cabinet in which they committed to produce a Code of Conduct by the end of 2013. While this code will not formally apply either to Partos or to the great majority of Partos members, Partos would also wish to participate in this as a joint endeavour. Since there does not appear to be an opening for this to happen at present, and to avoid members having to wait four years for their request for an updated code to be granted, it has been decided that this new Code of Conduct should be drafted independently, specifically for the IS sector. This could serve as the basis for collaboration with SBF

in this area at the end of next year, if an opportunity for this should arise.

In order to avoid duplication as far as possible, this Code of Conduct will wherever relevant make explicit reference to other already applicable codes, regulations or standards, or specific elements thereof. These include not only national standards like the CBF or the Wijffels Code, but also the Istanbul Principles and their development in the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness. The concluding declaration of the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness explicitly acknowledged these two documents produced by the internationally organised field of collaborative development.

The Partos Code of Conduct has, together with a compliance protocol, been ratified by the ALV and is binding on all existing and new members of the Association. Following ratification by the ALV the compliance protocol will become part of the Internal Regulations of the Partos Association. The Code of Conduct will of course also apply to the Partos Association Bureau where it is relevant to their activities.

## **Note for the reader**

The text sets out generally applicable values which are endorsed by Partos members as the basis for the activities of the member organisations. A number of footnotes have also been provided at the end of the document. These provide further detailed guidance which members should preferably follow in their efforts to comply with the relevant provision of this Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct does not pretend to cover every aspect of the topics considered. It is rather a description of the overall values which our members wish to adopt.

# I. Sustainable Societal Development

## 1. Sustainable positive change

The members of Partos:

- a. Operate on the basis of policy aiming to achieve sustainable results from their efforts;
- b. Work, on the basis of this policy, towards collaboration intended to achieve sustainable outcomes and impact;
- c. Serve, above all, the long-term objectives and needs of the groups of people targeted by their interventions, in all their activities. These activities may take place both in the area where the target groups are located and also for example on the global level<sup>1</sup>;
- d. Identify any potential negative impact before carrying out their interventions and activities, and do whatever is possible to avoid this negative impact;
- e. Uphold human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, against that background, pay special attention to vulnerable people and the deprived in the areas in which they are active;
- f. Take gender equality and the rights of women and girls as an important starting point in drafting and implementing policy;
- g. Take ecological sustainability into account in their activities.

## 2. Local ownership<sup>2</sup>

The members of Partos:

- a. Ensure where possible that their partners are co-owners of their programmes and projects and that their objectives and requirements and those of their target groups are the determining factor in policy formation and in the design of these programmes and projects;
- b. Where possible, make use of existing local structures and expertise, strengthening the field of civil society organisations in countries where they are active.

## 3. Partnerships

Members of Partos strive to achieve:

- a. Partnership relationships<sup>3</sup> based on shared values such as equality, complementarity, mutual respect, trust, autonomy of the organisation and shared long-term goals, solidarity and global citizenship<sup>4</sup>.
- b. A strengthening of the collaborative relationship with other actors involved in International Collaboration.

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1. *The members will make explicit the approaches they adopt, for example the "Rights Based Approach". The UN Declaration reads as follows: "A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Under a human rightsbased approach, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law."*
  2. *Preferably the members have incorporated the development of capacity (the development of the capacity of people, organisations and societies to successfully act in their own interests) in their development programmes as an integral starting point. They facilitate the endogenous development of capacity among their partners, by supporting them in their organisational development, with attention paid to the local and country-specific context, and issues of ownership and demand.*
  3. *Partners are those persons and/or organisations with which the members collaborate in order to achieve their mutually agreed objectives.*
  4. *Global citizenship finds its expression in behaviour which honours the principles of mutual dependency in the world, the equality of all mankind and our shared responsibility for the solution of global problems.*

## 2. Professional organisation

### 1. Professionalism and Effectiveness

The members of Partos:

- a. Use the resources available to them as effectively and efficiently as possible;
- b. Continually strive to improve their own capacity to achieve their mission;
- c. Strive to work together across organisations where this increases effectiveness and/or efficiency;
- d. Demonstrably work on the quality<sup>5</sup> of their organisation and processes, and have these externally assessed on a regular basis;
- e. Monitor and evaluate<sup>6</sup> their activities and results, based in part on locally formulated indicators relating to process and outcome;
- f. Adhere where appropriate to the generally applicable standards for Socially Responsible Enterprise<sup>7</sup>.

### 2. The creation and sharing of expertise

The members of Partos wish:

- a. To be a learning organisation (a learning organisation is an organisation which encourages learning at all levels (individual and collective), takes a planned approach and continually develops itself as a result);
- b. To encourage learning from experience and the proactive sharing of expertise, with one another and with and between the partner organisations and the various stakeholders, both within the sector and beyond.

### 3. Financial standards

The members of Partos adopt the following financial standards as a minimum:

- a. They have a favourable auditor's report available in accordance with the relevant guidelines for annual reporting;
- b. The VFI Directive "Reserves for Charitable Organisations" is adopted in relation to the scope and management of reserves as well as investment policy;
- c. The remuneration of Directors and Managers

- is in accordance with the latest version of the VFI's "Advisory Directive for Boards and Supervisory Panels on Remuneration for Directors of Charitable Organisations". The standard issued by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DG-norm) will be adopted as the maximum for all Managers, Directors and Staff;
- d. They will provide transparency in relation to their financial situation by publishing their annual accounts.

### 4. Transparency and accountability

In the interests of transparency<sup>8</sup> and accountability the Members of Partos will adopt the following principles:

- a. They take active steps to provide a comprehensively formulated insight into their objectives, policy, decision-making, deployment of resources, activities, progress, results, evaluation and operations in the Netherlands and in the fields that they are active;
- b. Their accountability is in part directed at those constituting the target group for their activities;
- c. They are prepared to engage in consultation and dialogue about their own performance with the relevant societal and political groupings.

### 5. Good employment standards

The members of Partos:

- a. Adopt clear guidelines relating to the health and safety and welfare of all employees and volunteers working in the Netherlands and beyond. Members will act on the basis of a careful safety risk assessment, both for their own employees and volunteers and for other parties for whom they have a responsibility;
- b. Pursue equal opportunities for personnel. They:
  1. act on the basis of the principle of non-discrimination;
  2. endeavour to achieve diversity in the composition of their workforce and in

- filling managerial positions.
- c. Ensure that their employees and volunteers are kept informed of applicable local legislation<sup>9</sup> and cultural factors which might influence their work, and take account of such matters in their activities.

*relevant legislation in the countries where they work (including legislation in the area of social security legislation, health, pensions and tax).*

## **6. Good governance**

The members of Partos:

- a. Pursue active policies relating to the prevention and combating of fraud and corruption, both within their own organisations and in the way their organisations deal with the outside world;
- b. Have introduced a separation between the governance of the organisation and its supervision, in accordance with the Wijffels Code;
- c. Act in accordance with the guideline issued by the Centraal Bureau Fondsenwerving (CBF): In the event of a conflict of interests in relation to a board member or supervisor the member in question must report this to the board or supervisory body on which he or she sits. The member in question must then further exclude themselves from the relevant consultation and decision-making.

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5. *Members will preferably use as a guideline Partos 9001, a sector-specific application of ISO 9001, which takes account of the special circumstances in which societal organisations operate in International Collaboration.*
  6. *Members will preferably adapt the frequency and method of their evaluations to the nature and scope of their activities. Where evaluations are used for formal reporting purposes they will preferably be carried out by independent professionals.*
  7. *Members will preferably comply with the OESO Directives where applicable. <http://www.oesorichtlijnen.nl/>*
  8. *Because of its significance for the effectiveness and efficiency of international collaboration, Partos has developed a sectoral agenda concerning the application of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard for the publication of information as open data.*
  9. *Where possible and appropriate, members comply with all*

# 3. Communications and fundraising

## 1. Mutual goodwill

The members of Partos:

- a. Will behave in a collegial fashion in their interactions with other members;
- b. Will show respect to one another when approaching the public with the aim of raising funds;
- c. Will be prepared to participate in mutual consultation regarding common interests;
- d. Will hold one another accountable with regard to compliance with this Code of Conduct;
- e. Make active efforts in both their individual and collective actions to represent the interests of the sector and its image, in the interest of the effectiveness of international collaboration.

## 2. Responsible fundraising methods

The members of Partos:

- a. Will provide full, correct and accessible information about the goals of fundraising;
- b. Will show respect to both the donor and the recipient when fundraising;
- c. Will report the costs of activities whose main aim is fundraising as costs of fundraising, doing so in a transparent manner;
- d. And/or their offices in partner countries who call on local resources for fundraising will give priority to the fundraising of their local partners when the latter are also make a call on such local resources;
- e. Will draft policy and make the resultant selection of images and messages on the basis of the following principles<sup>10</sup>:
  1. Respect for the human dignity of the persons involved;
  2. The equality of all mankind;
  3. Acceptance of the necessity to promote solidarity and justice.

## 3. External publications

The facts, opinions and/or images presented by a Partos member will be based on their own observations or on sources which are known to the member and are regarded as reliable. Both sides of the argument will be listened to when called for in establishing the facts. The member will also listen to both sides of the argument in order to prevent partiality in communications. This requirement may be deviated from in serious cases, for example where the safety of the persons or organisations involved is at stake.

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10. *In implementing these principles members will preferably comply with the Code of Conduct on Messages and Images as drawn up by Concord, the European Platform for NGOs active in international collaboration.*